

**Diary of Sgt Jack Croft, NX25391,
2/15 Field Regiment, 8th Division, AIF**

Malaya, 1 January 1942—9 September 1945

[This typescript was transcribed with considerable difficulty by Sally Nicol from a variety of manuscript sources. The diary consists of a Battle Diary recording action until the Capitulation in February 1942, and then an account of daily life in Changi Gaol and its surrounding work camps until Liberation in September 1945. Early parts of the diary were written clearly on the back side of commercial invoice forms, later entries on various paper scraps, including the margins of books from the Changi Library. As far as I know, the diary was a daily record (except when Jack was ill), and written at the time. It was kept in secure places and under considerable secrecy. Some of the entries were impossible to decipher 60 years later, and some have been lost. We have noted these lacunae. Where Sally was uncertain she has written notes to me, usually in bold italics and round brackets. I have indicated in the text in square brackets any interventions I have made. I owe a great debt to Sally Nicol for the effort and dedication she put into the transcription over many months. By her efforts my father's words and life have come into being. It has been a very moving experience for me reading this diary, and I hope it will be for any other reader, who, while not having the benefit of a close familial relation with the diary-keeper, will nevertheless have an insight into what so many men and women suffered in World War Two.

Julian Croft]

War Diary 30th Field Battery – 1st January to 17th February 1942

2/15 Field Regiment under Command of 27 Infantry Brigade

Kluang – January 1 – January 9

Battery disposed in Kluang area and Battalion Headquarters with Regimental Headquarters in Meng Kibol Estate approximately 3 miles west of Kluang covering the aerodrome and main road east of Kluang. D Troop in harbour about 7/800 yards west of C Troop.

Batu Anam – January 10

Battery moved in Regimental convoy to harbour near Yenuang. During afternoon recce of area around Batu Anom carried out by Battery Recce group. Positions occupied about last light. C Troop approximately 400 yards north of railway crossing on Batu Empat Road, and D Troop on Reservoir Hill approximately 500 yards south of crossing – Battalion Headquarters 200 yards north of crossing. Battery placed under command of 2/30 Battalion. B.C. moved to Battalion Headquarters.

Gemas – January 11

Same position. No firing.

January 12

Same position during day. Orders received to move with 2/30 Battalion to position (in nature of outpost) west of Gemas. Recce made by B.C. and positions occupied after dark : Battalion Headquarters 721285 (about 400 yards west of railway crossing Gemas-Tompin line) D Troop 719288 (near Chinese Cemetery), C Troop in 2/30 Battalion area at 693290. Advanced Battalion Headquarters with 2/30 Battalion Headquarters 606290: Guns (C Troop) dug in and camouflaged before dawn. Right Section sighted to cover road west of position and Left Section to cover open ground and railway line to southwest of area. All C Troop guns at edge of young rubber slightly forward of A Company's position. Ground soft and tractors parked in rear of guns to facilitate quick move. Intention was to fire counter preparations and harassing fire tasks on blowing of bridge across Sungai Gemenschen by ambushed B Company – F.O.O. sent with this Company and connected by L/T with advanced Battalion Headquarters.

January 13

Same positions. Rained heavily all day. Gun pits filled with water requiring constant attention – ground became boggy and movement of M.T. [motor transport?] practically impossible.

January 14

Same positions – weather cleared during morning. Enemy crossed Sungai Gemenchen during afternoon and advance guard cut telephone wires. Bridge blown according to plan but Battery could not be notified, so no fire put down. Contact made with forward enemy during afternoon and desultory fighting continued during night. Efforts made to repair telephone cables after dark but enemy had mounted machine guns at breaks to ambush. Maintenance Signals attempts to repair line unsuccessful.

January 15

Battalion area heavily attacked. Battalion Headquarters and Regimental Headquarters were moved back to Batu Anam about midday. D Troop went into action at 862270. C Troop supported counter attack by D Corps of 2/30 Battalion during afternoon which was successful attack however continued on whole front and after engaging tasks over open sights. C Troop's position was overrun by enemy infantry with tank support and forced to withdraw after evacuation of own infantry. During engagement C Troop was subjected to intense dive bombing, mortar, tank, automatic and small arms fire which destroyed a gun tractor. B.S. ran and mortar cycles. Mud, as a result of heavy rain, having bogged guns in pits and owing to generally boggy condition of ground in vicinity, only able to extricate one gun and one trailer although repeated attempts were made by all those detachments whose tractors were intact (the fourth tractor having been destroyed by enemy fire) Guns left were rendered useless by removing breech blocks, sights, etc. Personnel withdrawn to harbour east of Batu Anam. D Troop fired harassing tasks during the night.

Batu Anam – January 16

D Troop same position, continued harassing fire and counter preparation tasks all day and night. C Troop in harbour refitting with 18 pounders. Battalion Headquarters on main road $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to east of D Troop. B.C. with 2/30 Battalion Headquarters east of Gemas as Liaison Officer.

January 17

C Troop in action with 18 pounders 1 mile east of D Troop – fired only 15 rounds and 3 guns went out of action with mechanical faults. D Troop in same position and continued harassing fire.

January 18

C and D Troops same positions. C Troop's gun repaired and fired harassing fire tasks in front of 2/30 Battalion area at first light and continued with harassing fire throughout the day – also opportunity tasks in support of 2/30 Battalion. Orders received after dark to move further back. Recce in dark carried out by B.C. and C.P.O. and Battery occupied new positions before daylight to east of Segamut. Battalion Headquarters 609554. C Troop 597562. D. Troop 613551.

Segamut – January 19

Same positions – no firing. Constant enemy air activity and bombing. Recce of rear positions by B.C. Battery moved at dusk to Gehuangaren (Battalion Headquarters 685545. C Troop 681540. D Troop 665541.)

Glenuang – January 20

Same positions. Harassing fire tasks by both Troops. Recce of rear positions between 81 and 83 mile pegs made by Brigade in preparation for night move. Plans changed about 1700 hours and battery moved with Regiment after dark to harbour in Soefin (Oil Palm) Estate.

Yong Peng – January 21

Battery ordered to move from harbour (early am) to vicinity of Yong Peng into areas allotted by Headquarters R.P.A. C Troop into action (night occupation) at 961944. D Troop into harbour near Yong Peng village – Battalion Headquarters. at 61 miles peg. No firing during day.

January 22

Same positions – no firing. Recce of rear positions made by B.C. south of Ayer Hitam. During the day D Troop moved from harbour into action about 600 yards to East of Harbour. Both troops now covering 2/30 Battalion front on Muar Rd to south of Yong Peng.

January 23

Same positions during day. D Troop first harassing fire tasks forward of 2/30 Battalion positions. C Troop silent. Considerable enemy air activity and bombing. Further recce of positions by B.C. in Ayer Hitam area due to previously selected positions having been occupied overnight by other artillery. Battery ordered to move after dark to Ayer Hitam area. C Troop first to SE crossroads. D Troop and Battalion Headquarters at 57 mile peg. One Observation Post (O/P) established on high ground just northwest of cross roads.

Ayer Hitam – January 24

Same position as occupied during night. C Troop position very open and close to crossroads but this choice necessary on account of small range to tasks. Both troops carried out harassing fire tasks on 2/30 Battalion front on main road during day. C Troop bombed from air and shelled several times during day but no casualties, although bombs fell between guns in some instances and across Troop area. Some motor transport damage in air raids but only one (3 ton) beyond repair (a considerable amount of ammunition set on fire).

January 25

Same positions. Heavy rainfall all day. Owing to Infantry having withdrawn somewhat, now possible to move C Troop from exposed position near crossroads to vicinity 56 mile peg (done under cover of rain during day light). D Troop provided limited harassing fire during the day. Recce of rear positions made by B.C. during day in Simpang Rengam area, to which Battery moved after dark except one section of C Troop which remained at 56 miles peg and provided covering fire for Infantry withdrawal, rejoining battery after tasks completed. New position of Battery in vicinity of 45 mile peg both sides of road.

Simpang Rengam – January 26

Battery remained in position during the day, no firing. Recce during the day by B.C. for further positions to protect withdrawal of East Force through Namasia Estate which is old rubber and all hilly country. Area bordering main road all heavy jungle and swamp, making the road a long defile. Only gun positions available were in echelon alongside road with limited zone of fire on account of tall timbers close to road. Battery moved after dark to these positions (C Troop at 41 mile peg to cover, primarily, road junction at Simpang Rengam).

January 27

Same positions. Considerable air activity. During afternoon Battalion Headquarters and C Troop wagon line area heavily bombed. (Lieutenant Harry Hingst and other killed and wounded and buried on hillside in Namasia Estate on South side of Estate Road about 200 yards from main road). Reces made by B.C. and Battery Captain separately for gun areas to cover exit from jungle defile at 38 mile peg. C Troop withdrawn after dark to new positions. D Troop remained to provide covering fire on Simpang Rengam Road junction to enable 2/26 Battalion and Battalion of Gordons to extricate and withdraw, moving to new positions late at night after withdrawal completed. System of traffic control instituted by Battery as D Troop was firing from roadside and traffic from 27 Brigade Group and balance of East Force was considerable.

January 28

Battery now in action in open position, no suitable covered ones being obtainable in whole area. C Troop at 36/34 miles peg. D Troop 500 yards off road at 35 mile peg. Intense enemy air activity during day but guns not discovered, although considerable firing carried out due to effectiveness of natural camouflage employed. Battalion Headquarters bombed. No casualties but it is thought that bombs were directed at road cutting nearby. Recce of rear positions carried out by B.C. near 30 mile peg for subsequent withdrawal. After dark D Troop engaged enemy field gun at position indicated by

Liaison Officer with 2/26 Battalion, range being 12,875 yards (super charge) firing 10 rounds. Result not seen but no further firing experienced by Infantry from that position. That troop then stood by to cover jungle defile between 38-40 mile pegs during withdrawal of 27 Brigade Group and when completed moved to new Battery area and with C Troop took up positions between 28-30 mile pegs (Ayer Bemban).

Kulai – January 29

Brigade plans changed (early am) and Battery moved before dawn to harbourage near Kulai (D Troop at 19 mile peg, C Troop at 17¼ mile peg and Battalion Headquarters at 18 mile peg, remaining there during daylight. During the day B.C. made recce of gun positions between 16-18 mile pegs for occupation after dark. Previous day's firing had put two of C Troop's guns out of action (mechanical faults) and after dark this troop moved back direct to harbourage on Singapore Island, at same time D Troop went into action at 16 mile peg with Battalion Headquarters at 17 mile peg, A Troop (Infantry Battery) having also moved back to Singapore Island. The remaining Troop B was placed under commander 30th Battery and went into action at 17¼ mile peg.

Senai – January 30

Same positions as adopted during previous night. Guns fired Regimental tasks during the day and in course of this firing D Troop received fresh supply of ammo from A.A.S.C. containing several very wet charges which were discovered when a shell landed almost on one of B Troop's guns – all of this batch then discarded. Soon afterwards B Troop's No.1 and 3 guns had almost simultaneous premature bursts (at the muzzle) from H.E. shells resulting in one man being wounded. All of this lot was also discarded. Liaison Officer was sent during the afternoon to 2/30 Battalion for usual duties and to co-ordinate covering fire tasks with general withdrawal to Singapore Island. Enemy forces succeeded in establishing on Kulai village (between 2/30 Battalion and Battery area) and rendered continuation of communications difficult – overcome by bypassing village with telephone cables. This force was subsequently delayed with prior to withdrawal by our Infantry patrols at 2030 hours, B Troop withdrew to Singapore Island followed by Battalion Headquarters. Liaison Officer then withdrew from 2/30 Battalion Headquarters after final arrangements for balance of covering fire and telephone wire recovered by this Officer (ACPO) as he returned D Troop remained in action, firing to cover withdrawal until 2230 hours when that Troop also withdrew and followed rest of Battery to area in vicinity AMA Keng village (Singapore Island) in temporary harbourage.

Singapore Island – Ama Keng – January 31

2/15th Regiment now under command 22 Australian Infantry Brigade. Positions occupied by Battery in general area Amu Keng village – Battalion Headquarters west of road at 17 mile peg. C and D Troops approximately 600 yards to east and 400 yards west respectively of same road near 17½ mile peg. Two main Observation Posts established on high ground and two forward Observation Posts near water's edge, all to west and northwest of Battery area, having command over mainland opposite the northwest corner of the Island. No firing on this day.

February 1 – 7

Following week spent in consolidating positions by silent registration of Battery front, preparing gun positions by digging of pits (D Troop) and camouflage (both troops) laying cable by two separate to each of O/Ps and F/OP and digging in Command Posts telephone exchange etc.: survey of area, including fixation of pivot gun positions in main and subsidiary guns areas carried out by C.P.O. A.C. P/O G.P.Os. Accuracy of silent registration tested by shortening at safe elevations in front of F.D.Ls and found to be satisfactory (Registration by shooting 10 rounds per Troop plus 4 rounds, 1 round Troop fire, to check parallelism) C Troop guns repaired by L.A.D and thereafter remained in firing order. C Troop guns were not dug in as the minimum elevation at which they were required to fire allowed a Quadrant Elevation of only 3 degrees approx., thereby introducing considerable crest clearing difficulties. A mobile section in each Troop was instituted on 4th February. These left main position before dawn each day, remained out during daylight and returned to main positions after dark to engage any night tasks. The mobile section dealt with opportunity tasks that could be observed during daylight, thus avoiding the disclosure of main positions by shooting. The mobile positions were changed daily and the new pivot gun positions fixed by survey; several targets were engaged during this period but consent could not be given to fire on many more that presented themselves owing to orders from higher authority. Many requests from 2/18 and 2/20 Battalion had to be refused for this reason.

Liaison with Commanding Officer 2/18 and 2/20 Battalions which were being supported by 30 Field Battery, was established personally by B.C. and a "Resident" Liaison Officer (L.O.) in addition was sent to Headquarters 2/20 Battalion on 6th February. Both Battalion Headquarers were linked by direct telephone lines (laid by 30 Battalion Signals) with Battalion Headquarters to facilitate and speed up liaison. About 6 February the newly constituted C Troop comprising 6- 4.5 howitzers manned by a nucleus of trained and experienced personnel and the balance made up of reinforcements, was attached to the Battery and went into action in the northeast sector of 22 Brigade area near Sungei Kranji. Owing to the limited range of these weapons, the troop had to be placed well forward of the Battery area, resulting in further long L/T comm. An Observation Post for this Troop was established near the South of the Sungei Kranji.

During this week enemy air activity was almost continuous but no bombs were dropped on our gun areas. A certain amount of enemy shelling was experienced but no great damage was done. Travel by daylight along the roads was, however, hazardous by reason of both bombs and shells. "B" Echelon areas received considerable shelling and some M.T. was damaged and casualties suffered. "B" Echelon area during this period was 15 miles southeast of Tengah Aerodrome.

Two days of heavy rain was experienced during the week and movement of M.T. off the made roads was rendered exceedingly difficult by heavy mud – M.T. and guns were continually becoming bogged in occupying and leaving gun positions. Each Troop had a primary zone of fire of 140-150 degrees and was able to shoot if required, a further 20 degrees left by moving from pits or cover.

February 8

Battery in same area with Mobile Section but an intense enemy bombardment by air bombing artillery and mortar fire commenced about 0900 hours and continued throughout the day and well into the night. Line communications were continually cut by this fire and were being constantly repaired under extreme difficulties by sterling efforts on the part of the Battery signals and F.O.O.s, the latter on several occasions came into Command Posts a distance of 2-3 miles to report targets and matters of tactical importance and returned to their F.O.P.s under continuous fire, assisting in the repair of telephone cables as they proceeded. Numerous targets were engaged, mainly by observed fire from O/Ps during daylight and after dark on tasks allotted by Regimental Headquarters to the Battery, or requested by the Infantry Battalions after dark as phone cables were being constantly cut and communications were spasmodic, a "Resident" Liaison Officer (the C.P.O) was sent to Headquarters 2/18 Battalion. As it was difficult to maintain communications with Infantry Battalion Headquarters or both Liaison Officers returned to Battery Command Post several times with request tasks from Battalion Headquarters which were carried out in each case as soon as practicable. Heavy rain fell during the day, but the weather cleared towards evening. All mobile sections were ordered to return to main position after dark, but D Troop's section was hopelessly bogged, and defying all efforts, even a Bren Gun carrier, to move, had to remain out there, however, it continued firing. The other section of D Troop at the main position was similarly bogged in the pits and could not be moved although able to go on firing.

Between 2200 and 2400 hours enemy effected landings at several points in 22 Brigade area and landing parties down Sungei Krangi cut off G Troop. 2/20 Battalion area appeared to be overrun first, probably by thrusts from both flanks (Sungei Krangi on right and coast opposite Sungei Melayn and Sungei Tojam on the left) and after the isolation of G Troop, the mobile section of D Troop returned to its main position about 0230 9 February and reported that its position had been overrun by enemy infantry and the two guns abandoned after being rendered useless as they were bogged in.

On reference to Regimental Headquarters the Battery was ordered to withdraw. These orders were convey[ed] to C and D Troops by runner, by [but] enemy between the main Battery area and G Troop prevented word being got through to that Troop. Heavy artillery fire onto C and D Troops' area had destroyed 1 Tractor and 2 M.C. in D Troop and 2 tractors and 2 B.S. vans in C Troop (B.H.Q. although heavily shelled had suffered no major casualties in M.T.) On the order to move therefore C Troop was able to extricate only two guns, one of which became hopelessly bogged on the exit track and had to be abandoned. D Troop was unable to move any guns owing to the heavy mud and when their position was overrun by the enemy were obliged to leave them. G Troop, by a fast run in the dark over an exceedingly greasy narrow winding track, succeeded in breaking through for the loss of only a 4.5 howitzer. All guns left were rendered useless before being abandoned. Battery losses in equipment at these positions included four 25 pounders, three 18 pounders, MK IV, one 4.5 howitzer, 3 gun tractors, 3 B.S. vans and 2 M.C.s. During this action it appeared that the enemy employed four different types of artillery: 7.5mm, 10.5mm, 5.9" and a quick firing semi-automatic type of gun on the lines of a "Bofors" A.A. gun. The later invariably fired in bursts of 4 or 5 apparently over open sights; at about the same rate as a "Bofors". This gun had a very high muzzle velocity and a

comparatively flat projectory and seemed to be used from high ground on more than one occasion. It was this type of gun that was largely responsible for the damage to C Troop's M.T. as several bursts were directed at the Troop position whenever the "apparative illuminating sights" was switched on to proceed with a task, the response being too rapid for other than "open sight" shoot with a gun capable of rapid elevating and traversing. The heavier types were also used from time to time, the 5.9" being particularly conspicuous.

Bulim Jurong Road and Bukit Panjang – February 9

On assembly of the personnel the remaining guns and M.T. following the withdrawal, the Battery was moved into harbours on the Bukit Panjang Road to the west of Bulim village, before dawn. G Troop was then brought into action at 13 M.P. covering the north east of Tengah Aerodrome. The harbour covering Battalion Headquarters and the remainder of C and D Troops was heavily shelled (5.9") during the morning and subsequently bombed.

G Troop did not fire from 13 M.P. and on withdrawal of the forward infantry and the penetration by the enemy on the right flank cutting the Bukit Panjang Road the Troop was moved to a harbour on Jurong Rd where it was joined by B.H.Q and the remaining gun and personnel. During the afternoon G Troop occupied a position north of Jurong Road covering Bulim Village but it was not called upon to fire. Battery Recce groups met the 2 I/C (Second in Command) of the Regiment at Bukit Timah at 1800 hours for deployment orders and as a result 30th Battery was ordered to take up positions in the Bukit PanJang area. On orders from Regimental Headquarters 30th Battery was reformed to comprise E Troop (four 4.5 howitzers) F Troop (4-25pounders) and G Troop 5 x 5 howitzers following the loss except for 1-18 pounder of C and D Troop's guns.

After dark the newly formed Battery was moved into action – E and G Troops in the narrow strip between the railway line and Bukit Timah Road, near Bukit Panjang village, and F Troop in the Dairy Farm area to the southeast. Battalion Headquarters was established near the Dairy Farm in poor cover, but moved at first light to a better position some 400 yards away, the remaining Battery personnel from C and D Troops were sent to harbours to the south of Bukit Tumah village and subsequently to B Echelon area.

Bukit Panjang and Farrer Road – February 10

Battery still in Bukit Panjang area and several targets engaged by each Troop in tasks issued by Regimental Headquarters. During the morning, the infantry retired and the Battery was withdrawn to harbours south of Bukit Timah village. Rear positions were reconnoitered by B.C early in the afternoon. E and G Troops occupied positions on the southern side of Farrer Road covering Bukit Panjang-Bukit Timah area. Battalion Headquarters was established in a house in the western end of Farrer Road. At this time F Troop (25 pounders) was transferred to the command of B.C 29 Battery as that Battery comprised all 25 pounders and the difference in maximum ranges between 4.5" howitzers and 25 pounders was too marked to conveniently employ both types in the one battery. 30th Field Battery now comprised E and G Troops, in all nine 4.5 howitzers. No firing was done from the position along Farrer Road.

Towards dark the B.C. was called to Regimental Headquarters where the latest tactical information was passed on and a map marked to show what appeared to be much improved dispositions of our Troops. This information indicated that 12 Indian Infantry Brigade held Bukit Panjang village and the main road south of it and had made contact with 27th Australian Infantry Brigade on the north, the latter said to hold the Woodlands Road right through to and including the island end of the Causeway. The 12th Indian Infantry Brigade was to attack west of the main road at 1800 hours that day, attack again at 0900 hours next day to an objective about 1000 yards to the west and made a further attack at 1800 hours same day onto a further line approximately 1200 yards to the west. 30th Field Battery was to support those attacks in all states. Its orders were not, however, received until a few minutes before the time set for the first attack.

The Battery Recce Party at once set out on a recce of the Battery area (Bukit Panjang – Dairy Farm) and while in the area came under direct mortar fire from the enemy on the high ground to the west, necessitating completion of the Recce on foot until completely dark. Orders were issued for the deployment of the Battery and the B.C went forward to 12 Indian Infantry Brigade Headquarters for details of the fire plan and to report to the Commanding Officer. On arrival, rifle and automatic fire and either mortar bombs or grenades were heard some 400-500 yards to the north and during the discussion with 12 Indian Infantry Brigade officers, this fire became appreciably closer. It was ascertained that the favourable tactical situation as depicted earlier that evening was far from the true facts and that the 12 Indian Infantry Brigade was far below anticipated strength – also the attack set down for 1800 hours that day had not taken place. The B.C. and adjutant were sent to H.Q.R.A.A. to report the actual situation and in leaving the Brigade Headquarters came under considerable s.a. fire.

Meanwhile 30th Field Battery had partly come into action as ordered and while the B.C. was at H.Q.R.A.A. had been withdrawn on the Commanding Officer's orders. B.H.Q having been driven from its position by s.a. fire at close range and what remained of 12th Indian Infantry Brigade having been also driven back. The Battery was halted on the road, south Bukit Timah, where it rested until approximately 0300 hours next morning.

Hospital Hill and Holland Road – February 11

About 0300 hours orders were given to reoccupy the position along Farrer Road and this was carried out before dawn. Just after first light the Commanding Officer visited B.H.Q and issued orders for deployment of the Battery on the area around Hospital Hill to the north of Newton-Circus. In the course of the morning, two separate positions were taken up in this locality but no firing was done from either. During the afternoon, following a recce, the Battery took up further positions in the vicinity of Holland Road, south of Newton-Circus and remained there for the night. These positions were occupied in anticipation of further infantry withdrawals, but the line held and the howitzers remained out of range. Air activity by the enemy during the day was intense and bombing very heavy. At this stage snipers armed with rifles, who were either enemy soldiers who had penetrated our lines, or natives with enemy sympathies, became active in unit areas and parties had to be detailed to attempt to deal with them. After the first rather disconcerting effect on morale the risk was regarded more lightly and had little effect on future operations and movement.

About 2100 hours B.C. received orders to make a recce on area rear Pierce Road and to the south and southwest of Bukit Besar early on the morrow with the object of bringing Battery into action to support 22 Australian Infantry Brigade Group.

Pierce and Holland Roads – February 12

Battery Recce group left at first light to make above Recce and during the morning separately at long intervals the Battery moved into action: B.H.Q in a cottage about 500 yards northwest of the corner of Pierce and Holland Roads. E Troop 300 yards south of B.H.Q and G Troop a further 400 yards south. The remaining 18 pounder gun from C Troop was brought forward and utilized for anti-tank defense at the corner of Holland and Pierce Roads. Personnel from C and D Troops (now without guns) and B Echelon were brought forward to each as perimeter guards in the Battery area and to deal with snipers who were still active.

Several tasks were fired by each Troop, mainly after dark and in the course of the night G Troop was subjected to heavy mortar bombardments after their position had been illuminated by a peculiar white flare, the origins of which was not discovered. Mortar bombs burst right amongst the guns and all around the area but casualties were surprisingly light considering the intensity and accuracy of the fire.

Jervois Road – February 13

In the early hours of the morning orders were received to move the Battery some distance to the southeast a further infantry withdrawal being imminent. The battery moved at once and after a recce in the dark the C.P.O being sent ahead for the purpose was brought into action off Jervois Road – E Troop to the North, and G Troop to south of that road in Bishop's Gate Road B.H.Q on the corner of Jervois Road and Holt Street. Several high level "pattern" bombing[s] were experienced during the morning but no bombs fell in actual Troop areas. Only one task was fired from this position (E Troop). The Brigade was called – Regimental Headquarters about midday, and map marked with the perimeter into which the whole of the British forces were to draw. As this area did not include any part of the coastline or across thereto it was apparent that the force was either to fight to the last, try and break through – probably in small parties – or capitulate. In the early afternoon the B.C. was again sent for and given an area in Tanglin Barracks (inside the enclosed perimeter) into which to move the Battery. An immediate Recce was made (completed by the C.P.O on the B.C. being again required) and the Battery in the later afternoon, occupied positions as follows: E Troop in the northeast corner of the Barracks area near Pierce Road; G Troop in the central northern portion of the area and B.H.Q about the centre of the area – B.C. sent to Headquarters 22 Australian Infantry Brigade as Artillery Liaison Officer where he remained until 2100 hours on 15th February.

Each Troop was obliged to have a zone of fire of approximately 100 degrees with the zero line 290 degrees, to cover the whole of the western half of the complete perimeter. Two Observation Posts were established – one on Bukit Besar and the other on a knoll 150 to the north of Tanglin Barracks, both given limited observation over the area to the west and south west.

Owing to the steady loss of telephones, signal wire and other signalling equipment in the course of the campaign, communications became a matter of some difficulty and “party lines” had to be resorted to.

Tanglin Barracks – February 14

Both troops in same position. Orders were received that no targets were to be engaged unless fire thereon could be observed. As the Regimental Observation Post had only limited observation and the “party” telephone communications to Battalion and Company Headquarters made observations through Company Commanders in forward areas (a practice successfully employed on several prior occasions) an altogether too slow and unwieldy procedure, there was very little shooting, although tasks not within required category were being constantly called for by Infantry units. The lack of artillery support, dictated no doubt by the fear of a shortage with no hope of a replenishment, appeared to adversely effect to some extent the morale of the Infantry calling for fire.

Snipers were again active and enemy air activity continuous. The Battery area suffered heavy artillery bombardment and air bombers during most of the day with heavy casualties.

On this day, the enemy cut the water supply service and only the water in the soldier’s water bottles was available with no prospects of replenishment. Only limited food and ammunition supplies also remained although there was more than sufficient food to outlast the water.

February 15

Position of battery unchanged. Heavy enemy artillery fire and air bombing were again experienced with further casualties. The position as to limitation of firing was the same as the previous day and many requested tasks by the Infantry could not be undertaken.

During the afternoon warning of a possible “Cease Firing” order later was received. This came to hand at approx. 1900 hours, to operate from 2030 hours with the advice that the whole of the British Forces were capitulating and that in terms of the tentative agreement made, all war equipment and arms were to be preserved intact and handed over.

After the specified hour had passed all guns and vehicles were assembled in a Division Artillery Parade on the Golf links of Tanglin Barracks, in which area the Battery spent the rest of the night.

Ammo. approximately 26,000 Rounds. Battery

(The following pages taken from a separate diary to the above)

17th January '42 to 15th February 1942

17th January 1942

At last after days of anticipation and excitement the word to move came through. For weeks I had been trying to reason how long it would be before we would go into action and I knew if the enemy kept moving at the rate they were then moving, it would only be a matter of days, and although it seems a ridiculous thing to say, I was frightened they might be stopped before they arrived in our defensive lines (purely my ignorant ego which was badly shattered after the first day of action). Stopping them was impossible, they came down the mainland like a tornado, meeting no opposition from the air or sea and doing as they liked.

The Regiment was to pull out from Kluang (our battle station for the past month) during the early hours of the morning. Our Troop 'C' was on the road at the appointed time, but it was daylight before the Regiment was ready to move. Daylight is a very dangerous time for a convoy to move, especially one eight or nine miles long, and I anticipated a thrilling trip. We trekked all day and only once was the aircraft signal given, the planes being miles away to our right. Nippon this day missed a great opportunity to wipe off the face of the earth the 2/15th Field Regiment. There was quite a lot of traffic on the road north, mostly Army with a sprinkling of civilians. During a halt I had a yarn with the last white civilian I saw for many weeks. He was an Australian and came from Kuala Lumpur, where he had been employed as a tin mining Engineer. He said he was the last white civilian to leave and the place was in chaos, the Japs expected any minute. He cracked a bottle of beer, wished us luck, told us we had an impossible task in front of us, and continued on his way to Singapore.

We pulled into a harbourage at Geruang just before dusk. Sixty five battery had gone to a different harbourage and later from there to the ---- on the west coast.

With the darkness came the rain, never in my life had I seen rain to equal it and in no time everything was drenched and soaked including ourselves. A very uncomfortable night was put in. Guards and patrols being necessary, although the night was that dark it was impossible to see your hand; much bad language was hurled at all and sundry. Morning came as a pleasant relief.

10th January 1942

A very busy day for the brengun carriers and the winch trucks dragging out the tractors, guns, and vehicles which had sunk in the mud during the night.

The B.C. & G.P.O. had left early and recced a position for the Troops and guns at Batu Anom. The G.P.O. coming back and picking up the rest of the guns, took us to the troop area which was on the side of a hill about 40 yards right of the railway line. I picked up my own platform after a considerable amount of trouble due to the nature of the ground, and in the afternoon returned to the harbourage. From there we moved the guns and vehicles to another harbourage about 150 yards from the gun positions.

As there were signs of air activity the guns were left in harbourage whilst we took our gun crews with digging tools and camouflage nets to the gun positions. The nets were put up, the pits being beneath them. At last light we brought the guns into position on their platforms. This was no mean job as the track was next to impossible, also the hillside had been terraced and young rubber planted causing the ground to become very soft and boggy. During this operation the rain started again and another uncomfortable night was experienced, sleep was practically impossible, thousands, I should say millions of mosquitoes made their presence felt. There was no shelter available and again we received a soaking.

11th January 1942

Very hot day and our clothes dried out of rain but as quickly soaked in sweat. There was still a lot to do, the gun pit had to be completed, the digging was hard and the road out to be made and camouflaged in case of a hasty move. I worked the gun crew in shifts thereby giving them as much rest as possible, sleep was impossible, the mosquitoes thirsting for more blood, probably favouring ours to the Boong (native) blood they were used to. Enemy recon planes were noticed frequently from our position.

12th January 1942

Same position and able to take things easy although always under cover as an odd recon plane would fly over now and then. Just before dark we received the order 'Prepare to Advance'. The guns were timbered up and taken to the wagon lines.

At 7.30pm we moved out, our destination being west of Gemas. No lights were allowed and the night was pitch dark, Doug Munro's tractor and gun running off the road into a ditch. This held us up for a considerable time as everything had to be done in the dark. At last the gun was back on the road and we began the worst nightmare drive possible to experience. At this period the troops and transport from the North were madly rushing back, Indian drivers in a panic, some with their headlights full on, some with dimmers and some with parking lights. Halts were numerous caused by crashes and piling up of the returning vehicles. The glaring headlights did not improve matters for us and frequently following vehicles would smash into the gun. To counteract this a cigarette was kept alight inside the tractors which acted as a stop light. After what seemed ages we eventually arrived at our Troop position with two casualties to vehicles. On arrival at the position I went with the G.P.O. to pick our platforms. It was pitch dark and the platforms were chosen by luck and information from the G.P.O. who had seen the area before dark. This was necessary as gun pits had to be dug that night.

The guns were kept near 2/30 Battalion Head Quarters and taking our tools we proceeded to the selected gun position about 300 yards away. Luckily, I had left a man there and was able to find the spot. By this time we were all extremely tired and the prospect of digging the pit was not one to our liking. This job proved one of the most heartbreaking and impossible tasks we had been called on to do; the rain had started to come down. Every inch dug had to be felt by hand, the digging was very sticky and heavy clay. After hours of hard work all that seemed to be done was a few scattered holes and the job became impossible without a light of some nature, but lights of any nature were absolutely forbidden, also smoking. The officers and staff were sleeping back in the waggon at the Battalion

Head Quarters and so the men and I were ready to drop. I Decided to try and contact one of the officers with the story and get permission to await first light. I started off in the direction of HQ and had travelled about 20 yards when from out of the dark a voice called 'Halt' and sounded as it were meant, also a bayonet was stuck against my ribs. Well, I just about collapsed. It was an Infantry Guard, he asked for the 'password', which up till then had not been given to us, due do doubt to an oversight on somebody's part. After a considerable time I convinced him who I was. This happened at least three more times and believe me on a very dark night it is not the most soothing thing for the nerves. To put the finishing touch to this episode, I found myself in a small gully and whilst making my way out something slashed me across the face, I jumped back and then the mess started, I was trapped in the barbed-wire erected around one of the 30th Battalion Company H.Q. It took me what seemed ages to free myself from the tangle I was in, my face, arms and hands, in fact, practically every part of me was torn and bleeding.

The last experience decided me that orders or no orders the pit would have to wait for first light. I eventually arrived back at the gun position, told the crew to lie down, which they did, mud and all, and slept.

At the first sight of dawn, which was about two hours later, I woke my crew and as the light improved we were able to complete enough of the pit to receive the gun. Camouflage net was erected and just on daylight the gun was placed (after a considerable amount of bogging) in the pit and our tractor put under rubber trees and camouflaged, about 20 yards from the gun. I looked a funny sight covered in caked blood and mud and giving the impression of someone having gone over me with a rake, the gun crew still have a laugh at my expense and consider it one of the humorous incidents of the campaign, but that night to me was anything but humorous, although now I join in the laugh.

13th January 1942

Rained all day making the digging and completion of the gun pit very hard. The pit soon filled with water and had to be continually drained and bailed. The surrounding ground was extremely boggy causing the wheels of vehicles to sink. The guns were laid out on their zero line and our tasks made out. There was no time for rest and everybody in the crew was very tired and worn out.

We received a visit from the R.A.A.C. (Royal Australian Artillery Command) our C.O. and our Battery Command, they were very concerned about the bad condition of the troop position and I was asked if I considered it would be possible to get the guns out if necessary. I informed them that it would be possible if the weather cleared and did not get worse but I thought even then it would take a considerable time and the winch hauling gear might be found necessary. They seemed to think there would be plenty of time, for as soon as we fired our tasks we are to pull out. (Even the best laid plans of mice and men often go astray.)

During the day the P.O explained the situation and put us in the picture.

The Story: At a place called Sunoal Gemenchen which is about three miles in advance of our position the Engineers had mined a bridge across a small river. The bridge was to be blown after a certain

number of the enemy had been allowed to cross. These were to be ambushed in a cutting by 'B' Company of the 2/30th Battalion, who were in position for that purpose. Our Troop Commander had gone forwards taking with him two of our signals to a position occupied by 'B' Company Command and the Engineer's Command. When the bridge had been blown and the ambush put into operation, our Troop was to be notified by T.L. from the forward Observation Post and we were to bring fire to bear on the opposite side of the bridge where it was anticipated the enemy troops transport would concertina. We were to search and sweep the roadway and considerable damage was visualized. On completion of the task the troop was to withdraw to a position east of Gemas. 'D' Troop who were about 5,000 yard behind our present position, and were also to fire on the same target were to continue until we had taken up our new position. When 'D' Troop had finished the 29th Battery was to take up the task and continue while 'D' Troop withdrew.

The position our troop occupied was on the edge of the rubber overlooking a cleared plantation recently planted with young rubber. This clearing rose slightly, fell away rather gradually, rose again for about 300 yards, then thick rubber. The railway line was on our left flank and the roadway on our right. Both the railway line and portion of the road would be covered by our guns. The portion of the roadway which was constructed near the end of the cutting and only what passed the roadblock could be engaged. The whole of the roadway was covered by two anti-tank guns placed on both sides of the road a little to the rear of our gun positions.

Rough Sketch of Gun Position of 'C' Troop 2/30 Infantry Battalion 'A', 'D', and 'C' Company West Gemas. 12/1/42 to 15/1/42. **[Diagrams in original here.]**

14th January 1942

Rained during the night, but stopped during the early hours and weather cleared. Was able to get some sleep which was sorely needed only broken by our turns at guard.

Prepared ammunition and did maintenance to the gun during the morning. All day we were on our toes, expecting any moment the order to 'Take Post'; it came through about 3p.m. and what a thrill. This was the moment I had looked forward to for over eighteen months. We waited and waited, nerves all taut and most unexplained feelings were running through my body. The orders we were expecting did not come and 'Stand Easy' was given in their stead. Something had gone wrong, we thought we had heard the explosion of the charge blowing the bridge. Prior to this a few seemingly natives (due to their dress) riding bicycles had been rounded up and sent to the rear. They were Japs dressed as natives. 'B' Company telling them to go past the ambush knowing they would be picked up at our position.

It was some time later that we heard the story of this ambush and the reason for our not receiving the order to fire. It appears that the enemy first approached the bridge in small numbers mounted on bicycles, they were let pass and before a sufficient body large enough to ambush came across the total number let through in small parties was much greater than anticipated and would outnumber the forward Company who were to do the ambush. Eventually a body of about 800 riding six abreast on bicycles came over and the bridge was then blown sending up approximately 150 Japs with it. The

ambush was carried out according to plan and very few of the enemy in that body survived. Unluckily, some of the first small batches discovered our telephone lines heading from the Observation Post to Battalion HQ. and cut them before word had been passed back that the bridge had been blown. This happened about the same time as the message was sent back and the Observation Post was under the impression that the information had gone through. The Observation Post was evacuated as soon as the bridge was blown. Maintenance signals were sent out from the H.Q. to repair the break and found that the enemy had set up automatic machine guns at the breaks and they had to return. If the word had have come through great damage would have been done to the enemy as their transport and men were piled up in thousands on the other side of the bridge and with 4 troops, 16 guns, pounding into them it is impossible to guess how much damage would have been done. This broken communication caused us considerable trouble during the rest of the campaign so evidently the lesson that should have been learnt was not fully appreciated. I also consider that lack of communication played its part in allowing the enemy to land on Singapore Island. This weakness of ours must have been obvious to the enemy as they made a point of always concentrating on our lines and destroying them too frequently. It was three days later that 'B' Company were able to rejoin their Battalion due to the considerable opposition met with them, the enemy they had let pass, apparently the number was much in excess than anticipated and they were forced to detour and made for Gemas proper. Our Troop Commander went with 'B' Company. He had a very lucky escape, a bullet passing through the corner of his mouth knocking out some of the teeth, damaging some more and out the other corner of this mouth, both corners being torn and burnt.

Patrols from 'D', 'A', and 'C' Companies were sent out and the enemy contacted desultory fighting continued during the night. Guards on the gun were done in pairs by the crew and myself.

15th January 1942

Was there ever a stranger predicament than we were in with no apparent reason; a troop of artillery between the two front lines and only about 300 yards separating the two fronts.

The day opened with spasmodic fire from both sides which gradually increased until a large volume of fire, both from snipers and automatics, both sides using them freely. Up to this time there did not appear to be any casualties around our area. The first casualty being a reinforcement who had just joined the Battalion, accidentally shooting himself in the hand when the patrol of which he was one started out, he did not receive much sympathy. Early morning patrol had accounted for some of the enemy, one patrol crediting themselves with 50, including two officers. They were highly delighted and very pleased with themselves.

About 7.30a.m. a rumbling noise was heard and then the sharp boom of a gun of small calibre; it was a tank, which had arrived well down the road, the anti-tank guns had gone into action and a duel developed, the tank eventually pulling into the rubber, it was only a small tank and apparently it had decided to await the arrival of its larger brothers who were coming along in the rear!

The roadway bounding the open country had been blocked by a roadblock placed on the eastern side of a culvert which ran up to the large rubber on the enemy's west end. This culvert obscured our view

from our gun position and the only portion of the roadway visible to us was east of the road block. This applied to all the guns and to see what was going on it would be necessary to leave the gun pits and move towards the road, practically an impossibility at this period as the rain was falling pretty thick about our position and to move out would have been asking for it.

Both sides now started in earnest. The main force of the Japs arriving and with them their mortars. The place became a bedlam and it was a case of myself and crew seeing how close to the ground we could get, did we appreciate the gun pit we had so thoroughly cursed? There is no doubt all of us would have been killed if the pit had not been there. The rubber trees also proved our salvation, the mortar bombs and shells exploding in them showering us with branches, leaves, splintered wood and spent fragments of casings which burnt like a searing iron if they happened to fall on us. Our parapet and gun shield collected quite a deal of lead and scrap iron. Once there was a swish followed by a heavy thud and a mortar bomb landed about four feet away but failed to explode. We all expected to get hit and we would get sort of surprised when we looked around and saw we were all intact. Spurts of earth would run along the parapet and there was no mistaking what was causing them, the knowledge helped me to hug the good earth closer.

Hell certainly seemed to be let loose and it was then we received the order to 'Take Post'. Fire Orders were given and we went straight into 'gun fire', 10 sec. intervals (when we started to fire everything else seemed to quieten down). We fired two rounds, our target being an enemy concentration, map spotted by a recently returned patrol. My gun got the first shell away by a fraction of a second (Dud Munro owes me One Pound from the result) and from then on the firing sounded like salvos. From later information this shoot did a terrific amount of damage and we got right onto the target and the Japs will not believe that it was unobserved shooting. We all felt much better after the shoot and got a little more cocky.

With a rumble the big tanks arrived and went into action, some of them going down to the road block, four more moving down the road at one time. The anti-tank guns opened up and clinches were fought. I could not see from where I was, and determined to have a look I sneaked down towards the road taking advantage of cover arrived just in time to see a big tank burst into flames, there were then three other large tanks disabled along the road. One of the anti-tank guns had received a direct hit putting it out of action and causing quite a few casualties.

I thought Dud Munro's gun might have been able to get in a shot, but the road-block did not allow the tanks to come into his sights, he was very disappointed, the same applied to Rus West's gun.

The anti-tank's bag for the day was seven large tanks, a good day's work; the balance of the tanks going into the rubber and taking cover. One of these tanks being very unlucky was caught by a million to one chance. It had just taken cover and only a small portion of the turret was visible. The Mortar Sgt. controlling a section of mortars had climbed a tree (a very precarious position and dangerous) and from there directed the mortar fire. Noticing this tank he decided to range his mortars onto it; he gave the corrections for line and range, one mortar to fire. At that moment the tank crew decided to open the turret and the first round scored a bull, right down the turret and up it went in a

sheet of flame. Well I've heard and seen some excited people in my time at race meetings, football etc., but never in my life have I heard or seen anyone to compare with this Sgt. and from then on he kept us in fits of laughter and believe me, although it wasn't the time or place for laughter. It was pretty hot again with quite an amount of automatic fire coming from the flanks and the breastwork of the gun pits were collecting quite a lot. It's very fascinating to lie down and watch the lines of spurting mud above your head knowing that there was nothing to fear from them providing you kept low in the pit. When you see them coming towards you and firing from a dive bomber its not fascinating, it's paralyzing. There is nothing I know that gave men the blue funk more than that; you know that you must keep where you are, for as sure as you move you are gone. Not by bullets, but bombs. They fire their machine guns in the direction they think you are with the idea of setting panic, at the same time they release their bombs and God help anyone up and running for cover. Whilst you are flat on the ground and not higher than where the bomb lands and of course providing the bomb does not score a direct hit, you are more than reasonably safe. It is a different thing if you are definitely a machine gun target, too small to waste a bomb on ,then it's a case of do your best. It had become too hot for this Mortar Sergeant and we had to shift.

'Take Post' came through, this time it [w]as a 'close target' of harassing fire, 10 rounds of troop fire, 5 second intervals. I am not sure of the range but I know it was a reduced charge, I think about 700-800 yards. 'D' Company had gone in with bayonets and believe me the Japs did not appreciate the cold steel, their squeals could be plainly heard and it sounded like pig killing day at the slaughter yards. The counter attack was very successful and great damage was done by 'D' Company and our guns. As the men returned most of their faces wore broad grins and I am sure they thoroughly enjoyed themselves. This attack was made on the left flank.

From our immediate front and right flank bedlam again broke open. Now and then enemy mortar positions could be observed over open sights. Then God help the mortar crew, its an awesome sight to see rubber trees, mortar etc. just lift in the air fractionally before you appreciate the gun has fired. The 25 pounders are exceptionally accurate due no doubt to the marvellous telescopic sights they are equipped with. I should imagine they are more accurate than a rifle.

It was whilst he was directing his gun roughly by this trail, onto a mortar target, that Dud Munro, my cobbler, collected his, a burst of automatic fire coming from the right flank passed through his elbow and into his groin. I did not get an opportunity to see him again but am certainly looking forward to seeing him back in Aussie. As soon as I heard he had been hit I went to the rear to try and see him, but they had already taken him back to the dressing and clearing station. On my way back the Japs 4" mortar bombs were coming over pretty thick, one having just burst near a waggon and wounding the driver. His mates, thinking the position was unhealthy, dived into a drain close by, there was a swish, I dropped to the ground and the bomb seemed to land fair into the drain at the same time as this chap. I expected him to be blown to atoms, he was certainly knocked about, his stomach was burst open and he looked a terrible mess but still alive (I believe he is still alive today), both he and his mates were taken to the dressing station.

I arrived back to the gun position just in time to see three planes coming our way, they circled over us for quite a while and there was no mistaking whose planes they were and what their job was and they had evidently been sent for. The tanks had failed, the enemy advance held up and our fire was doing considerable damage. Our driver, Lang Campbell, had somehow managed to make some tea (our tractor was equipped with a primer and believe me it was a Godsend) and with the help of army biscuits and bully we were going to have something to eat. I felt extremely hungry, notwithstanding the fact that my stomach is usually easily upset and after seeing blood, gore and guts I marvelled that I could even think of food. By this time I had settled down and it seemed to me that this sort of thing had always been part of my life. I think everyone gets that feeling after the initial fear hours and it is only when things become very personal that the nervous and sinking feeling comes back and that is usually relieved by giving vent to what you personally think of the dirty lousy yellow fellow with the smile on his face, knowing he is safe, sitting in the plane. No-one hears you of course but yourself, and perhaps your mates, but they are usually adding theirs, it helps a lot and you feel when its all over a satisfaction of putting it over them (some poor devils of course get theirs and their feelings are totally different) and I feel like saying, 'See you yellow b____, you b ____ well missed'. I'm afraid I was unable to enjoy the meal, for after circling around they made height, knew what they intended to do, and went about doing it. First one turned and came down in a dive straight for my gun position, but anti-aircraft gunners let go and so did the Jap gunners. It was a disconcerting feeling but I watched it practically all the way, it zoomed over the gun but did not drop any eggs, hard on its tail came another, he did drop some. I saw them leave and thought it was finish for us, they landed back in the rubber. This went on, one diving down as the other zoomed up, the three keeping it up, machine gunning and bombing as they came. I gave, when possible, a running description to my gun crew and I told them when to duck and set a very good example of ducking myself. Most of the bombs fell in the rubber and in the vicinity of Battalion Headquarters, no damage was done, the machine gun bullets were very close and uncomfortable. Every time they circled I hoped that it was the last and just as I was beginning to think they were going to stay until they got us, they left but not for long. The damage done by them was negligible, but they sure play up with the nervous system.

It was decided that 'D' Company would make another counter attack, this time on the left front. They formed up at the rear of my gun, fixed bayonets, deployed and at a walk left the rubber and started across open ground. There was very little cover but they used to advantage the ground formation. The enemy seemed to be holding their fire, although isolated rifle and bursts of automatic fire was evident. The enemy's shooting must have been bad as I personally did not notice any effects. These 2/30th chaps are a cool lot – very well trained, they are considered the best trained troops in Malaysia, no exceptions, thanks to the Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher, a most efficient officer. There was no hurry with them, they kept their formation and just casually walked across at the high part giving the impression that they were only taking a stroll. I imagine the leading line was about halfway across, the Japs were starting to throw things in earnest, when back arrived the planes. This was the first time I had seen planes using anti-personnel bombs, they are like grenades, they are thrown out by hand and they seem to have an unlimited supply and were certainly using them together with their machine guns. 'D' Company were forced to go to ground and there they stayed until the planes then turned their attention, machine guns and bombs onto us and HQ. 'D' Company started to

move forward again, but were recalled. Even when they came back their pace seemed to be casual and themselves unconcerned, calling out to one another if so and so was OK, if not where was he. I saw at least three turn to go back, one going back after he had reached the F.O.P. and brought back his cobbler who had a badly shattered leg.

I heard the orders passed back to the mortars to 'Cease Fire', and I knew that meant up mortars and move and I knew also that it would not mean forward. This order was later followed by another 'The Battalion will Retire'. Here was a pretty kettle of fish, the Battalion retiring and here we were not less than 300 yards from the enemy with no protection, no orders. I looked towards the other guns, Jim Callow and his crew were still at their post, but there appeared to be movement around the other two guns. Our Command Post had shifted its position early in the day, to a position behind a small hillock some 75 yards from our gun. I sent Roley McLean to our Command Post and instructed him to contact the G.P.O. and ascertain the position. He was away some time and in the interim the other crew had left, taking their sights and firing mechanisms etc. with them. They had no instructions so I decided to await the return of Roley at the same time keeping a watch on our front. A little later Roley arrived back with instructions to dismantle the sights and firing mech., leave the gun and get out. There was still plenty of stuff coming over and I was passing Jim Callow's tractor. I saw Ted Perry-Circuit (Jim's driver) still trying to get his tractor going, this was impossible as it had been hit by mortar bombs, the radiator smashed in, also the bonnet, it was badly knocked about. I made Ted leave it and come back with us. By this time everybody was on the move and all vehicles that were intact getting under way. I found the G.P.O. and asked him if the instructions regarding the gun were definite as I thought it possible that mine could be got out. My crew were all for having a try. The G.P.O. said OK we could give it a try and without hesitation every one of the crew made back to the gun, taking all possible cover, automatic fire from the flanks being very prominent.

Whilst Nev Merrifield, my coverer, and the rest of the crew got the gun ready I led up the tractor. The ground was still a quagmire and particular care had to be taken. I did not want to bog at this juncture. The movement must have attracted the Japs attention and the volume of fire increased, also the mortars starting slinging their muck. It was found impossible to get the gun out by the entrance of the pit owing to the boggy ground, so it was decided our only possible chance would be by hauling it over the side parapet, the ground on the side being much firmer. I directed the tractor to this spot and after a hell of a lot of manoeuvring coupled with a hell of a lot of luck, got it close enough to attach drag ropes. The crew worked like clockwork, taking no notice of what was coming our way and it seemed plenty, (how no one was hurt with the exception of a few lead splinters is beyond me and just one of those miracles). The tractor and the gun moved, gradually it arrived at the top of the parapet, then the drag rope broke, and back went the gun into the pit burying the muzzle into the mud and sticking its trail in the air. We all looked at each other; time was valuable and it either meant leave it or try again and all voted another try. I directed the tractor back into position again, we doubled the drag ropes and hooked in, we all held our breath and over the top it went.

I have frequently noticed that whilst one is doing something that occupies your mind and time doing it, your are oblivious to what is happening elsewhere and around you, but when the job is finished

once again you are conscious of all. This was now the case and we were anxious to get going, especially as what appeared to be a Jap patrol was moving across the young rubber about a hundred yards or a little more away and a little to our left (I have since learned it was a patrol and that they turned back and did not come into the rubber, due no doubt to the noise we made as we pulled out which satisfied them that the place was still occupied which no doubt they were trying to find out). Anyhow, they helped Lang Campbell to keep his foot on the accelerator and to this day I cannot understand how he manipulated the tractor and gun through the rubber trees. Once the gun did hit a tree with a thud and it was a touch and go whether it would right itself and turn turtle. It decided to continue with us.

All that was left in the area were a few vehicles which were damaged beyond use, three of our guns and Jim Callow's tractor. Attempts had been made to get the other guns out but it proved an impossible task and after stripping them a hand grenade was thrown onto them and they were then abandoned. Russ West salvaged his ammunition trailer.

Everybody with the exception of five or six infantry men with Tommy guns who were acting as rear guards had left. It was from one of these chaps Ross Madden, I later learned about the Jap patrol turning back. We picked up a pretty badly wounded man and I asked the rear party to come with us, they assured me they would be OK which I then doubted very much and thought they were more or less committing suicide. They called out something about tanks. I did not get the gist of what they said, but found out shortly after.

The entrance to the rubber was over a narrow bridge barely wide enough to take the tractor and necessitated a wide swing to gain the road (we had a fair amount of trouble negotiating the bridge coming into the position). The tractor has a big fault and that is a very small lock and without any obstruction the tractor would just about make the road. Unluckily or otherwise there were obstructions; someone had unloaded their hot-boxes on the other side of the road opposite the bridge. I thought it might be just possible to miss them. We were partly on the road with the gun still in the rubber when there was a bang, a whistle and a shell just missing the front of the tractor plowed the road up a few yards away. I looked and saw a tank on the road on the brow of the hill. I jumped onto the road, called out to Lang to bring the tractor. I ran to the hot-boxes (hot boxes are made of steel having a cavity between the inside and outside walls and are roughly about 3'6" x 2' x 2' and are fairly heavy) and started to move them off the road. There was another bang and the next thing I knew I was on the broad of my back and the hot boxes scattering all ways. Lang was able to turn the tractor enough to bring the gun into view, at the same time the crew jumped out of the back. Without firing another shot the tank withdrew into the rubber. The only conclusion I can come to is the tank crew seeing the gun and the gun crew jump out thought we were going into action and decided they had had enough of anti-tank guns for the day (Ross Madden told me later that they did not give us a dog's chance and it was beyond them why the tank cleared). The tank was not our only worry, it only took us a few seconds to get on the go again but not before the enemy started firing a 1/2" high velocity machine gun at us. About 50 yards away a 4 ton waggon had slewed partly off the road and blocking half of it from then on we had cover until we made the bend in the road. The tractor had collected it

in a few places and the gun shield stopped some. I think it was the shield that saved the crew, the hits on the tractor being high up. Our lucky star certainly shined on us, I expected some casualties in the rear of the tractor, but when we pulled up nobody had a scratch, only some I received from the hot boxes and contact with the road.

After travelling about a mile I noticed a staff van moving in front of us. It stopped and there was a general scatter from it, a plane was machine gunning the road. We stopped and it was all cleared country, we had to leave the gun and tractor on the road. Luckily there were numerous watercourses close to the road and we took cover in these, spreading as much as possible. The plane fired a burst, zoomed up and disappeared, no doubt out of ammunition. No damage was done to us, but further along the road the staff van seemed to have struck trouble. When we arrived up to them, it was found to be one of our vans driven by Bill Bryant. With him were Harry Hingst and at least twenty others, how they had been stacked in God only knows. A big percentage of them were wounded.

The car had three flat tyres and generally chopped about, no was hurt by the plane, all the wounded had come from West Gemas. The wounded and some of the others were transferred to our tractor and gun. The crew and non-wounded riding on the gun. I put old Don Bertram (an old digger from our Regiment) who had collected a fair lump of shrap in his leg and another chap who turned out to be one of the two men from the 3 ton waggon that had afforded us the protection on the road. It had been bowled over by the tank, killing the driver and wounding this chap pretty badly in the side. He was able to get around the corner and found Bill's van picking up walking wounded when they had been doing for some time. Nev Merrifield transferred to the waggon and he, Harry Hingst and Bill drove with the flat tyres (they were machine gunned twice more before reaching Gemas and the van finally had to be abandoned).

We pushed along with our load and soon left the van behind. When we arrived at Gemas bridge we found the Engineers ready to blow the bridge and were waiting for us to come, they were on the point of blowing it when we appeared. I explained about the staff van and they again decided to wait as long as it was possible.

Half a mile further on a road branched from the main road to the left and I noticed in the distance a convoy moving. Knowing our B.HQ. was to the left of Gemas I decided to take the branch road and follow the convoy. Once again a plane was seen machine-gunning the road, we were still in open country and it was necessary to leave the gun and tractor and take cover in the watercourses. The plane continued down the main road and did not then bother us. We mounted and started off, Lang putting on the pace. It was just as well as the plane came looking for us but by this time we had gained rubber, pulled off the road into cover, the plane circled for a while and then left.

It was here we found the balance of our troop, they also had taken cover. The Battery Commander Major Ball came over to us, he was very elated to see us, he shook hands, congratulated and thanked us. Everybody was pleased to see us, they were beginning to think we had stayed behind. The wounded were given as much attention as possible and the convoy proceeded to 30th Battery Headquarters. Battery H.Q. seemed surprised to see the troop, they thought we had been wiped out.

After having something to eat which believe me was welcome, also a change of clothes. The wounded were taken to the clearing station. The Battery Captain, Captain Lawson, came and shook hands and added his congratulations. The roll was called and checks made, we were down quite a number, some could be accounted for and some could not, but within the next three days all were accounted for, quite a number wounded by no one dead or missing. Our loss of equipment being 3 25-pound guns; 3 ammunition trailers; 1 gun tractor (Marmon Halrington); 1 Battery Staff van and 1 motor cycle. It was then only about 5p.m., all this crammed into a few hours about 24 in all, to me the morning had passed years ago. Our baptism had been a severe one and I think for Artillery a unique one. To this day no reason has been given us as to why and for what purpose we were kept in so forward a position for so long a time. I think it was just one of those things that happened in a first campaign.

The troop then moved to a harbourage East of Batu Anam, this move being done at dusk. It was dark when we entered the harbourage. We were worn out and tired and just laid down besides our tractor and went to sleep, only waking for our turn at guard.

My gun crew are the coolest unconcerned coves possible to find, in fact many a time during the campaign I've found it necessary to bawl them out even to take the necessary cover. Bold. Nev Merrifield, a younger cove, 19, full of spirit, always wanting to take his rifle and go out to have a look what was going on. Old Jim Lee (32) the layer, a fatalist never rattled, took everything as it came with the opinion, 'if it was meant to be, it was meant to be'. Cyril Pitchford (30) a great cove, marvellous worker, smart and heaps of guts, no fool but plenty of appreciation. Roley McLean (28) (Solicitor in civil life), well he just would not be put out or bothered by the Japs or the King. Always did his job in his own time no matter whether on parade ground or in a serious position it was all the same to him. Allan Shaw (22) as good a scrounger as possible to find. Unconcerned about everything but food. One of those coves that will make a meal out of nothing any old time. Lang Campbell (29) my driver, a great help and piloted us out of many tough corners. They all did an excellent job and I certainly appreciated them. Nev Merrifield as my coverer was a power of strength and help.

16th January 1942

During the early hours of the morning our tractors together with my gun and the trailer moved out of the harbourage and left for Ordnance where they were to pick up new guns and return with them at dusk.

Our harbourage was in a narrow belt of thick rubber bounded on two sides and front by marsh and jungle with the main road running through it. The main road crossed the marsh which was about a mile wide and during the day proved a hunting ground for enemy machine-gunning planes. There was a native house situated in the rubber and we were able to have a good sluice with water from the well. During the morning six planes circled the rubber looking for movement, but we were very careful and they did not bother us. It was in the afternoon a plane flying very high, obviously a recon plane swooped down very low over the road near the entrance to the harbourage. As no transport had passed or any signs of any coming at the time I got inquisitive and decided to see if any tracks were visible leading in and likely to put our position away. It was then I first saw the method used by 5th

Columnists; opposite the entrance to the harbourage there, palm fronds had been laid on the road in the form of an arrow with the head pointing to the harbourage. The plane had evidently been on the lookout for such signs and had gone to bring the bombing planes. I removed the palms, but as all the officers had gone on different recces, there was nothing to do but wait for them to return and hope that they get back before the bombers. I told the troops and some of them dug slit trenches just in case.

One of the gunners reported to me that he had seen movement in some tall trees in the jungle about 200 yards away and commanding a good view into the harbourage. We both went to the edge of the marsh and he pointed out the trees to me. I also saw distinct movement and shapes. With two other men I decided to investigate, knowing that either 5th Columnists or infiltration troops were around the area. As the marsh continued back for some miles, the only possible approach was across it, so picking the narrowest portion but still keeping the position in sight, with a rifle each we started, taking advantage of what cover offered, which was practically nil. The closer we got, more certain was I that it was men, whether Indians or Japs we had to find out. After going a little further I gave a nervous laugh and felt a great relaxation of my nervous system. I was beginning to think who ever they were were holding their fire and at any minute would let us have it and I was just considering going to ground (which was mud) to see what would happen. Just as I made up my mind a black mass of arms, bodies and legs swung from one tree to another. There were large black gibbon monkeys, they gave me and no doubt the other two chaps, a few bad minutes.

When we arrived back Harry Hingst and ----- Martin were there. I explained the position regarding the arrow on the road and it was decided to shift our position, irrespective of light, although it was well on in the afternoon, to another harbourage and a few miles further back, using the staff vans and breakdowns. It was as well that we did, for not very long after, six enemy planes came over and after there was not much of our first harbourage left after they had finished. From that time on a strict lookout was kept for any signs of 5th Columnist activities near our future harbourage and positions: patrols making the rounds every hour or so.

During the night our new (the only trouble being the newness had worn off some 20 odd years before) guns arrived, they were Mark 4-18 pounders. We were all disappointed in getting 18 pounders but not nearly so disappointed as we were later. After some trouble getting them into the harbourage, the night being very dark, we eventually settled down for the night but not forgetting our guard duties. As usual we slept in our boots and clothes on a ground sheet with our slickers covering and that is how (when we are lucky enough to get any sleep) we slept until the show was over.

17th January 1942

All day we spent on the guns, cleaning them, checking oil [---?] and where necessary recharging them, greasing, oiling, putting the gun back, testing sights, dinos[?], range drums, and getting things into shape. We also checked ammo and stores. It was well into the afternoon before we finished doing it. The guns were in a disgraceful state and I thought that if that was all they could give us God help us, as the Command evidently could not. Any respect I had for Ordnance disappeared that day and I have had less and less since. I believe, as I was personally told by one of the Mortar crew, that the 2/30 had the misfortune to lose a 3" mortar and when one was sent from Ordnance to replace it, it

arrived just as it left the factory, caked in grease and it took the Mortar crew hours to get it in working order. The Ordnance to us proved worse than any 5th Columnist both during and after the campaign.

During the day many suspicious natives were picked up, some obviously 5th Columnists and a fair sprinkling of Japs. Some tried to escape and paid the penalty, the rest were sent back under escort.

Finally we were ready and at dusk the G.P.O. took the Number Ones to our new gun positions just east of Gemas. The position we were to occupy was to be vacated by B. Troop of 29 Battery. They had fired from this position all day and received back quite a lot of hate from the Japs.

For the last two nights and day the A.T.T. on this sector had given the Japs hell and at one time drove them back 7 miles and losing contact. The Japs had now brought up 6" guns and counter Battery work was in progress. 'B' Troop were happy to hand over and it did not look as if it was going to be too comfortable. The craters these 6" shells made was plenty. Our guns arrived in the dark and 'B' Troop pulled out.

We were not going to open fire until 2 a.m. It was filthy dark and after working like madmen putting the guns in, putting up the nets (as we expected to fire well into the next day) and carrying ammunition. The ammo trucks were over 400 yards away, they would not bring them up any further and as there were about 2000 rounds to carry in the dark, it was no light task. Every now and then there would be a boom, a swish, a thump, the ground would violently vibrate as would the heart. They were falling about 300 yards to the right of us but we expected them to alter their line when we opened up.

Our guns were laid out and we just lay down near the gun waiting for 'Take Post' which was to start a predicted shoot from map references. At last the orders came down and we started on our programme. We went straight into gun fire each gun having its individual task.

I knelt at the side of the trail and reported 'Ready'. 'Fire' was given and I passed on the order to my gun. The next thing I knew I was on the broad of my back, my face burning, unable to see and with a strong odor of fumes and burnt hair in my nose. Cyril Pitchford, my Number Two, was calling out "Who opened the B_____ breech?" No one could see and all were dazed. My ears were ringing like mad (they are still ringing but I have become used to it. The Ear Specialist at Changi said they would continue to do so, the drums having burst, nothing can be done about them). The gun on my left and the gun on my right both refused to run out, even drag ropes would not budge them; both were reported out of action. My gun appeared to be OK, so we decided to fire again leaving only the layer, Jim Lee, on the gun: the rest of the crew told to stand clear. When the gun was again fired I saw that the breech flew open at the instant of discharge, allowing the blast flame to shoot out the breech well past the trail, again we were temporarily blinded. I reported the matter to the G.P.O. hoping our shells had not fallen short into our own Infantry lines. The G.P.O. ordered me to cease firing, and that meant three out of the four guns out of action. Russ West's, the only gun able to fire, had only fired seven rounds when the order came through from Battery to 'Cease Fire' and prepare to move, and what a job the moving proved to be. The tractors had gone to the waggon lines about 400 yards away and in the

pitch dark had to be located and led up to the guns and loaded with approx. 500 rounds per tractor. The only possible way to lead them was by a lighted cigarette cupped between the hands and held behind the back. By this method it would bring the tractors along a few yards, again make a recce of the track, bring it along another few yards and so on until the gun position was reached. It took hours. When the ammo was loaded there was no room inside the tractor for the crew who had to walk picking up boxes of ammo as they fell out due to the bumpy uneven ground. I walked in the front finding the tracks onto the main road using the cigarette method. It was a great strain on us all, the driver having more than his share. Dawn broke before we found the road and the crew climbed aboard and hanging on anywhere it was possible, some riding on the trailer.

18th January 1942

As the day opened so did the Jap Arty in earnest and it sounded like cracker day magnified a million times. They were pounding blazes out of somewhere and we were heading towards that somewhere, Batu Anam, which we had to pass through. When we arrived they were falling thick and the town was starting to burn. All convoy speed and regulations were thrown to the wind. Lang Campbell drove like a fiend possessed. We got through the town alright but the Jap Observation Box must have observed us on the road and the 6" guns switched from the town and started searching the road. Every time one landed with their terrifying thump the tractor and gun seemed to lift from the ground. They did not register a hit but some very close misses. We took a track to the left nearly capsizing whilst taking it and went into a harbourage some distance away from the roadway. Everybody was disgusted and letting off steam.

During the morning the Captain Artillery (Captain Dahl) and his assistant Lieutenant Ernie Wade arrived to inspect the guns. Worn valves I think was the trouble with the other two guns but other than the treads appearing to be worn on the breech block my gun appeared to be OK. The other two guns were temporarily repaired and it was decided to try mine again whilst Captain Dahl was present.

A new troop position had been recced and although it was still light we pulled out of the harbourage and went to the position which was not very far from the harbourage, picked out our gun positions, laid the guns out on their Zero line, put up our nets and waited. By this time the Infantry had retired back past Batu Anam and our task was to be harassing fire and opportunity tasks in support of the 2/30 Battalion.

An opportunity target presented and fire was called for. 'Take Post' was ordered, fire orders came down. I was not the ranging gun but would go into gunfire when ordered. Captain Dahl stood at the side well away from the gun and when ready to fire the crew were to leave their positions and I would fire the gun by the firing lanyard, but like everything about the gun it was rotten and broke so I jumped on to the seat and pulled the firing lever. There was a terrific explosion, the breech flew open and Captain Dahl screamed out "Christ don't fire that b_____ thing again it will kill the b_____ lot of us and the infantry too." He then in no light manner gave his opinion of ordnance and every body connected with it and that was that. I received from the previous night a burnt face, loss of eyelashes, eyebrows and the thought we were lucky to get out of it so light. We removed the breech block and Captain Dahl took it away with him. Arnold Noble, who had taken Dud Munro's place, had gone to

hospital with a small wound and for the time being I took over his gun. We fired well past dusk and into the night. This Captain Dahl is a great cove: I had a lot to do with him during the show, our troop being his best customers.

It was at this position we had another experience of 5th Columnist work. Our Group Sergeant Major, Eddie Graves, noticed Malay natives lighting fires around the area. He took a few of B.HQ. men and investigated the Malays, who displayed ignorance of his questions and signs and gave the impression that they could not understand him. He made them put out the fires, herded them into a native hut, signed to them not to move out or they would be shot. One of them continually kept glancing towards another building so Eddie decided to have a good look around the place. In the other building he found boilers and tubs full of cooked rice and another big boiler of rice on the fire cooking. There was enough rice to feed a thousand men and more. The natives were asked why all the rice. Again they did not understand but when he drew his revolver they said it was for the pigs of which there were quite a number about. It is not usual to give good rice to pigs, at least not the pigs you eat but no doubt they told the truth in some respect only they forgot to say they were Japanese pigs. The rice was destroyed and the Malays locked up and have no doubt that if the fires had been allowed to remain we would have been either shelled out or bombed out.

During the night we were told to pull out as quickly as possible as the enemy had infiltrated behind us and we were in danger of being cut off. It was a hell of a track from where we were to the road and once again each vehicle had to be led out. We moved back to Segumat and took up position on the bank of the river a few hundred yards east of Segumat and near the Bridge. Captain Dahl had arrived back with a new breech and my gun was put back into action.

19th January 1942

As there was very little position a great deal of camouflage was necessary due to the consistent enemy air activity. This position had already received more than its share of bombing, large bomb craters were scattered all over the area, none seemingly to have done much damage.

About 20 yards to the rear of my gun was an anti-aircraft battery, controlled by English officers but manned by Indians. Every now and then the gun would open up and appeared to be keeping the planes at a fair height. Just in rear of the a-a battery was an old factory looking much the worse from a few bombs. After laying the gun on its line, checking everything including the camouflage, I decided to go over to the factory and try if I could get a much needed bath. I found a big concrete trough with a tap over it in one of the buildings, so stripping off I got into the trough, turned on the tap and soaped up. Whilst there the a-a started up again but as they had been firing all the morning I did not take much notice until I heard a plane dive, then a rat, tat, tat, a swish, that decided me and down I went flat in the trough. A deafening explosion took place closely followed by two more, the building started to dance, there were whizzes and smacks everywhere. I kept to the trough until things quietened down then decided to have a look. The edge of one crater being only 3 or 4 feet from the building which had the end partly out and the rest of the building held the appearance of a sieve. It was a near miss for me but not for one Indian gun crew, two were killed (they were brothers) and one wounded. The two brothers were killed by machine gun bullets and the other chap wounded by bomb

splinters. The gun was still in action and they fired frequently later in the day. A hit had also been registered on the plane which dropped the bombs and had left the area streaming smoke behind it.

I arrived back at the gun just as the crew were considering who would go and pick up my pieces. Alan Shaw had his nose up sniffing, with the look of a hunter in his eye, so I let him have the next turn from the gun. He arrived back with two sugar bags loaded with eats, including some wonderful biscuits called Empire Crackers, he had found a deserted store room. The rest of the personnel in the troop were notified and in no time all the trucks had enough food, including tinned butter, to do all of us a week or more. The most appreciated find was two cases of Tenants beer which quietly went the way of all good beer.

We were not called on for fire and just before dark the G.P.O. Number Ones left for a position which had been previously recced. This position was situated on top of a hill amongst some Coolie lines at a place called Genuang. We selected our gun platform, which was no easy job as it was found impossible to get crest clearance and cover which meant the guns had to be placed out in the open and our only cover would be our camouflage nets. Naturally we were not very happy about the position and expected that our stay here would not be all beer and skittles. The guns arrived when darkness fell.

A terrific amount of transport passed during the night making towards Singapore, and it looked as if there would be a general retirement before long.

Early in the night a terrific explosion rent the air followed by a charge fire which lit up the sky for miles: Segamut was ablaze. In this town large ammo., food and material dumps had been built. As many of these dumps as possible were shifted back, the balance was destroyed hence the explosion and fires. (This is the only place during the campaign that I know of where we destroyed what we could not remove.)

The tractors and guns took a considerable amount of manoeuvring to get them into position, the tractors had to be led about 200 yards to the rear of the guns, under cover of rubber and over the brow of the hill. It was early morning before we were ready and only a couple of hours of sleep, which we were sadly in need of, was possible.

20th January 1942

Starting early morning we fired harassing fire tasks all day in support of 2/30 Battalion. Aircraft tried to locate us all day and one time as many as twelve planes circled over and around us (during these periods we held our fire, under instructions) and although they machine-gunned the area and dropped some bombs, they were never close to us and from then on our appreciation of nets was considerable. Before this I personally had considered them just a help and I am now satisfied they are worth a thousand times more than their trouble.

During the afternoon Lang Campbell reported having seen a fighting patrol moving round the edge of the jungle near the base of the hill at rear of the gun position. A patrol was sent out but were unable to locate them.

Just before dusk, after we had fired a large number of rounds to cover the withdrawal of the 2/30 Battalion, shots from small arms or tommy guns started to come from our rear and flanks, no doubt from the patrol or patrols that had infiltrated some time before. We had already received instruction to prepare to move and we were not reluctant to do so. It was a pretty ticklish spot as it was necessary to cross a causeway of about 150 yards in length and we would present a pretty target in doing so. We all had our rifles held at the ready, the perimeter guards called in and we started off, my tractor leading. A few shots were fired from what seemed to be long range, but no hits scored. Evidently it was only a small party and they had decided we were too strong for an ambush.

That night we retired a considerable distance and eventually went into a Regimental harbourage in a Oil Palm Estate by the name of ... [Soalin?] ... reaching there around midnight. After a considerable amount of trouble manhandling the guns and trailers over drains and hillocks, we were able to lie down all being tired and worn out. A guard on each gun was necessary which we decided to do by hour shifts. My shift was the second shift but I never had the opportunity to do it.

21 January 1942

I was awakened by the guard and told that the Battery Captain (Captain Lawson) had passed on the back of a motor cycle, panically screaming out for us to get the guns and tractors on the road at once. We did not know what to think but naturally got going as quickly as possible. Things eventually quietened down, the Battery Commander, Major Ball, and a darn good soldier, taking charge.

The whole Regiment with the exception of 62 Battery who were in the Muar sector moved just east of Yong Peng. Our troop making a night occupation after considerable trouble due to a bad road jamb caused by R.H.Q. trying to push past every vehicle on the road. When they (R.H.Q) did get going again they did not stop until they arrived at Johore Baru. We eventually took up positions, laid out our night and zero lines, and stood by.

We were informed that the reason for this rush move was brought about by the enemy cutting off the Muar section and advancing along the Muar Road, to Yong Peng, which would have meant the surrounding of the whole forward army. The retirement was general and the Infantry had taken up defensive positions in the Yong Peng area, to hold the North and some were sent to the West to try and get the Muar sector, who were now completely surrounded, out.

Our gun position was a very open one and required a fair amount of camouflage. My gun continually required maintenance, the oil and air both leaking profusively (sic). Our Troop Artif. was continually working on all guns whenever it was possible. Not one of the guns were fit for active service and presumably not even fit for firing. My gun still showed the marks where a plate had been attached informing all and sundry that the gun was for drill purposes only. Major Ball personally informed me (quoting the number of the gun) that he had been Number One of the very same gun that I was using, back in Australia in the year 1924, and at that time it could not be used for even practice shoots on the range.

Near our gun position there was a large area of high Calang (Elephant) grass running up to the jungle. During the morning I decided to have a look round to see if everything was OK. This Calang was teeming with wild pigs and was crisscrossed with their tracks. Along one of these tracks I saw a black panther, evidently sneaking on his prey, probably a young sucker, anyhow its presence decided me that I had seen enough in the Calang and I went back to the gun position.

Around 9a.m. the planes made their appearance and bombed and machine-gunned anything that moved, this had the effect of keeping us well under cover; they came backwards and forwards all day and never let up. Both from this position and our previous very large flights of high level bombers were seen making towards Singapore. At one time there were five squadrons of 27 planes in the one flight.

Food we had in plenty, another dump being found at our last position at Guerang. We filled every available space in our tractors and the rest of the vehicles. After we had taken all we wanted we reported the matter and during the day four 3-tonners came up and loaded as much as possible, the balance left was destroyed by us as we were leaving by setting fire to the building. It had been an Indian dump which looked as if it had been left in a hurry. These poor souls by now were just panicked wrecks. At nearly every position we had taken, the pattering of bare feet on the roadway (I am speaking of positions close to the road) could be heard at some time or other; it was always some Indians running back having thrown away their arms, ammunition, hat and all their equipment, usually leaving themselves with shorts. I felt very sorry for them as I realised how far they had been pushed from, and the propaganda they were being fed on (we were having it dished up to us), thousands of men and planes and more tomorrow, had been a long way off for them and I am no doubt sure they were of the opinion that it would never come, it was a myth, just like the men and planes. One Indian officer, a fine type of Indian, came over to our gun whilst one of their panics was in progress, no doubt to offer some excuse for the panic. He said "Good day" and talked generalisms. After a few minutes he said, "I hope you are not too harsh in your judgment of Indian soldiers". He then went on to explain that it takes at least 7 years to make an Indian soldier and that the troops we saw were only young boys with less than six month's training and they just could not understand. He told of the lies and promises he was forced to make them, also that actually they were more of a labour corps and were never really trained for fighting and they could not understand why Britain had no planes or tanks and the Japanese plenty, he said it was pathetic, I thought it was just plain murder.

Stood by gun all night, two of the crew always awake which meant shifts of two hours on and four hours off. Still no fire required.

22 January 1942

Gun required artif. attention and it was found the air in the recuperator was badly leaking into the oil. Our troop Artif, did his best but was unable to rectify the matter. Captain Dahl was called up and again pronounced the gun not fit for action.

During the day our Battery H.Q. received a visit from Major General Callighan R.A.A.C. with his staff and accompanied by our C.O. I was sent for and on arriving at the Battery H.Q. was taken to

where a conference of officers was being held. The Battery Commander said, "This is Sergeant Croft, sir", and the Major General replied, "Sergeant Croft, I have been wanting the opportunity to meet you, in fact it was partly to meet you I came here today. (no doubt a little blarney). I want to convey the Command's and my own congratulations and gratitude for the wonderful job performed by you and your gun crew in saving your gun at East Gemas and assure you that our joint crews actions is fully appreciated, please convey this to your gun crew." I thanked him, told him it would afford me a great pleasure to pass on his words to my crew who had made the task possible and I felt and knew if it had been at all possible the other gun crews would also have saved theirs. Everybody was smiling so I thought to myself, this is a great opportunity and opened up with : - "Sir, whilst on the subject of guns, I would like to draw your attention to the guns we were issued with and now using. They are impossible and not one of them any bloody good, in fact they were more of a menace then of any use." (He was the only one that did not look shocked, Harry Hingst winked at me and had a large grin on his face, he knew just how I felt about them.) I pointed out that Major Ball had been a Number One on the same gun as I was now supposed to use, back in 1924. I turned to Major Ball for confirmation which was forthcoming. By this time he was grinning also. I then explained that the gun for the second time had been condemned by Captain Dahl and that another gun was on its way to take its place. The General assured me that the only reason why these guns were being used was for the purpose of using up the large amounts of 18 pound ammunition on hand, and that when next I required another gun he personally would see that I received the best 18 pound gun procurable. I thanked him and left wishing all the 18 pounders to hell. (From then Major Ball named the gun Buster Croft.) Later on the Island I did require another gun and am sure this next received was the best procurable as I fired hundreds of rounds from it and never once did it give me any trouble and I kept it until Capitulation.

There was aircraft in plenty and area bombed consistently during the day, also any movement on the road received plenty of attention per medium of machine-gun bullets from patrolling planes. Still plenty of promises of air support, even to the tune of day we could expect it (usually 11 am) but this time we did not expect it, we were not disappointed for we never got it.

'D' Troop fired during the day, also a Tommy 25 pounds Battery. This Tommy Battery was bombed out with heavy casualties to men and equipment, two of their guns receiving direct hits and another put out of action. They were about 600 yards from our position, but higher up and in cover, they were very unlucky and were not firing at the time, evidently something gave their position away. 'D' Troop was on the opposite side of the road from them and two bombs fell in their position but did not cause any damage. About ½ mile down the road from them was the 2/10th Field Ambulance Forward Dressing Station so the Tommies pulled in there with what remained of the guns, but not for long, the Medical Officer (M.O.) in charge slated hell out of them and made them shift their guns to a respectable distance from the Red Cross. It was a branch track off the road and I'm sure they did not realise that they were in the Red Cross area. After they left the M.O. sent a runner out to us and asked if we would collect some arms that had been left there. I went over and found a Boyce anti-tank rifle with ammo, two Bren guns and numerous shell cases (empty) and unused charges. With the help of a couple of men from the 2/10th Field Command. I collected the empty shell cases and burnt them. The

tank gun and Bren guns: took with me and gave them to Battalion Headquarters. The Japs knew the dressing station was there and respected it, if these empty cases and charges etc. had been found in the position after evacuation and the Japs knowing the Red Cross had been flown there, serious consequences may have followed as they would be under the impression that the Red Cross had been used for camouflage purposes. The Medical Officer informed me the Indians had a very bad habit of always making for the Red Cross.

Another gun to replace the defective one arrived during the night and was parked in the waggon lines.

23 January 1942

Plenty of work on the gun, all tests had to be made and general maintenance which took up most of the morning.

Aircraft exceedingly active – bombing and machine-gunning with plenty of close shaves and near hits. Was impossible to move gun from waggon lines into gun position before dusk, we were ordered not to do so as both waggon lines and gun positions would be jeopardised.

Yong Peng by this time had been bombed to the ground and was burning fiercely.

During the afternoon word came through that a body of men who had escaped through the Jap lines from the Muar were up the road about a mile. Ambulances were sent from the 2/60 dressing station. They consisted of the 2/12 Field Regiment, 2/19 Battalion Infantry and 2/29 Battalion Infantry, about ----- men all told, leaving still about 2,000 to be accounted for. They were in a very bad state, starved, practically all wounded. I gave them all the food we had in the tractor and thought they would even eat the tins. After receiving medical treatment they were taken to base hospital. The Field Dressing Station then shifted its position further back, they had been waiting for any that could break through from the Muar.

Late afternoon the Yong Peng bridge was blown by the Engineers and during the night we pulled out to position previously selected at Ayer Hitam.

Night occupation in unknown areas take considerable time and trouble and it was dawn before everything in apple pie order.

24 January 1942

Our guns were in a very open position and practically on a crossroad (this is contrary to our training back in Australia all crossroads were considered exceedingly dangerous for both harbourage and gun positions). The area had already received more than its share of bombing and by the number of wrecked vehicles with good results. The reason for the selection of this position being the necessity for crest clearance, the range to our target being very small. No other position in this area would answer the purpose.

Harassing fire tasks were carried out on the 2/30 Battalion front. Jap guns and mortars ranged onto the area and kept up a searching fire for various periods. Air activity was consistent, sometimes the planes flying around and above us not 15 feet high.

Towards midday three Bren gun carriers rushed through us crying out that tanks had broken through and were coming our way. My gun, being close to the road, was ordered to take up anti-tank defence on the roadway and quick as possible. The only position of any advantage being in the open and very outstanding. No sooner had we put the gun in position, loaded and laid on the road, when there was a roar of engines flat out and rat-tat-tat, we flattened out on the ground and a plane zoomed over us, no hits. He kept going, made height, and then circled. We had no doubts as to why, we had a good knowledge of his methods by now, he started to dive and so did we, into the drain at the side of the road. There was a roar, a swish and a deafening explosion followed by showers of mud, rocks and debris. Numerous smaller but loud enough explosions had broken out, which proved to be our own shells from one of our ammo trucks which had been hit. The plane circled and flew down this time machine-gunning again and then disappeared.

He had dropped four bombs, the first into the waggon lines destroying 1 3-ton ammunition waggon and badly damaging 4 other vehicles, one B.S. van having 165 holes in it but still able to go (most of the tyres on the vehicles were flat), the next about 20 yards from my gun, the next between Rus West's gun and his trailer, partly burying his gun and the crew (luckily they had dug slit trenches and were able to dive into them one or two had to be dug out, the trenches collapsing). The guns were firing a task, and after cleaning the gun they continued to fire. The other bomb fell about 50 yards further on in a very soft ground, it made a terrific hole but did no damage.

No sign of the tanks; camouflaged gun as much as possible, but still on the side of roadway, ready if necessary.

Shelled and mortared intermittently, during night, still necessary to keep tank sentries all night.

It was at this position three Tamils were caught signalling planes and Japs of our positions, they were taken to the rear. Also a Jap patrol came through and were cleaned up with Tommy guns.

25 January 1942

Rained very heavily all day. The shelling of our area became very intense during the morning and when not engaged firing tasks, cover was taken.

We could see our Infantry moving back and under cover of heavy rain we took up a new position recently occupied by one of the 29th Battery troops. The previous troop had not bothered about their track plans and as the position was open and amongst Calang grass, the tracks must have been very obvious from the air, but as the rain was fairly consistent no aircraft was observed. Fire was not required by us until dark, when we were to cover the Infantry during their withdrawal.

We were finding it hard work taking up our position now and large amounts of manhandling was always needed and as casualties had thinned out the crews it was necessary most of the time for all hands to put in one gun and then the next until all guns were in position. No reinforcements had been received since going into action.

Just before dusk two slow old bombers crawled across the sky, they were the first of our planes we had seen during the action. They evidently had taken advantage of the rain and sneaked out. I feel sure they never returned.

Orders to fire came at dark and again two guns went out of action and mine required considerable amount of nursing, adjustments being necessary after every round.

Once more we prepared to move and daylight found us at Sumpang Rengan.

26 January 1942

Our job at this position was to protect the withdrawal of the East Coast force through 'Namagie Estate'. It was a very bad area and gun positions had to be taken on the side of the road to give us any crest clearance at all and our zone of fire was considerably restricted. My gun was in wild bamboo on the edge of very thick jungle (excellent camouflage) and about 7 feet above the road level. The gun had to be pulled up on two 12' x 18" x 4" hardwood planks. It was very hard work and a great deal of patience was required. Here once again we were situated at a road junction but under the circumstances unavoidable.

Spent balance of day maintaining the gun and trying to right its faults.

It was impossible to sleep at night owing to mosquitoes and millions of other crawling insects. Glad when morning came.

27 January 1942

Air activity started earlier than usual no doubt due to the great amount of movement caused by the withdrawal of the East Forces which struck the main road at our position. The whole area around the crossroads was continually machine-gunned and bombed by low flying planes. I don't think there was one man in the Troop at Battalion Headquarters that did not miss death by inches and fractions. My gun crew and myself were practically buried alive and I still marvel why none of my crew were hit, my crew were undoubtedly lucky. Others were not so lucky and casualties were high and frequent. I think the casualties in our troop alone were eight or nine, two being killed, Harry Hingst and Alex Moffat. Harry Hingst was killed outright and buried with others on the side of a hill on the 'Namagie Estate' about 150 yards from the road, a chaplain coming through from the east Coast giving the last rites (that was the only time I remember a burial of that nature happening during action, it was usually dig a hole and with a prayer put the corpse in). Harry Hingst was very popular, game and happy, we missed him quite a lot. Damage to equipment was also severe and quite a number of vehicles lost.

During the night our troop moved to another position, about two miles further towards Singapore.

28 January 1942

If our last night seemed bad, our new position looked a thousand times worse. About 15 feet from the side of the road was a small gravel pit we placed our gun in, there was no cover and once again the nets produced wonderful results. Growing in profusion around the area was a fern the shape of an

umbrella and with the help of those ferns which we entwined in the net a very effective camouflage was obtained, in fact it was that effective it was practically impossible to see the gun from the roadway. There was a fair amount of traffic on the road and I'm afraid we gave the occupants of some of the vehicles bad attacks of heart failure especially when we had to open up in a hurry and no time to warn the traffic.

We were exceedingly grateful to the people who made camouflage nets. There was intense enemy air activity. They knew we were there and their object was to find and bomb us out but although we fired frequently, taking every opportunity during their temporary absence at one time urgent fire was required by the Infantry, and planes or no planes the shells had to go over, even then they did not get on to us. Undoubtedly they knew the area we occupied but not the exact positions of the guns, so they started searching and sweeping the whole area and splattered us with mortars and guns. Lady Luck treated the gun crew well once again, but there were other casualties around the area. Our gun started to play up the last few rounds and completely put the gun out of action. After covering the Infantry withdrawal we moved after dark to a position at Ayer Bemban.

29th January 1942

Two guns were now out of action, Captain Dahl had been notified and he arrived at the position during early morning with his assistants (one of them being killed a little later). Work was carried out on them all day but owing to mechanical parts being worn they could not be brought back into action. Captain Dahl left us in the afternoon with the worn parts to see if he could have them replaced and thereby get the guns going again by the next day.

All during the day the kites were busy and many bombs dropped, some going very close. In fact, some were too close. Captain Dahl dug a slit trench between us but was unable to use it; two Indians taking possession when the first lot came over. They sat on the edge all day and never gave us a chance. We both had a good laugh about it and decided to let them keep it and we went without. These Indians were attached to some Engineering unit who were waiting to blow a bridge nearby. They would not leave the trench even for food. I finished up by giving them a tin of salmon and some biscuits.

A party of the 2/26th Battalion came through us and started digging their fire trenches on the side of the hill at our rear. They cleaned us right out of food, they sure were hungry. I could count on my fingers the number of meals supplied to us by our B Echelon all through the action as it now looked like us doing a starve unless something turned up.

Late afternoon we moved to a harbourage at Kubai, only 17½ miles from Johore. We were informed that the two guns could not be repaired and it was therefore necessary for our troop to move onto Singapore Island that night. This information did not make us very happy and we were bitterly disappointed. Before the guns had broken down we were to be the last troop to leave the mainland as we were the first A.G.F. Troop to go into action. We were to cover the rearguards. We were anxious to be the last to leave, we protested and asked to be allowed to take over one of the other troop's guns. I suppose it is only natural that this request would meet with disapproval from the other troops. It was

a very disappointed 'C' Troop 2/30 Battery 2/15 Field Regiment that left the mainland that night, we cursed the Ordnance and the Malayan Command in general and crossed the causeway with heavy hearts and feeling depressed and cranky. After crossing the causeway we passed through Bukit Tunah turned to the right into Jurong Road and proceeded to a harbourage on the North West corner of the Island. Sleep was badly needed, we were all very weary and tired. We did not put on any guards and slept like logs, until morning.

30th January 1942

We woke with a terrific stench in our noses and found we were sleeping adjacent to a piggery. We had slept in the pig run and our ground sheets were covered in pig's dropping, the smell was horrible.

Hardly had we time to get the sleep out of our eyes when there was a roar of engines and two Hurricane fighters skimmed over our heads flying very low: we had heard of them but until now had not seen one. It was a wonderful thrill and excitement ran high and to add to the thrill not a hundred yards from us a wrecked Japanese bomber which had recently been brought down. It was a great help to our morale.

Our gun position was not what one would choose for its beauty and aroma, but the only one available which would give us the crest clearance and zone of fire necessary for our defensive positions. Gun pits had to be dug, and my gun position (although my gun was still out of action) was under a few trees in one of the pig pens.

It was a grand feeling to know that at least there was an air force guarding the Island of Singapore and frequently our planes would pass over our heads; it took me some seconds each time they came to realise they were ours. The consistent bombing and machine gunning on the mainland had left its mark. There it was considered something personal, here when the Japs came over it was mostly high level bombing and we were only a few amongst many thousands and our chances were the same as any civilians.

Frequently, I should say nearly every night, the Nips whilst we were on the mainland would broadcast on our wave length asking us how we liked the day, telling us what was in store for us the next day; it usually ran something like this: "Hello 2/15th Australians, how did you like our bombing today, you thought your position was secure but Nippon knows everything and today was nothing compared with what will happen tomorrow. You have fought a good fight, we have no quarrel with you, go back home to your wives, mothers and sweethearts. Nippon will guarantee your safe passage back to Australia. This generous offer by the invincible Nippon Army holds good for 7 days; but if you do not take our advice, every day will become worse for you until you are all wiped out. You must realise that the English are only using you to do their fighting, while they enjoy all the comforts well back behind the lines. They did the same with the Indians, ask them, that is the few that are left. Think it over 2/15th and don't forget we will find you tomorrow and each day it takes to make you your mind will be worse for you. By the way, in case you have not received it yet, your password will be _____" (and they were always right).

This tone of broadcasting came over practically every night. I believe other units received something similar. Instead of having a detrimental effect on us we enjoyed their broadcasts and looked forward to hearing what they said.

The Piggery was too much for everybody, bar the pigs, and during the afternoon we pulled out and by taking emergency tracks built through the rubber we arrived at a position near a village called Ama Keng in the vicinity of Tingah aerodrome.

31st January 1942

Our troop area was approximately 600 yards from the road with a track leading from the road to the gun positions. As our zone covered about 200°, the guns had to be placed out in the open and once again we had to rely on the nets and ferns for our protection from observation. The ferns had to be renewed every morning before daylight and proved a very tedious job.

The Waggon lines were in heavy rubber adjoining the gun positions and only a hop, step and a jump from them. In this rubber were a few little sheds and in one of these our gun crew had their quarters. We found this spot quite comfortable, plenty of water for tonging: a big fish pond abounded in fish, easy to catch and delicious to eat. The whole area was part of a Chinese mixed farm, pigs, fowls, ducks, fish, vegetables, fruit and rubber being produced. The Chinese family was still in occupation and remained there until the Jap artillery ranged on to us, practically destroying the house and only then did they leave. It was just as well they did leave then, as later on the whole place was razed to the ground, killing all the pigs, fowls, ducks etc. and undoubtedly would have killed all the Chinese family. I felt very sorry for the poor people and I only hope they were able to reoccupy the place after capitulation.

We lived very well until the Nips ranged onto us, it always being possible to buy eggs, poultry, and catch as much fish as we wanted.

1st February to 7th February 1942

Arrangements had been made for me to take my gun to a position near the aerodrome where I was to hand it over and receive another in its stead. It was from there I saw my first dog fight and was thrilled to the teeth. It was also there that I heard some very disconcerting information to wit. The Airforce on Singapore Island were to evacuate that night, some going to Sumatra and the rest to other places, Java and a rumour Australia. This left us without air support or practically without it, as we did receive a very little from Sumatra which only lasted a few days and was not available when required. The aerodrome was bombed whilst I was waiting for luck to arrive when I would take my new old gun to our gun position. To make matters worse an Indian Anti Aircraft battery shot down a Hurricane by mistake, it crashed about 200 yards from where we were, a complete wreck. The airforce started to pull out just as I left for our position. It put a very nasty taste in our mouths and the rest of the troop did not appreciate the news.

My new gun was in good order and condition and was by far the best 18 pounder I had seen and never once gave me any trouble.

The guns were laid out on their Zero line and our defensive programmes handed to each bunker one. They consisted of harassing fire and cover for actions. One on the NW corner, the other the N portion a switch of about 110° from the Zero line: the whole area covering some 200°. These programmes were to be fired after distress lights had been sent up by the Inf. Battalion concerned. Firstly these signals had to be reported to the G.P.O. which informed Battery who then obtained permission for us to fire and passed it back. Such is the way of the Army, well at least this army.

A mobile section was instituted consisting of two guns, (the other two guns were kept on the Zero line in case of necessity). These two guns left each morning before dawn and returned to the main position after dark. Each gun crew took their turns at Mobile Section, two crews one on and one day off. On return to the main positions at night the guns were laid on the original Zero line and guards mounted for the night.

The function of the Mobile Section was to engage any opportunity targets that could be observed during the day, thus avoiding the disclosure of main positions by shooting. Each day Mobile Section would take up new positions and thereby trick the enemy. A few rounds were fired each day but numerous targets were observed by the Infantry Outposts and our Observation Post but permission to fire would not be granted by the Higher Authority. This caused considerable complaints and queries but no reason for their attitude was ever given. It was a definite order from Command that no gun was to fire unless permission to do so had been given by them. I believe one officer of another Regiment took it upon himself to order fire on a definite enemy position which was causing quite an amount of trouble to the Infantry to whom he was attached. Permission to fire was not granted: he thought fire was necessary and gave the order. He was relieved of his command. Someone high up should have a lot to answer for as no doubt thousands of men were wounded and killed owing to this order. In fact I feel, and so does everybody concerned, that the Jap casualties would have been doubled and much more time gained (if time meant anything) if this insane order had not been promulgated.

After the Airforce left us, enemy air activity was almost continuous, roads, petrol dumps, etc. being their targets. Many of the planes were recon planes, spotting and taking shots of positions etc., they undoubtedly knew ours, their first shot onto our main position cleaned up one of our ammunition trailers setting off quite an amount of ammo. They shelled for about ½ hour and were well on their target; I think it was a registration and from the bombardment we received from them the next day a very good one. Balloons were also used by the Japs for observation and as we had no airforce they remained undisturbed. On the Mainland we were attached to our original 27th Brigade but here on the Island we were supporting the 22nd Brigade which consisted of the 2/19th and 2/20, 2/18th Battalions.

Previously we had dug slit trenches one to two men, but after the Japs had registered us as a target I got the gun crew to reinforce and cover them in. Near the Chinese house was a stack of rubber tree trunks about 7' x 12" diameter. These were placed about four deep and four wide on top of the trench and on top of them we placed filled sand bags three to five deep making the trench as safe as possible. Our efforts were not wasted as they saved the lives of a certain two and possibly more of the crew. One trench received a hit on the end and another such on the back edge, the trench partly collapsed

and the occupants, Tim Lee and Roley McLean (I had to stand over both until they built it) were nearly asphyxiated by the fumes etc. Both thanked me after for bullying them into making it secure. All the other trenches received plenty of shell fragments and large trees uprooted and splintered and fell on top of them. I was unable to appreciate them as I was caught too far away and had to take cover in a drain full of water where I spent the most uncomfortable hours of my life.

Rained during the night of the 7th and most of the following day, a not to be forgotten day, the 8th February 1942.

8th February 1942

Mobile section left at dawn. It was Jim Callow's and my gun crew's turn to stay in the main position. Both our guns were taken by the Mobile section as they were closest to the road and the easiest moved. We therefore took over the other crews' guns.

All the gun crews etc. had been brought up to strength with reinforcements. These reinforcements had just arrived in Malaya, they were originally for the 2/10th but as their casualties were very light we were able to take the reinforcements.

About 9a.m. the planes started bombing but did not worry us. Shortly after the Jap Artillery came into action, searching and sweeping the area, most of them going over us and dropping about 200 yards to the rear but some dropping in the area. This continued during the morning doing a lot of damage to the track and setting fire to a house at the rear and badly damaging a house and outhouses in our area killing pigs, ducks and fowls.

During the early afternoon the bombardment become very intense. I was at the Command Post when it started in earnest. They were right onto us, the noise was maddening, trees were crashing down, the shells were whining. The ground was heaving and the rush of air into the Command Post was like a tornado. It was impossible to leave the Command Post dugout. It was not the most secure place and as it seemed a million to one on scoring a hit I was wishing myself back in my own slit trench. The Command Post was pretty cramped for room and I as partly in and partly out. I made up my mind to go back to my own as soon as there was a lull.

The lull did not come for some hours and when it did I started off. I was about half way when down they came more intense than ever. A drain about 3'6" deep and 2' wide carrying about 4" water was the only protection available and down into it on my belly I flopped. They seemed larger stuff this time, the concussion from the bursts lifting me off the ground and it seemed practically out of the drain. The smell of the fumes were choking and any second I expected to hear the chizzoo, but not the explosion. I was in this position at least three hours and at no time during this period was it possible to leave. The heat from the explosions was like a furnace door being suddenly opened.

After what seemed ages the barrage lifted, I got out of the drain and made for the gun position. Where once rubber trees stood in profusion was now just a mass of fallen and splintered trees giving the impression that a hurricane had passed through destroying all in its path. Tim Lee and Roley McLean were pulling themselves out of the dugout which was obscured by fallen trees. They were

pretty shaken and had not shaken off the effects of the shells which had burst on the dugout. All the dugouts were covered by rubber trees and the sandbags torn to shreds by the fragments of shell casings. Our little house was still standing but badly knocked about and all the gear inside it including rifles, haversacks, ammo pouches etc. were riddled and torn. The gun crew were intact and strangely enough not a shell had fallen within 20 yards of the gun. The guard and lookout on the guns were wet through to the skin having spent most of their time in a slit trench more than half full of water.

All the vehicles in the harbourage were badly knocked about and put out of action which meant the Troop had now only two vehicles left, the two gun tractors which were at that time with the mobile section, who owing to the shelling were unable to get back until very late at night. The crew were collected and we stayed at the gun position as it pointed to the bombardment being a prelude to an enemy attack. The shelling had practically ceased only odd ones coming over at timed intervals.

We did not have long to wait before the SOS (two green very lights) went up. I reported the SOS to the GPO by voice and runner and waited orders to fire (a definite order to a ridiculous one against all common sense and reasoning). Communication had been out and the Command Post could not contact Battery HQ, so irrespective of the order we started shooting our tasks, searching and sweeping, pumping them out as fast as humanly possible, first on one task and then onto another. We were two guns short and the tasks for the four guns had to be fired by our two guns. Ten men were detailed to carry ammo, but owing to the rough passage over the fallen trees and shell holes the ammo was not coming up fast enough. I detailed an extra three men from my crew to help, three of us running the gun and it kept us going and we were sending them over as fast as we could bang them up the spout. The two guns fired every available round, even posting out what appeared to be good rounds from the limber that had been blown. Some of these rounds had split easily and which could be easily identified when fired.

The Mobile section by this time had arrived back and placed the gun in position. They also had a torrid time and during the day and early part of the night used their ammo on opportunity etc. tasks. Their task of putting the guns they had used back into their original position was no light one. The track and surrounding ground was well churned up and two direct hits had made a nasty mess. My gun's platform; lucky for myself and crew, our gun was taken by the Mobile Section. They reported the track very slippery and out of order due to the numerous shell holes and only with careful driving could a bogging be prevented. Perhaps an hour after their return small arms fire was heard seemingly close at hand and increasing rapidly in volume at the same time tracer bullets started coming over our position [appearing?] to be coming from our track out. Also we were amazed and could not understand what it all meant. It was not long before we found out. One of the 1A officers came running to the position with the news that we only had a couple of minutes to get out and he thought we were partly surrounded on the front and flank by forward enemy troops who had infiltrated through in two large bodies and had cleaned up 2/20 Battalion HQ about 40 yards in front of our position. This meant the only comparatively safe exit was through a swamp and small creek at our rear. The track out was under fire as could be seen by the tracer bullets.

As there were only two vehicles (gun tractors) left and four guns it was hurriedly decided to try and take the two guns which were closest to the track out. I took one tractor and my crew, Jim to follow with the other. We managed to hook in the gun but the trailer would take too much time we decided to leave it. Luck was still in our side and we managed to reach the main road without mishap or casualty. Jim rejoining off the road after giving a few yards and was hopelessly bogged. The gun and tractor had to be abandoned and they proceeded on foot by the rear exit through the swamp to creek. The troops had abandoned what little equipment they had saved to enable them to swim the creek.

I cannot understand why my gun crew and myself were not wiped out going down that track. The tracer bullets seemed very thick, the other bullets we could not see and I can only put it down to B ____ bad shooting on the Nips part or they were not as close as thought, although the small arms reports and automatic fire sounded too close for comfort.

We followed the roadway, passing through Infantry who were consolidating at new positions near the Tingah aerodrome, and proceeding to a village called Bulim. Whilst trying to negotiate a bomb hole in the middle of the road near the aerodrome our tractor and gun went down a deep gutter and bogged. It took us a long time and a lot of hard work before we could get them back on the road and it was dawn before we arrived at Bulim Village where the balance of the 30th Battery had formed up. Loss of equipment was heavy, and casualties, considering the intensity of the shelling, were extremely light. "D" Troop had lost their 4 25-pounders. "C" Troop 3 18-pounders which left two troops with only 1 18-pounder between them. "D" Troop still had a few vehicles and Battalion HQ was intact.

Battery moved to harbourage on the Bucket Panning Road to the west of Bulim Village.

The Japs crossed the straits at the NW portion using at this point two divisions, 70,000 men. Although it would seem that ample time was had to make this part of the Island into a highly defensive position. Only a small amount of wire and a few MG positions were placed there leaving roughly about 2 Battalions, approximately 16,000 men, to defend the sector. The Engineers offered to flood-light the Straits, also prepare the position as it could flood the watch with oil and set alight when necessary, but for some unaccountable reason (like thousands of others during the campaign) permission was not granted. The East coast was made, or had previously been made, practically impregnable and part of the west coast and the straits of Johore were just casually wired and very little defensive measures taken although repeated complaints and protests were made to the High Command. Naturally when the Japs did come over they came at the weakest point, wholly ignoring the East Coast, where thousands of British Troops behind excellent defenses stayed and never fired a shot from their positions. The Japs by-passed and threatened to cut them off and they had to retire. This method of by-passing and infiltration is a popular method with them and was the cause of our retirement from the mainland. Never once on the mainland were we forced to retire from contact. This method was to land troops along the coast, an easy matter for them as they had no opposition from our Navy and Air Force and by method of infiltration and by-passing would link up with their seaborne troops.

Later during the campaign a plan of the Island was found on a responsible Jap officer, showing the exact positions of all our defences including deployment of Troops; gun positions; n.o. positions; a.a. positions and the exact positions of all Headquarters from the highest to the lowest. The information shown on that map could only have been computed from information supposed only to be known by highly responsible officers.

Perhaps when the history of the show is written these queries might be answered.

9th February 1942

On checking my ammunition I found that it consisted of only 16 rounds of HP shot (tank shells) and same was reported to Troop Command. The sun had just begun to rise when there was a well known whine and crump and down came the Nip's wrath upon us in the shape of 5.9" shells. They gave us a good doing over and causing a few casualties. They were still shelling when over came their planes, twenty seven in one flight, they dropped their bombs simultaneously, the bombs in their flight make an awe inspiring noise like thousands of steam engines blowing off steam and at the same time rushing down on top of you. The explosions were more than I can describe, fumes, smoke, dust, bits and pieces, large and small everywhere and the cries and screams of the unfortunate mangled hideous. Casualties ran high; Young Kelly who had only just left me five minutes before was gone. We called him Lucky Kel before he was killed. I don't think there was anyone who had more narrow escapes from death than he. John Onslow was actually closer to the particular bomb than Kel and got off with a wound in the leg. There were some wonderful displays of fortitude and grit. The Captain with his arm completely blown off was smoking and seemed more concerned regarding his fellow sufferers. The man next to him, legs completely blown off, conscious but not a murmur (he died before taken away) and numerous others being given what attention available, whilst there were many past attention and some we could not find enough of for identification purposes. Those killed were buried on the spot.

Shells were still coming over and we then moved to another harbourage, a position off Jurong Road by taking an emergency road. We arrived without mishap but had to run the gauntlet twice.

The Battery was reformed to comprise E Troops (4-4.5---), F. Troop (4 25-pounders) and G Troop (544.5-). My guncrew and myself like [Cinderella?] were on our own with 1-18 pounder. MK 4 and 16 AP shot (18 pound as ammo was asked for but up to then unable to be procured). Our job being anti-tank defence to go to any position found necessary and when called upon. Later the battery was reduced to two troops of 4.5 hours, the troop of 25 Fs going to 29th Battery.

Air activity was very intense, hundreds of planes continuously in the air and both high level pattern bombing and dive bombing being indulged in.

The right was open near an ASC dump and we were able to get some food and received clean clothing, both thankfully received. The ASC treated us fine and most of the clean clothing received was their own personal clothing, they gave us tobacco and cigarettes which were also their own personal property. We must have looked a pretty sorry lot and filthy dirty.

10th February 1942

During first light we left for a harbourage south of Bukit Tumah village. Very early the Battery had engaged several tanks issued by R.H.Q. The Infantry retired and we went to this new harbourage. E and G Troops going into position but no fire was asked for.

In the afternoon the enemy guns commenced to range onto us using air observation, no damage was done. Air activity still very acute and the noise of exploding bombs never ceased.

Towards dusk the guns were called upon to support an attack which was to be lodged by the 12th Indian Brigade. The attack never eventuated and the guns had to be withdrawn.

The balance of the Battery which included the personnel of the late "C" and "D" Troops went to harbourage near Hospital Hill and it was here Hal Richardson and several others belonging to the unit left the Convalescent Depot and joined us. Most of them had been in hospital during the show, they were all in a bad nervous condition, due no doubt to the bombing around the area and the influence of the shell and bomb shocked patients amongst them. (Most of these chaps including Hal Richardson commandeered a boat later on and tried to make a getaway, but were captured by the Nippon Navy in the Sunder Straits and eventually became P.O.W.s in Sumatra, they left three days before Capitulation and are treated as deserters.) We spent the night near Newton's Circuit.

11th February 1942

I received instructions to take my gun crew to R.H.Q where I received further instructions as to a position we were to take up on anti-tank defense. I was shown a map spot (a road junction) and told to make a recce with the possibility of putting my gun there. We proceeded to within 400 yards of the cross roads where I dismounted and went up on foot. I had just arrived and was about to look around when there was a crack and something passed my ear with a buzz like a bee. I jumped into a gutter and waited. It was quiet with a silence that exaggerated everything out of proportion. I waited a few minutes and decided to make another recce; it was not to be, there was another sharp crack and I heard the bullet flatten into a bank at my side. I made up, or it made up my mind to return, which I did in the gutter. I reported a sniper to R.H.Q and a patrol was sent into the area. I had a fair idea as to where the shots were coming from and informed the patrol. I believe the sniper was captured in a building adjacent to the crossroad. He was Malay (hence the bad shooting) and was sent back under escort to G.H.Q.

Sniping became very prevalent during the rest of the campaign. Special patrols were made up to deal with them. They were very disconcerting and made us very uncomfortable at first, but not much notice was taken of them later as they never seemed to do much damage. The explosive bullet was used frequently by them and when they did get a score the bullet made a wicked wound and left a hole big enough to put a fist in. These bullets also exploded on contact but had no damaging effect unless they found their target.

Instead of the crossroad we took up a position in a Orchid Nursery situated in Orchard Road which gave me some very pleasant hours. We spent the night and next day there, during the night and day

two sentries were posted, each pair doing two hours on and four off, the rest of the crew always handy to the gun, only one man and on special occasions [two ever?] leaving the position at one time.

In a building on the opposite side of the road were some officers of the Malaysian Volunteer Corps (Australian Englishmen), they invited us over for supper (we accepted two going at a time) which included oysters in sherry, caviar, ham, mushrooms, fruit salad and cream, nuts and sweets and all kind of liquid refreshments.

12th February 1942

Enemy aircraft were over bright and early, their bombing was continuous all day, none were dropped near enough to us to be dangerous, but quite an amount landed in and around the area. An old Scotch resident, who swore he would not move for all the Japs in the world, he had sent his family away and he said he was old enough to die and he would die before he would get out. He was the only white civilian in this area; came over to the gun with a bottle of whisky. Not only Scotsmen drink whisky and we wasted no time in proving it. He told us about a posh restaurant, nearly opposite where we were and which had been abandoned together with its supply of food and drink. Two of us went over taking our tractor and filled every available space with tins of chicken, pea, turtle and vegetable soups, mushrooms, cooked hams (whole in tins), pasties, Australian glass jars of jam, fruit salads, cream, bottles of Canadian dry ginger ale and biscuits, cherries and numerous other delicacies. The liquor Magnums of Champagne, bottles of whisky, brandy, wines, liqueurs, and rum had all been broken and the contents poured out by the Military Police. It was a pitiful sight to see all these broken bottles. There were hundreds of them. Now we knew how the Malayan Volunteer chaps were living so well. There was still plenty of food left when we had finished.

During the morning the Japs started shelling the roadway, one shell exploding in a tree over our head, another just a little to our right, killing two Chinamen, they were trying to make for a drain to take cover. The roadway was searched by the Jap Artillery at different intervals all day. We could tell when they were coming our way and by this time practically where they would land: This road had been under fire for some days, it was a main road to Singapore and used frequently.

Late in the afternoon we shifted to a position in front of our Battery which was in Pearce and Holland roads, supporting the infantry which had taken up a defensive position not far in front.

Our anti-tank position was between the Infantry and the Battery and from where we were the Infantry could be observed. The battery opened fire early in the night and fired consistently (the number of rounds fired that night broke all existing records). The Japs answered with heavy mortar bombardment and very accurate shooting. A deep narrow concrete drain ran close to the gun and we were forced to take cover as the mortars were dropping them all around us and if the drain had not been there I'm afraid we would have still been there. Not much damage was done to the gun but the platform area was well chopped about, the hard road producing many daisy cutters.

The Battery pulled out early a.m. and went to a position in Jervois Road. Our gun going to a position in front of the Botanical Gardens where the Infantry coming up were formed before going to the front line.

13th February 1942

Two of our bren gun carriers gave us a thrill and we nearly gave them more than a thrill. We could hear them coming and had the gun onto where they must come into our sights, lucky for them we were able to identify them before firing.

Another high level pattern bombing gave us and a Battalion of Infantry who had just come up, a fright, but this time some other poor souls received them. Most of the Infantry and ourselves received a ducking as the only cover offering was an open drain very wide and half filled with water. Everybody looked a bit sheepish after, but with those high level bombers it is impossible to make a calculation as to where their eggs are destined to go. What looks a certainty to be yours might land a mile away. The dive bombers are more personal and they have their target and there is no mistaking whether you are it or not.

I have been trying to get 18 pounds HE ammo every day, but was unable to get Mo.S.C. to bring any up. Our Batteries finished up carting their own ammo from the dumps, the ammo depot, just abandoned their vehicles. I decided to take the gun back to Orchard Road (a 2lb anti-tank gun had pulled in next to the position we were occupying) and leave it there in position with Nev Merrifield in command and with Frank Reardon (now my driver) and myself going to Alexandria base where I was told 18 pounds ammo might be obtained.

We started off towards Singapore and on looking back saw heavy bombers flying down the road towards us. Our vehicle being the only vehicle on the road I thought they were after us, which of course was ridiculous for me to even think that nine bombers would pick one tractor as a target; anyhow we were flat out. There was a terrific escape of seemingly steam which seemed to be chasing us and then an explosion that all but threw us off the road. I looked back and a crossroad about 500 yards away appeared to be just coming back to earth, smoke etc. obliterating the place for what looked like miles. On our return journey to review the damage, it was horrible, parts of what were once human beings scattered in all directions. I counted five mangled bodies of what appeared to be---- and I believe there were hundreds of people killed by this bomb and our Regiment also suffered deaths and casualties as forward R.H.Q was in the fringe of the area bombed, also 29th Battery were very close, but I don't think they had any casualties, although I am inclined to think they were the original target.

To arrive at Alexandria it was necessary to pass through Singapore and the docks. Singapore received a heavy bombing which we were passing through and we had to run the gauntlet going past the docks as they were being shelled by heavy Jap forces, the roadway was collecting its share. Frank made the pace hot.

On arrival at Alexandria we found the base had been set on fire and our exciting trip all for naught. An English a.a. gun and crew were just pulling out from their position and they were the only living things we saw around the area.

Our trip back was uneventful with the exception of having to pull up in Orchard Road and wait for the shelling to cease, which it did, after a few minutes.

On arrival at the gun I was informed that a new anti-tank position was to be taken up by us in a Road (the name I have forgotten), the information was very vague and the directions were to follow the main road until I found the name exhibited on a sign post at the end of the road, also that it was in close proximity to the front line. Off we went following the main road and keeping a sharp lookout for the signpost and planes, the planes were not hard to find, frequently we had to pull off the road into cover. We had travelled a good distance in fact I was becoming a little concerned, as small arms fire sounded at times to be coming from our flanks, but owing to numerous snipers about (I have been told by a Jap whilst on the working party that there were about 5,000 Japanese disguised as Chinese on the Island before we arrived back from the mainland and I don't disbelieve him), not too much attention was paid to it. We were just passing a road junction when a G.G.T. officer ran out on the road and called us to stop, which we did. He asked where we were going and I said looking for ? Road. He remarked we would find a d_____ sight more than we bargained for if we went any further, as we had already passed their front line. The time it took us to unhook, turn, limber up and get going the opposite way would undoubtedly, if clocked, have broken all existing or likely to exist records, we seemed to hit the ground, mounting again and off. The Officer was apparently out with a patrol. He called out that he did not think the road we were looking for was in that area.

On our return I contacted one of our officers, the GPO who was then making a recce of the Tanling Barrack area, and he informed me that the G.G.T. had been ordered to form a perimeter in the Zangte area and all G.I.F. personnel would be brought inside this perimeter, which meant that our flanks and rear would be open and pointed very much to a last stand.

Later we went into the area, every man thinking, and at that time led to believe, that we were going to fight to the last man. It was with that in our minds we stayed in the area until capitulation.

14th January 1942

The perimeter had been formed, our positions being on the west side of the Barrack area facing Pearce Road. I found some clean clothes which I donned after having a tong. I threw away my dirty clothes and it was not until after Capitulation back at Changi that I remembered having I think about 36 dollars, 5 Pounds, in the pocket of the trousers I had discarded.

Air bombing and machine gunning increased, the planes coming low enough for us to clearly see the faces of the occupants. a.a. guns seemed to have no effect on them and I believe to this day that the shells used by the a.a. guns were practice shells and purely bluff on our part due to the ammo having run out or the impossibility of getting it. We used bren guns as a.a. defense but without any known effect. It looked like only a matter of time for us, as casualties were mounting all day.

Very little shooting took place, ammunition having to be conserved as little hope of replenishment was possible.

During the day, to make matters worse, the enemy had cut the water supply and we were left dependent on our bottles. Snipers were very active and we were shelled and mortared continually during the day and night.

Late afternoon the Battery took post and started to fire on our target, but had hardly commenced on "gun fire" when the order came through to cease fire.

Nippon had taken up a position covering a junction of cross roads on anti-tank defence. I had hopes of getting a task but nothing of that nature came our way.

15th February 1942

The day opened with very heavy enemy artillery fire and air bombing and further [casualties to us. The] positions as regards counter fire and required tasks by the Infantry was the same as yesterday, permission to fire could not be obtained and although we could observe the Japs pulling guns into position on top of hills and the information passed back with a request for permission to engage them, we were still not allowed to fire. These guns later did severe damage to us and caused deaths and casualties, one gun crew of E. Troop being wiped out. Jack Collins from Newcastle was badly wounded by these guns – 4p.m. in the afternoon.

During late afternoon warning of a possible "Cease Firing" was received. Our tempers were not the best since being unable to hit back and this information did not improve them. The Japs could not have received similar orders as they gave us their all.

We received the "Cease Firing" order at approximately 1900 hours to operate from 2030. (This order as far as ceasing did not effect us to any extent we had been unable to receive permission to fire for the last 24 hours.) Naturally our reactions were not in agreement and howls of protest filled the air and then the silence that dropped upon us was deadly, broken only by the crack and bang of snipers firing their explosive bullets at nothing in particular.

Whilst mentioning snipers. Early in the night I had an hour or so of uncomfortable feeling, brought about mostly by my thoughts of snipers. It was later dusk when a building in the direction of where snipers had been active during the day and about 800 yards from our position intermittently showed lights from its top windows and the reason could not be accounted for. The G.P.O. asked me if I would take a man with me and investigate. I took Cyril Pitchford and we started off. It had quietened down considerably and only odd bursts of isolated snipers firing at no particular target but relying on the demoralising effect of this shooting and the explosion of their bullets on contact. The noise of our heavy steel shod boots ringing on the roadway seemed to us to be terrific and at any moment we expected to collect a sniper's bullet, which thought gave me a funny feeling down the spine and in the stomach (never once did it dawn on me to take off our boots and it only occurred to me months later as a POW). On reaching the house a big two story place, I posted Cyril at the front door and went in to investigate. It was one of the most unnerving experiences of my life going through the house room

to room, the torch I had was of little use and only a thin glimmer which seemed to make everything move. I expected anything to happen at any moment and the number of frights I received were numerous. On the top floor I found the reason for the illuminations, it was the reflection on the window facing the gun position from a fire some miles away which now and then flared up. At this period hundreds of fires had been started by the bombs all over the Island.

Never was I more relieved to get out of a house as I was to leave that one, and I think Cyril felt pretty relieved when I turned up and told him the story. The return journey did not worry us so much and we were much quicker getting back than going up. We left the position after the specified hour had passed everybody feeling extremely miserable. God knows what miracle we had expected to happen. We were still alive and all we had expected was death, and I know I felt as if I had been forced to do some despicable action against my will and I was not looking forward to death. No doubt our reasoning came from ----- minds.

Together with all guns and vehicles we assembled in a line and ----- on the golf links of Tanglin Barracks and there spent the night. Thus ended my short experience as a soldier in the action.

My next experience is to be that of a Prisoner of War.

Monday 16th February 1942

Tanglin Barracks

Quietness as heavy as a sin, everyone stunned. This feeling since yesterday late afternoon, what a difference from yesterday and the day before with no water, very little ammunition, plenty of food, continually bombed and shelled, planes flying that low you could see the occupants grinning, together with the thought of it was just a matter of time. No thought of capitulation only that of certain death, all resigned to the fact. No wonder we were stunned after a month of incessant bedlam day and night. Then the contrast. Not ours to reject but forced to accept, just sat around wondering, feeling as if your soul had been given an anaesthetic. Casualties were very heavy those last few days, who can say; were these people favoured by a God?

Tuesday 17th February

It's not a dream: quietness and peace (but not of mind) still enveloping although movement is now noticeable; gradually coming back to earth but cannot yet analyse feelings: pawns that here answered their purpose, this can be expected and probably appreciated, but there still seems to me to be a definite bad odour about the whole business: Rumour has it that we will be moving today and all gear (what is left us) that cannot be carried on our person to be dumped and all papers, letters etc., to be destroyed and burnt. (I reread the letters and felt very miserable.) Also two days rations to be carried. Orders to move have arrived, we are to march to a camp 20 miles away.

Wednesday 18th February

Woke in new surroundings with clothes hard and caked with sweat from that nightmare march of 22 miles through the stench of mutilated and bloated bodies and the nauseating sight of spattered brains and parts of what had once been human beings. Saw many of the enemy, they did not seem to bear us

any ill will and their smiles were if anything ones of friendliness and many kindnesses were received from them which was quite unexpected as both sides did not take prisoners and many thousands of both sides perished who could have been saved with medical treatment. Our new billets are in Burwood camp, Changi Barracks and what a shamble. Personal thoughts rush through your mind, what will they be thinking at home? Will they notify your people and how long with it take them? What news was given out and how was it given, was it broken down, sincerely hope so, or everyone home will be frantic. Hope the casualty list is one of the first jobs done, it's going to be a very worrying time until we are assured of it reaching its destination. Spent the day fixing up quarters.

Thursday 19th February

Food not too plentiful only what we were able to carry with us, expect rice from the Japs. Checked up on tobacco found I had carried with me 30 grams, thanks to Dad, will have enough to last the boys and myself some time, expect tobacco to be a problem. Spent most of the day cleaning up.

Friday 20th February

Much as yesterday, still cleaning up. Rice arrived, have not much to supplement it with. Japs have not yet bothered us, we are still under control of our own command. Sixty men required for burial party to bury Chinese who were shot for alleged looting, some 300, heard the machine gun fire yesterday afternoon.

Saturday 21st February

Bugs, millions of them. Our quarters were once occupied by the 7th Dogra Indian Regiment; gave place a thorough cleaning, hope it's effective. Had a touch of fever and dermatitis again.

Sunday 22nd February

Still cleaning up. Bugs as bad as ever, would have to burn the whole place down to have any effect. Attended Church Parade, fine service by parson. Food still insufficient. Fever etc. still there, don't feel the best.

Monday 23rd February

Talk of making garden and try growing some sort of vegetable. Fever a little better but dermatitis worse. Another burial party (poor chows). God knows how many more are being slaughtered elsewhere. No improvement in food, believe we will be living on rice only shortly.

Tuesday 24th February

List being completed of casualties etc. (I believe in our Regiment the percentage is very high, killed, wounded and missing being more than 45%) to be sent home, it is anticipated that the method of sending will be through a neutral country. I hope not, as it might take months. A miracle, fresh meat in a beautiful stew. Guarantee we'll all break out in boils.

Wednesday 25th February

They keep us working i.e. our own Command, have not seen much of the Japs. Also starting to become Regimental, this is most noticeable amongst the officers who were not worth their salt during

action and I'm sorry to say they were in the majority. Food still insufficient, hungry all the time, rice does not satisfy. Officers now have their own Mess.

Thursday 26th February

Believe a Chinese family man, wife and two children put to death today for selling cigarettes to the POWs. Also thousands are receiving similar treatment in Singapore proper. Saw Fred Elliott today. Dysentery starting to get a hold, already a few deaths, mostly weak patients. Started making garden. Don't think it will be a success. Still hungry.

Friday 27th February

Received some very disconcerting news today, representation was made to the Japanese regarding mail, also the possibility of receiving our kit bags, it was not successful. Their view being that the Jap soldiers do not receive or write letters whilst on active service and what is good enough for them would have to do us. The kit bags had already been looted by the natives, the kit bag question was understandable although very disappointing, especially as they contained all my letters, most of my photos, the presents I was to send home and rolls razor, but the mail was a real knockout blow. This rice diet plays hell with your bladder. Saw the Doctor today regarding my leg, tore the nerves during action, will have to receive a course of massage, also my right ear drum was burst and left me slightly deaf have to see a specialist later on.

Saturday 28th February

Big inspection today by Jap high command. We were lined up along the roads and inspected from motor cars, of course the Jap moving picture camera had to be there. Starting to get thinner, did not have too much fat to spare when I arrived. Cigarettes are very scarce, have to start rationing myself and the boys. God knows how long we will be here. Have our own guards to keep us in our Regiment area and things are becoming very Regimental and exasperating under the circumstances. Shows a definite complex of one track mind. I don't think much support will be received from the men, their first goal should be trying to regain the confidence of the men and believe me it will take a superhuman effort on their part. Must be hungry tonight.

Sunday 1st March

Two weeks as POW, it seems that many years. God how long will it last? Those you love are continually in your mind's eye and in your heart, its impossible to concentrate even to play cards or to read. No happenings of any importance.

Monday 2nd March

Worked in garden, at least something different to do also away from Parades (of which there are plenty). Stores getting light, cut out midday meal of rice and substituted a cup of tea (never have milk or sugar) and one biscuit which builds up dinner at night, but still manage to keep hungry. Dysentery bad over at other camps, we seem to be keeping it down.

Tuesday 3rd March

Regimental Orderly Sergeant today. A few of our slightly wounded cases arrived back most of them not nearly right, receiving attention from our unit Medical Officer. Scrounging party allowed to go out. Arrived back well laden with coconuts and paw paws.

Wednesday 4th March

Talk about the Tommies taking over our portion of the camp and are to move over to Changi with the rest of the A.I.F. This is sure to happen after all the time and labour we have put in making this place reasonably comfortable, there is only one consolation the bugs are still breeding profusely. I have been looking around for all these great defenses alleged to be in this part of the Island, found 3-15" guns (all blown), two I believe did not fire a round.

Thursday 5th March

Rumour still persistent regarding shift over to Changi (only about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away). Saw two English officers looking the place over today which more or less confirms the rumor, hope they don't like the place. Rained like hell today and washed our garden into the stormwater drain.

Friday 6th March

Notice to move, must be out of these quarters by 11a.m. tomorrow. Just typical when we were more or less comfortable. Everything has to be carted by hand, stores (mostly rice) firewood, coppers and I believe the mess huts and kitchens etc., which were constructed by us are to be pulled down and transported piece by piece. Tomorrow is certainly going to be a very busy day, at least won't have much time to think.

Saturday 7th March

What a day. There we are perched out in the open on top of a hill without cover, but compensated with a beautiful view of the straits of Johore. It appears we are taking over a building previously used by the A.I.F as a hospital and as they have not finished clearing it out and it might take some days we are to stay here under the stars; it certainly suits me.

Sunday 8th March

I can now see where the money was spent on the defense of the Island. The quarters are magnificent at least a 5,000 Pound home for every Lt., and the homes vary with the rank, the barracks are palatial, married N.C.O and married O.R., N.C.O and O.R all have their own barracks, and what barracks. The grounds are beautifully laid out, all kinds of recreation rooms and fields, in fact everything but defenses. It must have cost millions. Walked over to the hospital to see Jack Collins and some of the other boys. Could not stay as the stench of putrid flesh was overpowering.

Monday 9th March

Living out here would do me during our stay as guest of the Nippons. The air is wonderful, full of the most delightful perfumes from the surrounding gardens and trees. See movement of the Japs Navy every day, nothing out of date about their vessels or Air Force.

Tuesday 10th March

Dad's birthday, hope everything is OK with him. Am very pleased that the last reports received of him were good. More moving, it took us all day to arrange the place. The building was previously used (before we used it as a hospital) for the housing of unmarried O.R.s, 28 to each floor and as there are 600 of us, that is 300 to each floor, it was necessary to build bunks in tiers of three. Even the lav and wash rooms are utilized for sleeping, the sewerage system being out of order, also the water supply. Can still smell the putrid flesh.

Wednesday 11th March

God it was hell trying to sleep last night. I finished up taking my ground sheet outside and slept in the open. Intend doing that every night unless it rains. Still very hungry. Tobacco holding out, but not for long, too many without.

Thursday 12th March

Spent most of the day looking around the place, there is a marvellous view from the verandah. Saw quite a few ---- [Newcastle?] boys, Mannix, Gable, Allingham, Tinning, Wansey, Brooks, Levy and others, also names I have forgotten. Also saw Colonel Gallagher, had a yarn to him and he invited me over to his quarters for a yarn anytime I felt like it. I complimented him on his DSO, he certainly did a good job with his Battalion and both he and his Battalion think our Battery is just the thing and have nothing else but praise for us. The feeling is mutual.

Friday 13th March

Rained like blazes all day, could not do anything out of doors, did a little tailoring, made a pair of shorts out of $\frac{3}{4}$ trousers. Dysentery is very bad, quite a few in the unit have gone down with it. I can recommend it for reducing.

Saturday 14th March

Worked pretty hard today filling in bomb craters and so preventing mosquitoes from breeding in the water held by them. Still living on rice and not too much of that.

Sunday 15th March

One month today and every day of it was an age, no news but plenty of rumours. Food is starting to circulate but at what a price. Bully beef \$5 or 15/-, fish 15/-, milk 15/-, bread $\frac{1}{2}$ loaf 3/-, cigarettes 3/- packet. This food has been found by the natives, we buried tons and tons of food in dumps on the Island, also there were big ASC stores. They are reselling it to us, no doubt at great risk to themselves, but certainly at great profit.

I did have \$35 once during the action but left it in the fob pocket of a pair of trousers I threw away after wearing them continuously for about 14 days, so it looks like I'll have to suffer the rice.

Monday 16th March

Eileen's birthday. Went to ear specialist about my ear, there is nothing that can be done for it. Met Aub Jones waiting for the Eye Specialist. Poor chap had a grenade burst near his face destroying the sight of one eye, he looked a pitiful job as he also just finished dysentery, he is just a skeleton and

very lucky to be alive. Dysentery is getting worse, thousands of cases but only about 30 have died with it.

Found a guava tree with a few ripe ones. Mixed them up with my rice and gave it rather a nice flavour. Still sleeping out when possible.

Tuesday 17th March

Have started an Education scheme for the purpose of running classes in all subjects for those people interested, the teachers are recruited from all over the A.I.F here. I have put myself down for a Commercial Art Course, hope it comes off at least will occupy my mind a little.

Wednesday 18th March

Called up for interview regarding Art course. I believe there are over 350 applicants and only 60 can be accommodated, don't suppose I will be lucky enough to be one of the selected. This is a golden opportunity as the teachers are P. Murray-Griffin, Official War Artist to I.A.F and Captain Greener, member of the Paris and Vienna Art Assoc., also official artist to the Egyptian Museums. Has reproduced most of the treasures in-----, also he is a noted archaeologist, he is giving lectures on that subject. Dysentery and Beri Beri still bad although I believe that are getting it under control.

Tuesday 19th March

Great fleet of war boats including submarines around the place today, they made a great sight. There is nothing old fashioned about this fleet, they certainly fed us up some rot regarding the Japanese Army, Navy and Air Force. From what I have seen of them they are a pretty formidable lot and so far in cases achieved the supposed impossible. Regimental Orderly Sergeant today, real bludge.

Wednesday 20th March

One of the lucky 60 chosen for Art, started this afternoon but only talked. The class is every afternoon from 2p.m. to 5p.m. (excepting Sunday). What a Godsend, something to create an interest and occupy your mind. The schedule is 2 days lettering, 2 of clay modelling and 2 of drawing. Will have to hunt around for pencils, paper, utensils and clay, very anxious to make start.

Thursday 21st March

Had a fight to get off a duty to go to the school (typical Army) if this happens every day I'm going to give it up before I start. Worked on still life, hat, bottle, haversack grouped. Learnt quite a lot. Am in Murray Griffin's class, he is a marvellous teacher. Incidentally, he was head art master at the Melbourne Tech College (one of the best art schools in Australia). Stew tonight, and cigarettes put one in a much better frame of mind.

Friday 22nd March

Big convoy of transport arrived today, we can't be controlling the China Seas, looks like our stay is going to be longer than we hoped. Lettering today, can't say I like it as much as drawing, have different teacher. Our teacher was a window dresser in civil life. Just plain rice. I believe stew is going to be a once a week or every 10 days, hope it's once a week. We are trying to cook some weed that grows in the area, it's not too bad mixed with the rice, tastes like cows and smells.

Saturday 23rd March

Another row to get off duty for class. Lost my head and said a few hasty things. Must have done some good as I went and so far have not been hauled up. Modelling, like it very much. Spent 3 hours doing a nose, its not as simple as it looks. Two of us sit opposite and do each others nose. 10 minutes pose and 10 minutes work. Plain rice with roasted rice for breakfast. Plain rice with thin curry water dinner, and rice and cow's cud for tea. Tea has been cut down only half a mug per man.

Sunday 24th March

One of the English COs has been invited by the Japanese to attend the shooting of 3 of his men found in Singapore. Some of our chaps have been belted up for breaking our area and caught by the patrols, they had on our uniform. I believe the Tommies changed to civilian clothes. The food markets are still charging top prices through the fence. Smoking my last tobacco and I fear there is going to be some heavy going from now on, it's certainly a soother. Had rice flap jacks for tea, not too bad, but not enough, hope they keep on making them.

Monday 25th March

Flap jack for dinner and tea and certainly a change but the fact remains they are still rice. Crave bread, butter, sugar, jam, milk. We get a little meat but could do with a lot more. Drawing today. Drew a nose for 3 hours, we are starting right from the start and I certainly appreciate it. Dying for a cigarette.

Tuesday 26th March

Still great movement of navy and shipping. Great convoys moving as if there was nothing in the world to stop them. Making flour out of rice. Bugs are becoming a great problem, I still sleep out in the open and only indoors when it rains. Receiving massage treatment for my leg. Lettering today, does not appeal too much. Great concert last night. Wonderful artists. I believe that they joined the A.I.F as a concert party. I did not bother to attend them before, but I certainly won't miss the next.

Wednesday 27th March

Using salt sea water for cooking our rice. Went with the party down to the beach (about 2 miles) scrounged a coconut had a good feed, enjoyed the walk, also had a swim. Clay modelled a nose again. Should certainly know a nose. Got caught in a quick heavy downpour last night. Was wet before I woke. Rice cake for tea, not too bad.

Thursday 28th March

On a job cleaning a anti-malaria drain found two skeletons. Very annoyed about missing my drawing lesson. Would not have cared as much if it had been lettering. Still had a pretty fair spin. Regimental concert tomorrow night. Believe we have some good talent amongst us. Very surprised at number of dysentery cases in our Regiment, but the death rate has decreased considerably. Saw Aub Jones, still look like death warmed up.

Friday 19th March

Regimental Orderly Sergeant, just hung around – it's a fair bludge. Saw young Levy strutting around the place like a young pea hen immaculately dressed in laundered white shorts and shirt. God knows where he has been hiding. He certainly looks well fed and groomed. I believe he is a batman to a doctor or a Col. or something, or maybe they are his batman, I don't know or care, but the contrast between he and Aub was damnable. Did not go to class, big inspection and I had to follow around. Concert very good, but some very personal remarks passed about some of our officers and Malayan Command. The boys enjoyed it anyhow.

Saturday 30th March

Spent morning making rice flour. Modelling today. Did an eye. Found it very awkward, will have to spend some time on the eye.

Sunday 31st March

Went for a walk around the camp, found some ripe guavas and Malayan apples, climbed the water tower and had a beautiful view over the Island and surrounding straits and islands. Got a very strong urge to make a break but where could one go? There is no chance of making a break, the odds would be about 10,000 to 1 against. Felt very home sick and despondent. Wish there was an art class on Sundays. Keeps my mind more at ease.

Monday 1st April

Salt water party this morning, enjoy to walk and swim. Also another coconut. It riles me to see the non combatant units getting about perfectly dressed, fat and contented and looking well fed, whilst the poor combatant units look like starved crows, some without boots, hats and all sorts of old clothes. Our Reg. was lucky as we found enough clothes at the first camp to nearly clothe us more or less presentably. Its funny also that the men in hospital are crying out for more food whilst the Field Rmb. Corps, especially 2/9th, live and eat like lords. I have personally seen their food, there certainly should be some sort of inquiry. Surely the powers that be are not blind. Drawing today, still life, doing pretty well am very pleased, so is the teacher (sounds b ____ mad).

Tuesday 2nd April

Was on list for working party, but Doctors crossed my name out as I am still receiving massage treatment, leg slowly improving. Made rice flour in morning, getting flap jacks for meal helps. Lettering today, like it a little better, still prefer drawing and modeling. Issue of 10 cigarettes today, also meat stew tomorrow. What ho! Rumours will be flying tomorrow night, I think the full bellies are responsible. Cigarettes are good, there is more satisfaction in them now than I ever appreciated before. A.I.F. concert on again tonight, hope its as good as the last.

Wednesday 3rd April

Cooks were on strike after breakfast. N.C.O.s cooked dinner, made good job. Cooks back on job for tea. Modeling today, still on the eye. Concert last night excellent; gave a Noel Coward skit, was marvellous and the chap that took the woman's part was perfect, hope the Japs weren't looking, if they were there is going to be trouble about having women in the camp. I defy anyone to see through

his makeup even to the voice, both speaking and singing and his actions were just perfection itself, certainly puts in the night well.

Thursday 4th April

Plenty air activity, must be a big convoy or something about. Saw Fred Elliot, looks pretty well. Marvellous perfume, all day, wind blowing over the gardens into our camp, speaking of perfumes one of the finest I have smelt is the perfume of the rubber tree, it is one I have known in Australia but cannot place it although it reminds me of Mum somehow it seems to bring her into my mind, most peculiar but it always happens, wish to God I was in a position to check up on it. Drawing today, more still life, getting the idea.

Friday 5th April

Making rice flour in morning, receiving a little wheat flour in return; cooks trying to make bread rolls, first attempts not so hot, prefer the flap jacks, although they bring on heart burn. Did some figures today, much prefer to lettering, suppose its easier. Sprayed all the buildings with some sort of mixture to see if it would rid us of bugs, don't think it is going to have much effect. I bet this is the greatest bug breeding country in the world and like everything else they grow to an exceptional size, wish they were something you could eat.

Monday 27th April 1942

Left Changi to join working party, arrived at quarters just after dinner, ate as much rice as possible to hold, felt a little sick.

Tuesday 28th April

Started work loading gravel at Johore Baru Hospital on afternoon shift 2p.m. to 7p.m. Received a few cigarettes from the Jap guards, also inmates, and felt like a bloated Capitalist. Think I'm getting a touch of fever and earned 10 cents = approx. 3^d, patiently waiting for pay day.

Wednesday 29th April

Holiday. Emperor's Birthday. Played bridge all day. Hope we get holiday pay.

Thursday 30th April

Unloaded metal onto new road Tommies are constructing. It is a bludge for us, unloaded two loads each taking 5 min then sat down on edge of main road and watched traffic. Received a few cigarettes.

Friday 1st May 42

Hospital loading metal also a bludge. The Jap inmates yarn to us all the time which also means a cigarette. They are very interested in our age, married or single, children and family, they like looking at photos. Think my wife and baby are beautiful and so do I.

Saturday 2nd May

Mae's birthday, at one time I hoped to be home for it. I won't say that I thought of her today as I do nothing else but think of her and Julian every day. Some unloading job. Did not get any cigarettes. More rumours.

Monday 3rd May

Hospital again, met Jap Pilot, very nice chap, 22 years of age, was not wounded, just sick. Most of the Japs in the Hospital, I believe some 3,000, all suffering from shell wounds and have a great respect for our artillery. Had a good feed at Hospital, the cooks brought out dishes of clam soup. What one could not eat we brought back in tins. Marvellous what one will eat when hungry.

Monday 4th May

Cigarette issue and very acceptable. Nothing else of consequence.

Tuesday 5th May

Hospital again. Did not seem to be as many patients, must have cleared a large number out. No cigarettes. I smoked my issue the same night.

Wednesday 6th May

A new job working on a monument which is being erected on top of a very high hill (can be fully appreciated when marching up). From the top is a marvellous view practically all over the island and the surrounding islands and waters. The monument is being erected to the Japanese dead and I believe around this area they lost approx. 8,000 men when taking the Reservoir and this hill. They are also building another monument to the memory of their fallen adversaries also the civilian population that lost. It's a very nice gesture unless they think we might make a special effort on its construction, a very nasty thought. We start work on this job at 9a.m. and knock off at 5.30p.m. with 1 hour for lunch.

Thursday 7th May

Still working on the hill. It's certainly some mark, and pretty hard on rice. Feel pretty sick today, don't think it is the fever, violent pains in the stomach.

Friday 8th May

Sick all night and made at least 8 trips. Went up the hill again but did not do much work for Japs, did quite a lot for myself, afraid I've got a touch of dysentery.

Saturday 9th May

Feel very weak, made numerous trips again, last night and during the day. Pay day, too sick to enjoy my hard earned dollar 2/11.

Sunday 10th May (Mother's Day)

More work on the monuments. Nothing of interest. Went to Church Parade. Feel a little better but still consistently walking. 3 months a P.O.W.

Monday 11th May

Did not start work until 1.30p.m. and finished at 4.30p.m. for no apparent reason. All sorts of rumours especially as a brown out was ordered from today on. Feel much better. Bought cigarettes.

Tuesday 12th May

Still on monument and back to normal hours. No doubt they are inconsistent and certainly not original. Without a doubt our fellows certainly have loafing on the job down to a fine art, its an education to watch them. They have the Japs perplexed and it is only a miracle that any work is done. I am practically back to normal, much luckier than some of the other dysentery cases, must have thrown the germ early. Spent part of my cash, 5 cents on a cake and what a treat.

Wednesday 13th May

On the hill again. Saw convoy of ships leave harbour, also big flight of bombers land on Island. Far out to sea saw in the afternoon column smoke also what appeared to be dog fight. Plenty of rumours flying about. Prominent Japanese artist visited top of hill and made a few sketches. One rumour to the effect that we are going to be split up into four groups and sent to different part of the Jap Occupied Territory. Saigon, Formosa and men over 40 together with hospital cases to be left on Singapore.

Thursday 14th May 1942

Still on the hill. Its pretty hard work on rice three times per day (4/5lb per day) for the last 3 months with only rare occasions a little milk or curry, both very watered. Milk is an unknown quantity now. Great movement in transports during the day. We are all hoping. Its funny every plane that has flown over us since we become P.O.W. is watched with great hope although we know for sure who they are. I suppose its just habit. I think I will do it all my life. A great event tonight, a spud as big as a bar----'s egg, one per man too and real new potatoes, also some broth made out of fat to mix with our rice. decided to give up smoking, have gone all day without, necessity knows no choice, but could have had a few draws. Don't know how long will last, possibly to next cigarette issue.

Friday 15th May

Change of job. Worked today weeding around Jap soldiers quarters. Give me the hill any day, at least there is something beautiful to see. Nasty accident, two Scotties found a mortar bomb and while they were examining it the thing exploded blowing the head and arms of one and severely injuring the other. Still not smoking. Had some fat water with a few yams boiled in it, no doubt we are living well these last two days.

Saturday 16th May

Another new job and what a job, carrying reinforcing steel rods up the hill, 5 trips in all. The hill is about the same grade as Brown Street and 3 times the height. Will sleep well tonight and won't lay awake thinking of home. Have not had cause to test my personal temper as yet, hope I can keep it under control when the time comes. A gang of our chaps sneaked their rods onto a lorry and a 1st class Jap sentry noticed it, called their immediate sentry (a 2nd class Jap) up, slapped his face and then made him line up the gang and slap their faces with a stick. The boys marched off singing "should old acquaintance be forgot". They usually sing or whistle this on those occasions. No cigarettes today. Stew made of yams and a little pumpkin with our rice tonight. The climbing is bringing the tinea out.

Sunday 17th May

A day of surprises. Firstly split into two sections, one to work and one to rest (my section) and so on alternative days. The on shift left at usual time and went up the hill. They arrived back just after lunch for no apparent reason. They brought back tools etc. which is unusual. See what tomorrow brings. Had a good loaf and did some washing. Cooked some flap jacks but of plain rice, mixed with vaseline not too bad with a pinch of salt. The Chums and Scotties were also brought back early with their tools. Would give a 1/- if I had it for a good cigarette. Waiting anxiously for pay day. Some of the boys have bad tinea. Mine is not too bad. Dysentery still raging. Have heard that the chaps left behind at Changi Barracks have disappeared, where, no one seems to know.

Monday 18th May

No work today. Just another lazy day with too much time to think. More fat soup with rice. Starting to put on weight was 10 stone 12 lbs when I left Changi, must weigh myself first opportunity, probably lost few pounds during time of dysentery. A new set of guards today, only temporary. I believe the old ones have been called away and their proper relief had not yet arrived. Here's hoping. Rumours that the Changi chaps sailed from the Island.

Tuesday 19th May

Still no work. Did a little washing. Cooked some more rice flap jacks with Vaseline. Suffering bad attacks of heartburn at present moment. Weighed today must have lost more weight than I thought, now tip the scales at 10s 8lbs. I think it is a few years since my weight equalled that.

Wednesday 20th May

Still no work. Food position very bad, rice being very inferior and hard to eat. This nearly 4 months since I tasted bread, butter, jam etc. Tried playing rummy, but reminded me too much of home so gave it up. No rumours. Would much prefer to be working, time on my hands is not good for the mind. Hot rumour confirmed, that 3,000 A.I.F. sailed for an unknown destination, but is believed Formosa.

Thursday 21st May

And still no work. Food position even worse today, our stores are long overdue. I have often noticed that the conversation never embraces sex which was usually predominant when men get together, but I'm sure only indulged in when hunger is satisfied. There is an epidemic of flu going through the camp, not very bad but uncomfortable. I woke up this morning with my share. There are numerous skeletons of A.I.F chaps around our camp also numerous Jap graves. They did not bury our dead, but the last few days we were given permission to bury those around the area. Amongst those buried today were 19 with their hands tied behind their backs. No doubt these poor chaps were taken prisoners and then shot, an understood thing for prisoners taken before Capitulation. The brother of one of these chaps belongs to our Regiment, he knew he was missing and was last seen in this area. There must be thousands of our chaps, English and Indians dead who are not buried.

Friday 22nd May

Just moped around, this kind of life will finish us all. Few cases of Beri Beri already. Rations arrived today, nothing else but rice. God how we hate it. Would a thousand times prefer to be in the action.

Saturday 23rd May

Here I am writing this with a cigarette in my mouth and a full tummy and feeling like human being. Manna from Heaven today, meat, potatoes and green paw paws and what a stew, even made the rice mixed with it taste like real food. Issued with three cigarettes, smoked two straight off and kept this one for after tea. If I only had a letter from home to go with it, must reread for the thousandth time the one I refused to destroy and always keep in my wallet. Sure to dream of home tonight. Full bellies always start rumours so am expecting some any minute.

Sunday 24th May

Another marvellous tea, same as yesterday but with the addition of a cake made of rice flour, wheat flour and pineapples. Noticed the different mess utensils today, some have beautiful silver spoons and for us jam tins for cups, also cut down tins for plates. Others wonderful china plates, us using home made spoons and jack knives. Then you see pewter mugs with tin plates, the one seems to have everything perfect. I have an enamel mug, ordinary soup spoon and cut down can for a plate. Still no work, just sit on the ramp near the road and watch the traffic. Not a bad stunt, received some cigarettes and last, but not least, a ripe pineapple. A Chinaman gave me the pineapple and the cigs came from a Jap. I'll be sitting there again tomorrow. The pineapple did not go far. I was lucky to get a slice out of it. Wish we could get some news.

Monday 25th May

Still no work, but looks like some very shortly as our new guards arrived today, mustered us and incidentally found a few missing. They turned up later and had to report to the Jap Commanding Officer. Have not heard how they fared, hope for the best. They sneaked out to try and get some pineapples to make cakes so we all feel the responsibility. Did not do any good in the cigarette line and pineapples today: see what tomorrow brings.

Tuesday 26th May

No work, but possibility of starting tomorrow. The new guards have taken over from the temporary ones, also rumour that we will be paid tomorrow, had given up all hope of receiving it. Tea good tonight, vegetable broth, rice and last but not least a bully beef rissole. Oh boy, was it good, wish there had been a dozen each, that was the only trouble, one made me twice as hungry as usual. The new guards let the camp breakers off with a few slaps on the face and a caution but with the promise of very drastic measures to the next lot. Caught a cigar thrown over by a Chinese today, chopped it up and made cigarettes. Very hungry for some authentic news, all we get is just rumour and very unsatisfactory.

Wednesday 27th may

Well the best day I have put in as a P.O.W. It was decided to try and buy salt and a few other necessities which we do not get enough issued (not rice), so three from our section were picked to go under guard to a nearby village Bukit Timah (about 1½ miles away). We arrived there and the Jap guard gave us 2 hours to do our business (we did it in 5 minutes as we were unable to buy the articles required) so we just cruised about the village markets and what was left of the shops. We were

standing near one of the stalls when a Chinese lady came up and brought 2 packs of cakes, paid for them then pushed them to us and walked away. At the same time I felt a hand touch my pocket and putting my hand there found a packet of 30 cigarettes. Walked to another stall and the Chinese shopkeeper gave me a paper parcel, it contained new shelled peanuts. By this time we were near a Chinese restaurant and on looking up a Chinese signed with his eyes to come in, we did and found a bowl of Mah Mue on a table waiting for us (it consists of chicken broth seasonal and small pieces of chicken, pork, prawns, and plenty of spaghetti). The Chinese just nodded to it and left and did we tuck in. After that banquet we walked into the markets where an old Chinese woman passed me, she put something in my hand, it turned out to be a dollar note. She did not look around just went on. A cigar and another packet of 20 cigarettes were received in the same manner also a succulent piece of pared pineapple was placed in our hands. All this without a word or even a look. I believe if we had stayed much longer we would have finished up with the whole market. The Chinese do not say much but they certainly show their appreciation. I have a very sincere admiration for them. The Jap guard was a nice cove and pulled up a truck to take us back. Received a shock today, there were four Jap guards talking away at the gallop next to where we were sanding waiting for a truck, when one turns around seemingly from out of the blue and said "Say are you guys toting your lunch there?" We nearly fell over. It appears he was in America for 19 years before the war. The worst meal since I have been a P.O.W. today, thank God for Bukit Tumah. Rumour we start work on the road tomorrow but would much prefer to go back to Bukit Tumah.

Thursday 28th May

Started off for work, only went 100 yards and did it pour, we marched for 1½ miles in the deluge and stood waiting in it for 1½ hours, then the guard turned us about and marched us back. First time I have felt the cold in Malaya. Nothing else of importance. Meals worse than yesterday. Given rice without any salt. Am I hungry? Wish they would pay us what they owe us.

Friday 29th May

Well again feel contented as possible. Good tea, stew with real meat, rice and beans, also cake made of pineapple (green). Given a cigar which completed the meal. New arrangements regarding work: half of us work one day and the other half the next. Did some washing, and built myself a bunk of bags, hope it does not collapse. I doubt it, as my weight has not improved, as a matter of fact I think I have lost more. Few rumours today, we only listen to the good ones and discredit the bad. Every time I think of home, which is often, I get a numb feeling, have just about worn out the photos I have.

Saturday 30th May

Much prefer working, time goes much quicker. Our new guards are very congenial and never bother us. Portioned out the work and said when we finished it that was all for the day. We did not hurry and was then back in camp by 4p.m. and I might state we did more in one day than we usually do in ten. I'm afraid all armies are the same. For 9 weeks we cleared land of timber and growth, grubbed the stumps, cut away hills and culverts for the road, loaded, carted and laid the stone, large ones, medium and small metal, rolled them and otherwise practically finished about 600 yards of road. Now we are rooting up all the stones, widening the road by another half and cutting down steep

grades to a gradual slope. Apparently these Engineers did not like the previous Engineer's methods; to us its just work as we don't care a damn. Now for tea, stew (without meat) made of beans, Chinese spinach (Kantong) and yams. Also pineapple rissole together with two spoonfuls of Brewer's Yeast, a great help to combat Beri Beri. Dysentery and Beri Beri still with us. Another great event, we were paid, also N.C.O.s get a rise of 5 cents per day (1½ d).

Sunday 31st May

The anniversary of the 2nd luckiest event of my life, my son Julian's birthday and in ten days time it will be the 2nd anniversary of the 1st, which made possible the 2nd. I spent the day trying to imagine the scenes of the day at home together with a lot of wishful thinking. It has been to me a great misfortune to have missed my son's first Christmas and 1st birthday, but God willing I will be home for his next. The tea tonight fitted the occasion, the best since Capitulation, beautiful stew ½ lb meat per person, potatoes and vegetables not forgetting rice and a rock cake. It looks like there is going to be a big improvement or something unusual is going to happen. It is marvelous how a little food that one is used to can bring back your natural normal functions. It was a common occurrence whilst the diet was all rice to go 12 even 20 days. Happy Birthday Julian.

Monday 1st June

Had a touch of fever last night. Went to work today, did not feel too well, possibly throw it off tomorrow. Extra good tea tonight, but could not eat very much, to someone else's benefit. Breakfast and dinner are much the same, plain rice, although with our lunch today we had 4 slices of cucumber, it's marvellous what a difference it makes, feel we are getting the cream of the land. Had some news from Changi today still having some deaths with dysentery; poor old Ace Byrnes is very bad and not expected to get over it. Sincerely hope he does. It is definite some of the boys have sailed to a destination unknown. We certainly can't have much say on the seas. Hope I don't get my usual crop of dermatitis with my fever.

Tuesday 2nd June

Still feeling feverish, but managed to have some tea. But did not feel like breakfast or dinner. Tea was grand, wish I'd felt more like it, vegetables (plenty) stew, rice, date pudding with sauce and I believe the rations that arrived today was unbelievable. Hope it keeps up. Still plain rice for breakfast and dinner but if the rations are what we heard it looks like an improvement in both these meals. Can't understand the change, hope there is no catch. Rumours still flying about, must be the food.

Wednesday 3rd June

Feeling a little better, meals still good, stew for breakfast and tea, plain rice dinner. Boys are beginning to show results, look just like a ----- that has just turned out, pretty boney and fat bellied but with work and food they will start to build up. Received two bags of ripe pineapples today. I am led to believe we will have pineapple fritters tomorrow. What Oh!!

Thursday 4th June

Feeling pretty good, will be able to work tomorrow. Extra good tea tonight, vegetable stew and rice, meat rissole and cake with a date in it. These Japanese guards are treating us much better than the

previous ones but still no matter how well their treatment it does not compensate for the fact of not letting us write home and receive word from home. We would put up with the worst if this privilege (and actually it is not a privilege, as a P.O.W. in any other part of the world is allowed to write and receive, it is only something humane) was allowed us. Most of the chaps spend quite a lot of time mapping out careers and building castles in the air. I'm afraid I do quite a lot of the castle building. Another game I play with myself is visualizing everyone at home and one by one picturing what they are doing. Most of us at this camp and I believe other camps are suffering with a sort of scalds between the legs and in other places, its very uncomfortable, the skin peels right off and leaves the places red raw, it is also extremely itchy and we unconsciously scratch whilst sleeping which does not improve matters and often causes bleeding.

Friday 5th June

Back to work, did a good hard day. I'm satisfied I can keep up and perhaps do a little more than the majority. The young chaps don't seem able to handle the rough going as well as the matured man. This was also very noticeable during action. My leg gives me a fair amount of trouble at night but ... *[page torn away]* ... I only weigh 10 stone 10 ... *[part of page missing]* ... strong due to the lack of the right food. The Japanese brought into our camp 2 bren gun carriers and a 1 ton wagon. There were 14 Australian skeletons found in them, probably wounded who had been placed in them during the campaign. We buried them and collected their identification discs and also a diary found on one. There were also a few tins of bully beef strewn amongst them, but as the smell was terrific no one bothered to collect them, as hungry for meat as we are. Just saw a humorous incident, a load of pineapples was going passed the camp when a lorry driven by an Aussie sneaked up close beside it and the boys in the back unloaded into their waggon at least 50. They then went past the following truck also, Aussies did the same thing, I don't know how it finished as they were then rounding a bend out of sight. Meals just fair today, not near as good as the last few days, although we received some fish. It was just like the mackerel I use for bait, only these fish stunk a hundred times worse. I could not tackle them but some of the chaps said they weren't too bad. Two more Bren gun carriers just brought in four skeletons in each. The carriers were absolutely riddled. An English officer was with them and he said that heartbreaking as it is to see those remains we could have the satisfaction of knowing that they must have put up a terrific fight. There were thousands of spent cartridges in the carriers and on the ground ... *(page torn and missing)* ... hundreds of Japanese graves, most of them communal. That is one thing we will never forgive the Japanese for: not allowing us to bury our dead after the Capitulation. It would have then been possible to identify every body found, now it is practically an impossibility as most of the identification discs are eaten away by the ----- and their people will be hoping for the impossible to happen as a body is not reported as dead unless sighted or identified. This uncivilised action together with the stopping of our communication with our families is unpardonable and unforgettable. We all feel very badly about these things. I believe there are quite a few of our dead still lying unburied around the area where the carriers came from.

Saturday 6th June

It is two years today that I joined up and the beginning of the most miserable few days of my life. I can still vividly picture the worry and heartbreaking that day caused. I was then caged up and unable

to do anything about it. Today I am more so. Then I was at least able to ring on the telephone or write, today I have just to think and hope. Thinking does not improve matters, but leaves me very depressed with very little hope of relief in the near future which no doubt is brought about by the lack of any authentic news. The news we do receive is anything but hopeful and gives the impression that things are going badly for us. I try to discredit it but it is so possible that it persists.

Fair meal tonight as far as our meals go, a piece of braised steak about the size of a date, two dessertspoons of gravy, small portion of rice and a date cake. I'm still as hungry as hell. Afraid this life will make gluttons of us all. More Bren gun carriers and vehicles arrived during the day with their gruesome loads having the effect of making us ill tempered, depressed and further adding to our bitterness. It would be fitting punishment for the makers of war to be forced to ride for ever in these vehicles with what remains of what was once youthful and human and now just stench, bones, some not even known. Poor bloody fools, if every man was not a fool there would be no one to fight and there would be no wars.

Sunday 7th June

Four Lunar months as a P.O.W. and in those four months I think I have aged that many years. Had an agreeable job today, pretty hard work but a change. Five of us and a Jap guard went into the bush and cut down trees to make posts. The Jap guard was a congenial sort and spoke a little English. He is 23 and was wounded at Gemas by one of our artillery shells, possibly one of mine, definitely one from our troop. When I told him that he laughed and demonstrated the action of our shells. He has been in the army 3 years and has 2 more years to do. He does not like the army and is ... [*page torn and missing*]. He likes the Australians but does not like the English or Americans, but would not give any reasons. He does not smoke, but brought us packets of cigarettes and supplied us with a smoke every time he gave us a breather which was fairly often. He calls out "Smoko" and pulls out the cigarettes with a grin all over his face. He also went away and brought us back four slices of pineapple each. A contrast, another guard attached to our camp has a monkey whose tail looks as if it has recently been cut off. This guard derives quite a lot of pleasure in lighting a cigarette and handing it to the poor monk so that it will grab the hot end. It has numerous scars on its hand. Today he was jabbing it with his bayonet making it cry. One of our chaps walked over to the guard house, picked the monkey up and threw his wallet onto the table. The Jap just laughed. The chap still has the monkey and I don't think they will take it back. Meals today not bad enough to complain about and not good enough to rave about.

Monday 8th June

The monkey went bush this morning and no amount of coaxing would induce him back; perhaps it will be much better off providing it doesn't go too close to the natives who would appreciate a meal. I believe thousands of natives are starving in Singapore, they poor souls seems to get it both ways. The last day of Capitulation 22,000 were killed and was one of the deciding factors for Capitulation. Hundreds of horses passed our camp last night, a very uncommon sight. Previously the only horses in Malaya were race horses. In Singapore and on the mainland they were only something seen in a circus. Japanese holiday today. Scrubbed out our quarters and did some washing.

When we first arrived in this country the M.O. gave us lectures regarding tropical diseases etc. We could not walk barefooted, sleep without mosquito nets, drink water that had not been chlorinated and numerous other precautions. I followed them to the letter until we left Tampin and up to then could definitely guarantee that my bare feet had not touched the ground. Since then I have drunk all kinds of water, never used a mosquito net and was incidentally stung by every sort of mosquito and insect in the last four months ... [*page torn and missing*] ... at every opportunity. This applies to most of the fighting units and I'm sure very little harm has come by it, or we are becoming like the natives, immuned. No rations other than rice; dry rice three meals today, hard to take.

Tuesday 9th June

Work getting tougher and hours longer. We work from 9a.m. to 6.30p.m. – 1 hour for lunch. News today very upsetting and am extremely worried, can't get it out of my mind, although I am hoping it was just Japanese propaganda, to wit: Japanese submarines shelled Newcastle and Sydney. If it is true which after analyzing it from all angles ----- much doubt, I can only pray that no harm was done to mine or anybody. Hope Mae and Julian took my advice regarding Woolbrook. God I wish we could do something here, its maddening, no reliable news and just waiting.

Wednesday 10th June

The 2nd anniversary of the greatest event of my life and the days spent with my wife from that day the happiest. God grant that I can spend years instead of days. I greatly regret my inability to send Mae a little token to commemorate the day. I can only try (which I frequently do) mental telepathy, to send to her just what I feel I would like to say and I hope from the bottom of my heart to spend the next anniversary with her and Julian. Still extremely worried about the possibility of the news regarding the shelling being correct. No work today, system being changed again, we now work from 9a.m. to 6.30p.m., two days and then one off; don't know how long this system will last. Some of the boys broke camp today and went scrounging pineapples. They came back loaded, all half ripe. There's going to be plenty of belly aches, but will help to clear the Beri Beri. Had my first hot shower since I arrived in Malaya. Some of the boys erected a hot water system. All meals much improved but am still hungry as blazes.

Thursday 11th June

They certainly had S.O.L. today. Kept at us all day and worked us till 8p.m. 11 hours, not so bad. We just laughed and when they raved we started singing or whistling to ourselves. We got the impression that things weren't going all their way at other places, hope we are right. They threatened to keep us there until we finished the tasks they set which was an impossible one, but we saw them out and they gave up before we finished. Everybody in great spirits and whistled all the way home and were we hungry. There was not much for tea, cow and stew with rice and rock cakes. I borrowed 50 cents and bought myself a nice full mug of coffee with real sugar and a bread roll (stale) which I toasted, pinched some dripping and salt and had the best tea I've had since being a POW, as a matter of fact, one of the best teas I've ever enjoyed. I'll sleep well tonight, too tired to stay awake with my usual thoughts. I wonder what tomorrow will bring.

Friday 12th June

They were certainly out for blood yesterday, last night at 12 they woke us and had a check off. Somehow they just can't count correctly. They sighted us one by one and well in. They then counted us and recounted us, but could not agree. They broke us off and then fell us in again. We eventually got back to bed at 2a.m. No one knows what game they were playing. We still gave them a good laugh. Still on the ramp today, but knocked off earlier: 7p.m. Hands very sore due to the handles on the picks, hoes and shovels being made of rough unbarked saplings. I reckon I have qualified for any job requiring pick and shovel work. We got 5 minutes every hour for smoko and ½ hour for dinner. One chap did his block and incidentally nearly lost his head for retaliating. They tied his hands behind his back and put a rope around his neck. He was placed in the guard tent tied like that all day and will be court martialled by the Japanese, we are very anxious about him. Tojo's speech was published for our benefit stating that he was giving Australia her last chance to withdraw from the war, giving all the advantages she would receive from Nippon and then painted a very drastic picture of what would happen to her if she did not accept, also mentioning the fact that the treatment of A.I.F. P.O.W.s would be extremely uncomfortable and drastic for them. We can take it. Saw a few examples of their quick tempers today. Tea fair but not anything to write about. Wish I could have borrowed another 50 cents to repeat last night's meal.

Saturday 13th June

At least we had our day off today. How long this concession will last I don't know, it's about the only one left.

It's a funny thing to say, but correct. We are starving for sweetness and likewise we are starving for salt, doesn't make sense but you can tell the lack of both. Everything is tasteless, we chop up the half ripe pineapples for the little sweetness they contain. Spent a very busy day, what between the millions of bites we received from the sandflies and the scalds between our legs etc., it's only one scratch after another. I certainly appreciate how Mae felt with her nervous itch.

The rumour regarding the shelling of Sydney and Newcastle still persists. Beginning to believe that there must be some truth in it. I spent quite a lot of time visualizing where and how the shells would fall and hoping ... [*page torn and missing*] ... a great deal of ... [*missing*].

Sunday 14th June 1942

Brickbats in one hand and bouquets in the other. We have received a raise in wages which will now be Officers and W.O.s 35 cents, N.C.O 25 cents and O.R. 15 cents and I certainly did my 25 cents worth today. Long while since I worked so hard, feel pleasantly tired and was so hungry (had stew and rock cake for tea) could still eat 10 times the amount. They were in a much better humour today, no incidents.

A script was displayed on the notice boards giving figures of what amount of excavation Japanese soldiers can dig and shift (I don't remember the figures will get them later). They stated that they knew we were incapable of doing as much as them but they expected us to do a certain amount. I also

forgot this figure but I know they are both impossible, especially when digging a hard rolled road, and they were going to see that we do it, we'll see.

Scalds pretty bad today. The reason for them I think is that it rains frequently during the day, we keep working and get soaked, the sun then burns hell out of us and sweat pours out of us. This goes on most of the day. One of the old boys Fatty McLean from our hut is very bad with dysentery. He is just skin and bones and I fear the worst. A glorious sunset tonight, one of the best I have seen, gave me a funny feeling in the stomach, could not keep my eyes off it. Beyond me to even try to describe. Have not heard any more of Hec Byrnes, hope he is going OK.

**Lecture delivered by Lieutenant General Sir Lewis Heath, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C.
to A.I.F. Officers, Changi P.O.W. Camp. Sunday 15th June 1942
[Please note the date discrepancies Sunday and Monday following both dated 15th June]**

(Lecture by General Heath) Singapore.

I propose dividing my lecture into 2 parts. The first is the prelude. The period of tension, preparation and training for operations in Malaya and the Far East. The second will concern the operations themselves from the outbreak of hostilities on December 8th 1941, up to the arrival on the Island and if there is any more to be said, what I consider to be some of the reasons why we suffered defeat.

Now the first period, the period of tension, started as far back as 20 years ago. Up to 20 years ago we were allies with Japan. There then became great differences between the aims of Japan on one hand, and the aims of Great Britain and America on the other, especially relating to China. As a result of that, in 1921 we broke alliance with Japan. In the following year at the Washington conference we came to various agreements. There was one which specified that the Capital Ship standard – the rates between us, the Americans and the Japs should be 5-5-3. The Japs did not agree to sign very gladly. To start with, it must have caused a certain amount of loss of face, but they were clever enough to angle for and get some important clauses into that treaty, one of which was that neither United States or Great Britain should make a first class naval base or add to any fortifications within striking distance of Japan, and that automatically put us at the mercy of the Japs in respect to Hong Kong and the Philippines. Now although Japan signed that treaty she must have done so with her tongue in her cheek for whereas we had to think far ahead about making our naval bases, she was content for a matter of 9 years to abide by the treaty. In 1931 the world was in the throes of an economic crisis, Japan as usual took advantage of the situation as she has always done since 1914. In 1934 she cast aside her agreement and occupied Manchuria, thus putting herself, as she thought, in a position which made her unassailable from the sea. We decided rightly or wrongly – I think wrongly to build our Naval base at Singapore. The situation at Singapore looked fairly comfortable, at least it did to the politicians. Since then however there have been great changes and as early as 1934-35 the Admiralty at home was to become very concerned: because, although the Base had by then advanced very considerably and was nearing completion, it must have been clear that we were likely to be embroiled in a struggle at home that would have no Navy to send to this expensive Naval Base. In 1938 the position was reviewed and it was realised that ships would not be available for defence of our

interests in the Far East, and so they had to think how to defend not only the base but the straits leading into the Indian Ocean. In the absence of a navy they rightly decided that the defence of Malaya and Singapore taken as one entirety should primarily rest upon the Air Force. Without proper consultation with the Army authorities the then Air Force commanding, in collaboration with the Air Ministry, embarked upon a programme of Aerodrome construction which was detrimental to the interests of the Army, which would naturally have to protect any aerodrome they made a degree of dispersion, which was quite ridiculous. The program of construction included the modernization of old landing grounds up at Koto Bahru, another 22 miles down the East Coast at Yong Kedah, and still another at Kuanton which is at the mouth of the Palang river. The modernization of one at Alor Star and the construction of others at Sungai Patani; Butterworth in province Wellesley and later there were more to be constructed up there. Indicated in the original programme was the construction of one at Kalang, Kluang and three others including Kalang on Singapore Island. Later on they decided on one in Kelantan 27 miles back from the coast at Mahlang; another at Alor Star and a matter of 5 fighter strips all up in Kedah. Then as a sideshow the Navy decided to building one at Maria, south of Port Swettenham.

Now what were the forces available at the outbreak of war with Germany? In Singapore itself there were 3 Battalions. On the mainland 4 Battalions of Indian Volunteer Forces up North at Taiping. In addition 4 Battalions of the F.M.S. Volunteer Forces. What hope had they of protecting this vast territory 350 miles from Singapore? Before the flag fell in Europe it was decided to send a force the 12th Indian Brigade as a reinforcement to Singapore. That enabled them to have something additional to protect Mersing and at that time they were unable to look further north than Mersing for the employment of regular troops. Further reinforcements came in November 1940, with the arrival of what was formed into the 11th Indian Division which consisted of 2 Infantry Brigades. Later was established the G.H.Q. of the Far East which had a very big ----- or area of responsibility. Burma, Chung King, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and the Dutch East Indies, all of which came within the sphere of influence of Sir Robert Brooke-Popham who was Commander in Chief of the Far East. He had with him a planning staff only, not a executive staff, and all he could do – all he did, was to try and get coordination between our Allies which later became known as the A.B.C.D. powers. He was stationed in Singapore and in consequence perhaps took a closer interest in Malaya than in the other part of his sphere. In the previous August we got the 3rd Battalion which was evacuated from Shanghai when we decided we could not attempt to hold it. Then came the A.I.F. reinforcements and about the same time the 9th Indian Division but who like the 11th Division had only 2 Brigades. The Singapore fortress troops consisted of 2 Brigades; 2 Brigades of A.I.F. which were given the protection of the beaches of Mersing and Endau and the State of Johore. 11th Division (Ind.) was responsible for Aerodromes in Nth Kelantan and Kuanton. The troops were very dispersed. What was our conception of what the Japs were likely to do? The G.H.Q. appreciation was that the Japs would not attempt to land at any place held by troops unless they could support landing by shore based planes. We had protected those places which would be most profitable for them to land. Kota Bahru was profitable because of its drome, not so profitable as regards making air inroads into the country because it must have been quite clear that the only means of communication to the interior

was the line of railway which ran over large rivers and that in consequence bridges would be blown. The Japs knew this district like the back of their hands as iron ore is exported by them from here. We could not spare troops to hold these mine areas but a Company of Malays was sent up to round up some hundreds of Japs working in the mines. Kuantan would be most profitable because it's drome only and miles from coast and also a road which ran into the heart of the country which if continued would bring them through the gap of Fraser's Hill into Selanjor, or alternatively they could go south. A landing at Mersing or Endau would be profitable if they were prepared to take a risk of aircraft being used against them. Before war started there was a scheme afoot called "Operation Etonian" which gave the 11th Division in Kedah the job of securing Patani and Cinggora before the Japs could get there. To carry this scheme out in time presented great difficulties. G.H.Q. at the time were confident Thailand would come in on our side. They said we would be invited in, thereby giving us time to settle down. The actions of Thailand later on caused a certain amount of misgivings on the part of those holding this view. Nevertheless this scheme, which with some slight modifications became known as "Matador", was passed by the War Office as part of our defence scheme here. I fought vigorously against it. The order was to move forward and seize the beaches of Cinggora before the Japs could get there. With regards to Patani it was agreed that we had not the resources or the troops to get there in time and it was decided to try and get to a position which can be known as "Laycol" 30 miles inside Thailand on the Patani Road.

After going into things pretty carefully it became doubtful whether the Thais would ever invite us and the question then arose, when could we move into Thailand? The answer was quite clear – we could not move until Thai neutrality had been violated by Japan. I ordered recess to be carried out of Jitra for the protection of the dromes being constructed in Kedah and Province Wellesley. We were up against the labour question. Thousands of labourers were required but we were up against the civilian attitude which was that their role was to produce 100% rubber and 100% tin, and if we took their labourers it would be at the expense of production. But we did get from them some labour with which we constructed anti-tank obstacles.

Now you may have thought that your positions at Endau and Mersing were scattered but I can assure you that we were much weaker up at Zelantan and also at Kuanton. Here the 8th Brigade then commanded by Brigadier Key, now General Key, had 30 miles of beaches, and he had a northern frontier vulnerable if the enemy landed there, of 10 miles. He had been given one extra Battalion at the expense of this other Brigade down south. This second Brigade had 17 miles of beaches but it was not incumbent on the enemy to land on the beaches actually held there was a very good place for landing further to the south at the mouth of the Patang River, which goes into the heart of the country right up to the road. This river is navigable at all seasons of the year by Jap motor landing craft. The only thing we had to hearten us was the air force's optimistic estimates that they could wipe out 40% of any convoy attempting to land troops on the shores of Malaya or Southern Thailand. They held to that belief after the Japs walked into Indo-China, and although their aircraft had not been brought up to the figures demanded by Sir R Brooke-Popham.

In July the whole situation regarding the strength of troops in Malaya and the Air Force was reviewed. The Air Force adhered to their figures, which was round about 368 1st class aircraft. Actually when war broke out they had little more than half that number, and of the number 50% of them were obsolete or obsolescent. They had old Wildebeests, rather obsolete planes that were quite useless. Nevertheless they said "Leave it to us, we will knock out 40% of any convoys approaching". The review of the army situation resulted in the War Office being asked to bring the forces in Malaya to the following basis:

111 2nd Corps – to be made up to 3 Divisions, each of 3 Brigades;

The A.I.F. to be brought up to a full Division of 3 Brigades;

Malaya Command Reserve to be brought up to full Division of 3 Brigades;

and lastly, and most importantly, that we should have a Tank Regiment. We could not ask for an 'I' Tank because many bridges would not look at an I Tank in this country. So, the specification was a 14 ton tank.

Had the specification been fulfilled, and the Air Force at their requisite number of modern aircraft, and had we got those forces we asked for, we might have just pulled off the show I think but we must remember that we could not be strong everywhere and that they were terribly weak in Burma.

I might say that in a letter to General Warell soon after he became Commander in Chief in India, I expressed a hope that he might come out and see conditions in Malaya. He said he would come out as soon as he could; and he also wanted to see Burma which was not then under his Command. He appeared much more concerned with the situation in Burma than he was with the situation in Malaya. He had a good look around this at the differing positions both here and in the other countries in the Far East Zone. Burma was nobody's child at that time – it was not thought that the road was sufficiently good to enable it to be used for a big attack against India and he was determined to have Burma put under his wing which he succeeded in doing. However, if we had held out they would still, I think, have got into Burma.

As I said tension with Japan had existed since 1922 in one form or another – if not tension, apprehension. Tension certainly became active when Japan walked into Indo-China and that really altered the whole situation in Malaya, and although we were aware of it at the time, by walking into Indo-China the Japs presented themselves with air bases from which they could bring shore based aircraft against us. When I say "shore based aircraft", they could bring bombers which could be protected by fighters. Now, the Air Force knew that the Japs had got long range fighters. They had been using them in China over very long distances, but our people did not know that by merely pressing a button these Jap fighters could get rid of the great heavy bellied patrol tanks for long distance flights, which hampered their maneuverability at close range. What the Air Force did not know was that by pressing a button these Jap fighters could cast aside these belly tanks and become as maneuverable as their design permitted. It was a fact that they got these aerodromes in Indo-China from which they could escort their bombers across, which enabled them to bomb Kota Bharu and these places, and start bombarding us from the very early days.

I might say in Sir R. Brooke-Popham's time there had been more than one conference between the A.B.C.D. Powers, but we could not get out of the Americans any promise of Capital Ships for this area. They said "Yes, if our Asiatic Fleet is not engaged we will send them to your aid, but that is as far as we will go." The Dutch East Indies said, "Yes, we will help you out with our aircraft, we can send you 4 squadrons if they are not required elsewhere." I believe the Chinese did make an offer to send Chinese Divisions down here but the Government did not like the idea and the offer was declined. Anyhow when the time came we had to stand on our own legs.

We did not get the reinforcements we asked for. There may have been several reasons for that. One thing, I do not believe to this day that the highest in the land thought that the Japs really had serious intentions of going in for a Southern expansion policy as long as China remained a thorn in Japan's side, and so long as Russia remains 'on the perch' up north unengaged. But Russia became seriously involved in Europe and we had to go to their aid, and the aid to Russia reduced what might have been the number of aircraft and tanks available for this country. We also had to keep up our supplies to the Middle East ----- and be prepared for a break through in the Caucasus and I believe that all along we hoped that they were bluffing and we tried to bluff the Japs. I do not know what you think, but you will remember when the Japs walked into Indo-China in July last year, the Americans and ourselves retaliated by freezing all Jap credits. That was practically driving them to war, and it would have been permissible for us to do this if we had been in a position to go to war in this theatre and in the whole of the Southern Pacific. But were we? We were not.

Then there was that mission in Nov. last year, followed by a clearing of the tension at the end of November, which resulted in the mobilisation of the Volunteers out here. Japan made her intentions quite clear when aircraft condensation trails were seen over the northern aerodromes, and even went as far south as Ipoh. One day part of a Jap camera was dropped south of the aerodrome there.

At that time in early December we were only on the 2nd degree of readiness and recess had been started out for Indo-China. You will remember Saturday 6th December, when we received the first report of a Jap movement south of Saigon, and the northernmost aircraft of this flight from Kola Bharu spotted a Jap convoy about 1—miles south of Cape Cambodia. Now, unfortunately contact with that convoy was broken and was not regained. The next day Catalinas went out from Singapore (2) but they never returned, I think they were shot down.

Now if we were going to carry out "Matador" operation, the operation on Singgora, we really should have moved on that Saturday. The home government was not prepared to order it. I do not know why, perhaps they thought that even at such a late stage as that we might upset the Americans if we ourselves were first to violate Thai neutrality. On the 7th, that is the following day, Sunday, not the air force but a secret source reported that there was a 2nd convoy 24 hours behind the leading one, which had been reported on the Saturday. Both these convoys contained about 40 transports and were with escorts.

On the 8th December hostilities opened with a raid in the early hours of the morning on Singapore, and almost simultaneously a landing was made on the beach near Kota Bharu. Later we heard that

landings had been carried out at Patani and at Singgora. Later still we heard that Bangkok had been occupied, and we heard of the treacherous attack on Pearl Harbour.

The northern beaches in the Kota Bharu are all divided out into sections about 3 or 4 miles long. It was between the two northerly beaches that the Japs made their landing and they were directed by a Chinese smuggler who we afterwards discovered had put up guiding lights. He was incidentally a man we had tried to get the local police to arrest many months before. On either sides of these beaches were pillboxes. We had pillboxes up about every 1,000 yards.

There was very stiff fighting but by midday we know that both these pillboxes had been lost. That gave the Japs a holding of about 3,000 yards of coast. Counter attacks were put in all that day, but the Jap proved himself superior as an amphibian to our men – he was wearing those rubber boots with a slit toecap. We lost pretty heavily but only 2 Battalions were engaged. A creek ran right up to the aerodrome, which was within a mile of the coast. The Japs lambasted that with their aircraft throughout the day – there was hardly a minute of the day that the Japs were not over it. By the evening of 8th the air squad had had to evacuate Kota Bharu aerodrome. During that landing the aircraft had been up since before daylight. They managed to hit one transport – they sunk a light cruiser and they sunk a barge actually in the Kelantan River – another place where they were trying to land. Those were the only casualties inflicted on the enemy transports during the landing operations at any of the places mentioned. One eighth perhaps of the total ships off the shore – not 40%.

On the night of the 8-9 the Japanese exploited their gains and it was clear by the evening of the 9th that the 8th Brigade had lost not only Kota Bharu aerodrome but had little chance of hanging onto Gong Kodah away in the south because the troops from the latter place had been withdrawn to reinforce another front. Now the Japs put in their one Brigade – they had 6 Battalions – and they got most of these 6 Battalions ashore by the following night. It had been the original intention not to reinforce the 8th Brigade but G.H.Q after conference decided to spare 1 Battalion of the only Brigade in command reserve, the 12 Brigade, to come up here. On the 10th I was in telephone communication with General Barstow and General Key most of the time. General Key reported that he had lost both aerodromes, and that there only remained the third aerodrome at Maghang, which was not yet in a state to be used, the runway had not been completed and the question arose as to whether the purpose for which the aerodrome had been defended had not disappeared. Was there any point in trying to hang on? If you have ever seen the railway running into Rellinton you will agree that it would have been very unwise to attempt to get this Brigade out of there because it was quite certain that as soon as the enemy established himself on these aerodromes, they would make this railway line quite impossible. So it was decided on the 11th December to evacuate the 8th Brigade to Gahang, having removed all available vehicles, transports and stores. Casualties during these operations were as heavy as we had had up north – most of the reg. came back 400 or so strong. They fought their way to railhead at Krai.

Not until the 8th December was a decision given as to what was to be done about implementing this “Matador” scheme. At 1330 hours orders were given that “Matador” was not to take place but permission was given to cross the frontier. As part of the “Jitra” scheme a covering force was to be

sent out known as “Laycol” as part of the “Matador” scheme a force was to be sent in to hold what was the most easily defended position at a place called Ledge [?] in Thailand.

At Kroh we had one Battalion 3/16 Punjabi. It was to be reinforced at the garrison at Pehang, 5/14 Punjabi. That column, known as KROCOL, consisted of 1 Battalion and ----- Battery ----- of Sappers was to advance in Thailand. At 1500 hours the leading scout crossed the frontier at the customs gateway and was shot dead by a Thai gendarme. The Thai gendarmerie – whether they had any Jap soldiers with them we shall never know – fought well. There were only about 50 of them, employing guerrilla tactics, but they held up the Battalion considerably that day and by nightfall the column had only advanced about 15 kilometers. They were meeting obstacles all the time and were constantly being sniped. The next day the gendarmerie were increased to 150 or so, the force got as far as the Ledge where all opposition ceased. By next day they got on to the 33rd Kilometre. The 3 Reserve M.T. Company had come up and embussed them to Betong. They were preceded by the carriers. At Betong much to their surprise they met Japs. The Japs had covered three times the distance coming all the way from Patani. The road was a very poor one and there had been very heavy rains and it was quite remarkable how the Japs managed to get along so quickly as they did. There was light opposition for a start. Our people went on and seized a hill and before they had covered two kilometres they found to their surprise Jap medium tanks advancing up the road. I do not know how the tanks got there since every bridge on this road was reported to be of a capacity of only 8 tons. The leading Company of the 3/16 Punjabis let the tanks go by – most of them – and they charged in against the lorries which were following up the leading tanks – there were about 10 of them. Unfortunately for the Punjabis behind those 10 lorries came the remainder of the Jap tanks, and we only got back out of that Company 10 men. The 3/16 fought hard all day on the 11th, and more than held their own. They had got to Betong. Meantime, the 5/14 Battalion had been told to halt some distance in rear. Whether that was a sound move I do not know. Anyhow, on the 12th the Japs brought up more stuff, and they put in a frontal attack which very nearly overran the leading Company. ‘D’ Company put in an attack which nearly succeeded in ousting these Japs. Colonel Morehead, who was commanding the column, decided that if he were to arrive back with any troops he would have to withdraw. Again the 3rd Reserve M.T. Company carried them out of the action and they passed through the position held by the 5/14 Punjabis.

There was a position practically on the boundary line just to the west of Kroh, and that position had been selected by 11th Division originally as a protection against the attack. His road from Kroh down to Nap I never saw, but it was reported as only being fit for a baby Austin in fair weather. We blew the bridge on that and I sent up one Company of Argylls who were later reinforced by a section of arm. cars. I thought the enemy would use jungle tracks and come down in the form of raiding parties, and this protection was required for the bridges against raiding parties. The 5/16 withdrew. The next day the 15/14 who were told not to get heavily embroiled also came back as a result of a wide outflanking movement across their right flank. They had suffered only less than 6 casualties but the 3/16 Battalion came back rather mangled. In executing their final withdrawal they had lost their second Company all but 6 men when the Company became surrounded and the Battalion came back only 350 strong with wounded.

On the other front at 1330 hours they got an order for the full movement of "Laycol". I had always impressed on Gen. Murray that I never through that "Matador" would ever come off. But they were all impressed with the spirit of "Matador" – it meant a forward movement and they were looking forward to it. For three days and nights they had been on half an hour's orders for "Matador". At 1330 they got order "Matador" is off, man JITRA.

As part of that scheme there was a small column called "Maycol" to go forward. That column went forward but it only got as far as ----- at nightfall. At 2130 hours on the 8th they saw 35 pairs of full headlights coming along and about ½ or ¼ of an hour later they were up against tanks, and the 4 anti-tank guns which were with the small column consisting of only --- Battalion claimed to hit 3 to 5 tanks. I think probably the lower figure is nearer the mark. The Japs were behind the tanks and there were about 20 lorry loads of them. They were very nippy, as usual, and they got out promptly. Our people blew the 3 bridges from ambush and that held the Japs for about 24 hours. Then they crossed the frontier. At the frontier they were met by another body of our troops. They scrapped here during the morning of the 10th. Our forces were then withdrawn to Changlun.

I am satisfied that was one of the mistakes there was not proper reaction to the fact that the enemy had tanks. It altered the whole question of how you should employ your troops. Our troops came leisurely back to this place Changlun. Took up a position south of a bridge, but made no attempt to blow the bridge. Later, when they wanted to blow the bridge the bridge did not go up – it had been raining incessantly. Quite a lot of our demolitions did not go up when we wanted them to, and others which we did not want to go up, went up gloriously.

Very stiff fighting went on here on the morning of the 11th but on the whole I think the Japs got the worst of that. Unfortunately, we lost two of those old Breda Anti-tank guns. The fight was broken off at 1350 hours. Our troops were not followed up closely, and they withdrew to the 20 Kilometres position. By this time this covering force was a whole Battalion strong plus a mountain Battery. The General commanding the force went up about 1430 and said:- "I don't like this position. Get back a couple of miles." The first calamity came at about ½ past 4 that afternoon whilst the Company Commanders were back with their Battalion Command reconnoitering. All the guns were on the move when a tank blitz came down the road. There was one Company moving down the road and two Companies astride the road. The result was that that Battalion was split, and only fragments came in in the next two days. They were "caught bending" good and proper. But it was not the fault of the men, it was the fault of the handling of the troops.

They came on and bumped the 2/1 Gurkhas in front of the Jitra position. Another bridge did not go up here but they managed to stop the leading tanks. That was followed by a very strong Infantry action which went on until the night and the Commanding Officer of the 2/1 Gurkhas arrived back with only a handful of men – they had been surprised and cut off.

Then on the 12th came the battle on the main Jitra position. The Japs had been covered except the NE position. The whole position had not been covered because earlier we had not wanted to advertise too

much to all Japs that lived in this area where our positions were. Incidentally, we had been endeavouring to get all the Japs evicted from the forward areas for months prior to this but failed because the local Govt. would not play. Anyhow, the enemy attacked in force and they followed that up from 0200 hours on the 12th. The Leicesters who had a fairly good position, had quite a good field of fire and fought well all day, but they were not nearly so hard pressed as the right flank. But a most unfortunate decision was given by the Brig. up there and the Leicesters who had been holding their position quite well, were told to clear out after dark and occupy another position. After that there was quite an amount of confusion but the Japs pressed through in the gap between the Japs and the Leicesters and got into the Gurkas.

There had been various other mishaps, there had been troops up on the frontier and they were brought back to the Jitra position far too late in my view. Anyhow, several appeared about 13 kilometres from Alor Star and found that an important bridge was blown against them. They were cut off with their anti-tank guns and all their transport, and moreover, they were fired on by our own troops.

The Jitra position extended right down to the sea. The troops tried to get around by the railway but found that a bridge on the way had been blown. When we withdrew to Jitra, troops to the west of the main road were swept from their line of retreat and they only got back after great difficulty via Pehang and the coastline in Sampan, some of them came in at Pria, and other did not come back until we were back at Ipoh. We were defeated at Jitra – there is no doubt about it – and we were defeated there chiefly because we had not taken proper precautions when we knew the enemy had tanks. General Murray Lyon would have it that the main reason for the defeat there, was that he was all keyed up for this “Matador” operation and the troops were unprepared for this withdrawal operation. Anyhow, the details of the battle at Jitra cover many hours of talking and it will be an interesting battle to study in the future. The outcome of it was that General Murray Lyon got back to Gurun with half his Division. At Gurun having blown bridges over rail and road, over 100 yards along in both cases. Arrangements were made to feed the troops. However, the enemy pressed on with surprising quickness, and our people did not even have time to feed their troops, who had in many cases been without food two days already. At Gurun the enemy again thrust at us down the road. The tanks were not so much in evidence as before but they were there and even on more than one occasion slowed up by our guns. The troops by then were desperately weary. Things did not go well at Gurun and the 6th Brigade lost heavily. In fact out of the whole of his H.D. Brigade Ley was the only one who survived the battle of Gurun. That happened on the 13th. We had already lost Ipoh. The road to Ipoh was open, and constituted a threat to this Division's right hand and rear. The 12th Brigade the Reserve had been released and the two Battalions brought up – one Company was sent to look after Grek itself. “Krocol” came under Command Bnd. Parbisk who was ordered to act defensively. I might say we had hoped we would have armoured vehicles but they did not arrive in time. Permission was given on the 11th – the date of the battle of Gurun – for General Murray Lyon to come back to Perak river. On the afternoon of the 16th evacuation of Penang had been ordered.

Now, to go back a little, but what had the enemy been doing? They were in great force in the NE corner in the battle of Koto Bharu and they continued to pester the troops in the NE corner. In the

NW they did not worry the troops but concentrated entirely on the aerodromes. They opened the ball at 7a.m by bombing Alor Star, and continued by attacking the aerodrome of Sungei Patani. Two attacks were made on Sunai Patani, one attack on Alor Star, and one on Butterworth. The next day they attacked Alor Star again even more heavily, so heavily, that the R.A.F decided to evacuate on the afternoon of the 9th. On the 10th they decided to evacuate Sungei Patani aerodrome, where we left 9 Buffaloes (fighters) and 6 Blenheims derelict: and that was about the scale of casualties at these three aerodromes. The enemy continued to attack Butterworth, but this ground until the 16th was used as an advanced landing ground. But by the 14th there was not a plane housed there permanently. These aerodromes which had forced us into thus undesirable country up here had all gone.

Apart from the aerodromes they concentrated on Georgetown and the rest of Penang. Georgetown was ablaze by the 13th and continued to be ablaze and they continued to attack even after we had evacuated it. Everything was brought to a standstill in Penang – Harbour Board, Municipal services, Police – and it was certainly no mistake ordering the evacuation which was ordered on the night 16/17. The order was carried out very well, with one exception which I will mention later.

By the 18th we were back on the line of Kruan river. The enemy from the 15th onwards had started being a nuisance. By the 19th it was necessary to reinforce that one Company of armoured cars, and the 12th Brigade had to go around, and operating from Kuala Kan-ear Brigadier Paris was given the role of stopping this threat on Taiping. The main enemy thrust thereafter came down this road – they never pressed us very hard elsewhere.

By the 21st, if not earlier, I was thinking we would have to bring the whole Division back across the Perak River. You all know how difficult it is to find anything like position where you can see your enemy, get observation for the Artillery, and where you can dig in well, where you can get anti-tank obstacles. If you can find a position on one road you can be certain it can be by-passed on the other roads. But after a deep recce back here I decided that the best place we could find was one called Kampar, just south of Ipoh. That was without doubt the strongest looking position I have seen in Malaya. That is in the midst of mining and dredging country. It was on the western side of a mountain running to 4,000 ft. It had its weakness in that there was a road that ran around and bypassed the Kampah position to a valley on the side of a mountain: that meant spreading the force. Another weakness which I foresaw was that the enemy might drive down the Perak River, we could not attempt to hold the enemy anywhere north of Kampar. On the 14th, by accident almost, I discovered that 24 motor propelled craft had been left behind in Penang, together with a large number of tengkangs. We had given particular instructions that all these were to be destroyed, but there was terrible confusion there. With the air superiority that the enemy had it looked as if the enemy would have, in addition to having complete command of the China Seas, complete command to the Straits of Malacca and with that command the chances of turning the Corp's position was more than doubted. Eventually, by Christmas day we were back in ----- quite well. We had blown the bridges all right, but that never held the enemy up in any case for more than a few hours. He was quite adept at crossing rivers where we had blown bridges. We did not know he had any such abundance of these motor landing crafts, which he produced almost out of the hat when he came to landing on the island.

On 1st January the enemy was up against us at Kampar, we having fought rear guard actions all the way down. Within 24 hours of these bridges over the Perak having been blown, the enemy were again across with their tanks and AFVs. Now I had all along hoped that sooner or later we would have a chance of using our mobility and our armoured cars, and our first attempt to use them was the country around Ipoh. I personally suffered a very great disappointment when it was found that they had bullets which penetrated our armoured cars and rendered ineffective our armoured mobility. That was the ordinary small-bore rifle bullet, with a special steel support.

We battled at Kampar for three days and there we probably inflicted more casualties on the enemy than anywhere else. This valley which I spoke of was held by the Ghurka Brigade. The enemy were ambushed there a couple of times, but they did not proceed against the Ghurkas. There was some good scrapping on the Leicesters front. By the 4th the enemy had landed at Telok Anson, the mouth of the Perak river, and the mouth of the S Bernam. To look after this threat we had only been able to spare the Independent Company; but to back it up was the 12th Brigade., which was in reserve at Bidor, which we had hoped to rest. That Brigade was moved down the Telok Anson Road, but they failed to hold the enemy in what as almost impossible country defensively. The result was that we had to withdraw and I personally very reluctantly withdrew Kampar; we had to withdraw to Bidor.

The Division Command had selected a position between Trolak and Slim. It was rather like country where the A.I.F. ambushed the enemy north of Gemas. The rail and road ran almost together through two corridors cut through virgin jungle. The 12th Brigade. there became a forward Brigade, again in a series of positions in what the Brigade. Command called porcupine down both rail and road. We had two successful actions there on the 5th. That position was in many ways very strong, or rather, could have been made strong. The enemy could pop up at a few yards distance on either side of our men, and it was rather nerve racking for the men. No proper anti-tank obstacles had been made. We had not learned the lesson of Jitra. There was only a trumpery thing like Dannert wire, which had been laid on the road. On the 6th the troops covering the forward anti-tank obstacles were surrounded and themselves ambushed and tanks burst through just when the forward Battalion was withdrawing under the Brigade Commander's orders. The idea was to alter his positions slightly, leaving his next Battalion as the forward Battalion, and the tanks caught his forward Battalion on the move. There was terrible confusion and the tanks – I think they were 16 medium and some light tanks, burst right though to the Slim River, where they were finally held up by 4.5 howitzers. There they were laid out by the leading gun at a distance of 400 or 500 yards. The full details of the battle of the Slim River have not yet been recorded. We still had a considerable number of anti-tank guns left, but they failed to hold up the attack. That was a great blow.

As I say, the defeat at Slim River was a very sad blow, but before we were defeated there I had been looking back – perhaps I had been looking over my shoulder a bit too much – for even as far back as 11/12 December, when I went down to consult G.H.Q. Command about the evacuation of Kelantan, I had then visualized and put up an appreciation for the defence of Singapore, concentrating everything we had on this necklace of aerodromes across Northern Johore. Between the 2nd and 5th January I had been back as far as the Muar line and Segamut looking for a position should we be driven south of

Slim and I feared we might have to give up the Slim position because of these outflanking threats. I had thought we might be able to get back on the Moar line with 6 Brigades, but in the battle of the Slim the whole of the 12th Brigade was lost except the odd 50 men in one Battalion, along with the whole of the Brigade transport. The next Brigade had also suffered heavily, that was the 28 Brigade, the Gurkhas. As soon as we withdrew south of Bidor the enemy embarked his troops at Telok Anson, and started pegging away on the coastline. I had hoped to have the 9th Division for operations across Fraser's Gap, should we be forced south of Khala Kupu, which is where the Fraser's Gap Road hits the main road to the north. But the enemy pressure in the western coast area became so serious that we had to bring the strongest Battalion away, the 5/11 Sikhs and then, the 3/17 Dogras, to defend the flank.

Going back to the 9th Division the 22nd Indian Brigade up to 22nd January remained intact at Kuantan. The enemy did not attempt to land at Kuantan but after in battle in Kelantan he worked down the coast or he landed north in Trengsanu somewhere. Anyhow, he came down the flank of the Gurkhas who were holding the flank, and worked his way anywhere he chose. As with the operation elsewhere he had excellent guides – whether they were Jap planes who had been employed in the area, or local residents, we do not know. But in a matter of three days he had forced the Command 22nd and 2nd Brigade to withdraw his troops across the Kelantan River, and they were fighting to hold onto the Kuantan aerodrome itself. Eventually by the 23rd January we had to give up the Kuantan aerodrome. We had hoped to deny that aerodrome up to the 14th February to enable an important convoy which was due to come in on 13/14 to have a clear passage to Singapore. Actually our aircraft had been driven out of Kuantan by heavy enemy attacks long before that, and we were not using it except as an occasional advanced landing ground. The enemy brought off two good attacks. The Gurkhas lost quite a couple hundred of men on the east side of the river, and the 2/12 Frontier Force Regiment lost very heavily on the aerodrome on the point of getting out and embussing to get away. I do not think that the embussment was a very clever affair, but the Commanding Officer of that Regiment put up a remarkable fine show himself when, after being bayoneted three times and hit twice by bullets, he went around personally in a carrier and withdrew all his aerodrome posts. I hope by now he has got a Victoria Cross. He was missing on the Island, but after a number of miraculous escapes he got away and was evacuated from Padang in Sumatra. I cannot go into the details of this because they have not been written up yet. But by the 9th January the ----- were concentrated in the Raala Ipis area. Less than two Battalions were left to defend this other area, against the coal mines at Batu Arang, against Port Swettenham and Kuala Lumpur itself.

On the 7th January, the day after the battle of Slim, General Howell appeared on the scene. He always was very quick to respond to any change in the situation: and after visiting the Division Command we went up and saw the two Brigade Commanders who had been involved at Slim, and it was as the result of that visit that it was decided that the 11th Division must be got out as soon as possible and sent back behind formed troops to be given a period of rest and time for reorganisation. And it was decided that evening to take the risk that was taken at Mersing by withdrawing an Australian Brigade and forming what you will remember was called "Westforce". General Gordon Bennett decided to hold what I call the Gemas-Muar line. He had under his command these two Brigades of the 9th

Division, the 8th and 22nd Brigades, both weak, and the newly arrived 45 Indian Brigade plus your own troops. I had looked at that line with a view to holding it with six Brigades. It was a different matter to try and hold it with four Brigades. I need not dwell on the very successful ambush which you carried out near the Jemento River. Anyhow, that made the enemy very careful about coming down the main road, and pressure never became very acute in this area of Batu Anam, which was a reasonably strong position as positions go in this country. The Muar was the weak part of the line – and myself I doubt the wisdom of having split the 45 Brigade as it was split on both sides of the river. There were at least four Companies on the west side of the river. Again, the enemy having finished its operations here brought more troops around for outflanking movements. We did try to get the Navy to stop all this nonsense of small craft coming down the coast and getting around behind us after a great delay they managed to get hold of 11 small crafts, good fast little crafts. But to give you an idea of the extent of the enemy's air command: out of these 11 only 4 fetched up at Port Sweetenham, the remainder being sunk or beached en route having been attacked by low dive-bombers after being machine-gunned. So the enemy continued to exert command of the western sea as well as the east. The 45 Brigade, as you know, was severely handled at Muar – in fact, very few got out. As a result of the trouble into which that 45 Brigade got itself, it had to be reinforced which meant that one reserve Battalion, the 24th Battalion of the 27 Australian Brigade, and one Battalion from the 22nd Brigade (Australia) were called upon. They, in turn, got into difficulties. The enemy using the coast route got in behind them.

Even after Muar there was still a chance that we might hold onto this important line of aerodromes – or at least deny them to the enemy. The 53 Brigade arrived in the convoy that was due on the 13th and they were rather unceremoniously pushed into the battle. One A.I.F. Battalion was withdrawn from Gemu-----, one from Beta Pahat, one from Ayar Hitam; but the Brigade Command had taken on this rather difficult job of trying to help out this 45 Indian Brigade and the two A.I.F. Battalions. A lot of mixed scrapping went on. Meantime the 11th Division, which had hoped to have at least a week to reform and rest, had to be brought back into battle.

The 15th Brigade took on Batu Pahat. It was a mixed show. They took with them one Battalion of the 53 Brigade. They had their own Leicesters, and a Battalion of infantry. In the meantime the Ghurka Brigade, which had been so mangled up north, went to Pantan Keehil. The enemy, using the sea again, gradually worked his way around and produced a lot of men in Batu Pahat. After about 3 or 4 days infiltration they got in behind us there, and after our troops withdrew to the main road, got in across country behind us.

In the meantime we had to withdraw from a forward position at Segamut, which we had been holding reasonably comfortably. We got back to the line of Kluang Batu Pahat, but by that time the enemy had landed north of Endau and was in contact with the remaining two Battalions of the 22nd Australian Brigade. When Batu Pahat had fallen, it was deemed that the whole line had gone – it was impossible to hold on here with the road from Batu Pahat open, and it became a matter of finding our way back. The enemy were all the time trying to work around. Actually they succeeded in cutting off this composite 15 Brigade entirely. We could not keep our Line of Command open to them, but the Navy

under cover of darkness evacuated the 2,000 men cut off from this Brigade in Batu Pahat and brought them around into Singapore. That left on the line the 53 Brigade which had been swung around and brought into position defending the Pontain Keck Road.

Now it has been said: why didn't we hold a bridge-head covering Johore Bahru, instead of going back to the Island? Well, it was considered very carefully. Recce teams were out the whole time working behind the forward troops, looking for suitable positions, and I had the services of Brigadier Paris to reconnoiter all these places, and he recced a bridgehead, a bridgehead position, but it would take at least 10 to 14 days to make it into anything like a decent position, and moreover we would have been dependent upon the water which came from Kualu. We were told that the water could not come from the Reservoir on the Island. So it was thought expedient to fall back on the Island and hope that the Japs had not got sufficient transport to get them across the Straits and Johore in any numbers. As you know, that proved to be false hope. The enemy waited a week and by that time got down sufficient H.L.C. to get them across the Straits in tremendous numbers. A Division and a half were brought across in one night. That shows the thoroughness with which the Japs had planned this campaign.

I said that in the third part of my lecture I would try to deal with some of the reasons for our defeat. Some of them are probably quite obvious to you – in the first place, the vast advantage he held by having the initiative. If we had held out at Perak he would have undoubtedly come in at Kuantan in strength if we had held out in the north it would have meant that this threat at Mersing would have been intensified several times. The G.H.Q. estimates of the enemy strength was 2 Divisions in the first instance, and two Divisions later. Actually that estimate was pretty accurate. I do not think the enemy at any one time had in these operations more than 5 Divisions. As far as I know, the only enemy Divisions identified were the 16th, the 5th Guards Division, which were not employed until the Battle of Muar. But the Japs themselves say about 5 Divisions was what they had employed. We know they had command of the sea, but nobody thought they could with such ease get command of the air. They got command of the air, in the first instance, by having the long-range fighters. They surprised everybody with their accuracy of their bombing. They had evidently got the plans for the American patent and bomb sights which I think must have been stolen by the Nazis. I have never seen anything like the accuracy of their bombing even in the Middle East – neither by the enemy or by ourselves. It was generally recognised in the Middle East that the enemy bombing was more accurate than ours. To have done this in the Middle East would have necessitated low flying tactics. Actually, much of the accurate bombing was carried out from heights of 12,000 feet and over. The enemy had had the tremendous advantage – probably never before available on the same scale – of being able to plan in advance every detail of this campaign. Imagine the accuracy with which we would have planned an attack on Japan had our relative positions been reverse. He had his rubber planters, his miners, hairdressers, everyone in name, but actually Staff Officers working out every small detail of this scheme. He was able to live on the Country. One Company Commander I met on the Island down here said that for 41 days he had not had a Japanese ration. You have to give full credit to their sappers for the manner in which they negotiated all obstacles. They never gave our troops a rest. I brought out in the beginning how short our troops were; our troops never got an hour's rest because we had no reserves behind them. The enemy, I do not think, ever employed vast numbers

of troops. He worked in Regiments, battalions at a time. His scouts were well trained, they remained the rank and file, not so good but they were all imbued with this tremendous spirit of self sacrifice which stood them in such great stead. He made great use of bicycles which gave them so much mobility. We tried to get bicycles out of the local inhabitants before the war but we failed. The Japs simply took them off the local inhabitants. They had evidently studied jungle warfare very fully. Their leaders had all had a modicum of training in China. It was a very serious blow to find they had those armour piercing bullets. In fact it entirely nullified what armoured mobility we had, though that was not great. We had hoped in the earlier stages that they would lose their tanks in the numerous demolitions and obstacles we had created, and that their A.F.Vs would not be able to run rings around us in country where there was a network of roads. That proved to be a wrong estimate. And the command of this Western sea certainly accelerated the enemy operations very considerably.

Well, we have been defeated here and we have lost Burma. The Dutch have lost their Islands and the Philippines have gone but the enemy are terribly stretched and already there are signs of them losing the ships with which they command the sea. And without command of the sea all the ground which they have gained is going to be lost. We are going to have that "come back", but when it is going to be one cannot say; but the day is coming and there must be many who hope it will be soon and many who hope they will participate in the final overthrow of the Japanese.

Monday 15th June

Blitz eased somewhat, but work still hard. The figures for quantities excavated by Japanese soldier is 6 cubic meters carried 6 meters per day; we are expected to shift 4 cubic meters which has to be carried distances ranging from 50 yards to 150 yards.

Had a bit of a scrap with a cove, pretty good fighter too. It went for about 5 minutes and was then stopped. I don't think I disgraced myself. I received a split lip and presented him with a disfigured nose, split his eyebrow and gave him a beautiful black eye. He is a pretty powerful cove, not much taller than myself but about a stone and half heavier and 13 years younger.

Had a good tea, vegetable stew (plenty vegetables and rice) and cake with a dash of jam, and about a dozen prawns per man. The prawns were not the freshest. I would say they had been dead about 3 days before we cooked them and believe me they smelt fairly high; still beggars can't be choosers and the smell is only a secondary consideration.

Big fire in Singapore today, burnt for most of the day and it was still burning at night. Don't know what was the cause. The smoke was made by oil or rubber, possibly sabotage, if so there will sure be some Chinese (missing) tomorrow.

Tuesday 16th June

Day off today. Feel a little stiff but otherwise OK. Spent day washing and trying to cut a piece of ivory into the shape of a heart, getting very sentimental. A rusty nail is not much of a tool, so I doubt very much the success of my artistic endeavours. Meals usual standard, rice and more rice and not very good rice. Rains at least six times per day now, alright under cover but not so pleasant during

working hours. Pay day but nothing to buy, as the canteen has closed up and as we are not allowed to buy outside from the natives. God knows what we are going to do with it.

Wednesday 17th June 42

Rained most all the day and we knocked off an hour earlier. During the lunch period, with two other chaps I sneaked off to a nearby shop, bought 2 duck eggs for 20 cents, cigar, pineapple and kidded the shop keeper to sell me the broken biscuits for 20 cents. Whilst he was picking out the biscuits he became very agitated and started putting them back, also the other chaps did a bolt. I looked around and saw two Jap soldiers with their rifles behind me. I did not feel too happy but as there was nothing left to do I gesticulated to them and made them understand that the shopkeeper was frightened of them and therefore had put back some of my biscuits. Of course I used my nicest smile. The Japanese then told him to give me back my biscuits, he did, good ones and all and I think if I had stayed long enough he would have given me all he had, but I did not wait but gathered up and with a smile of thanks to the guards did a hasty retreat and very glad to be able. When I was going one of them said Australian something and both started to laugh, lucky to strike that kind of guards. Contrast: as natives are not allowed to sell to us and we are not allowed to buy, two old Chinese women usually hide in the trees and sell us pineapples. The guard caught them today, hit them over the head, took their buckets of pineapples off them and then brought the buckets around to us and offered the pineapples. I was very pleased that not one of us took any but just ignored him. He was very annoyed and threw the contents into the mud: The buckets were there when we were going home and some of us put ten or five cents into them. The Chinese are very good to us.

Good meal tonight, by a good meal I mean judging from plain rice. I believe the natives can't even buy rice or flour and as rice is their staple good it must be very drastic for them as they most probably have to live on their individual productions and fruits, the poultry having already graced the Japanese tables. I'm having my duck eggs for breakfast, hope they are not the usual hundred years old. Dysentery 100% worse the last few days and colds very bad, doctor very worried about both. Have not heard how Heck Byrnes or Fatty McLean are doing.

Thursday 18th June 42

They were in good mood today, did not bustle us, do anything to annoy us and even knocked us off at 5.30p.m. Tomorrow is a Japanese holiday, perhaps they were going on leave. Had my eggs with my rice for breakfast, thought they may have been too rich for me and was afraid I might be sick. The rice we are getting now is impossible, it is mouldy and extremely dirty, no amount of washing will clean it and the smell is hard on the nose.

Incident occurred today which shows how we are starved for sweetness. A Tamil (they seem to be popular with the Japanese, as they allow them to do what they will not allow the Chinese) arrived on the scene with some kind of concoction in small cubes, which he sold for 35 cents, everyone was a bit dubious and together with the fact we don't like Tamils and do not buy from or talk to them unless very necessary. At last someone tried them and the word went around that they tasted just like brown sugar and molasses. There was a general stampede and the Tamil mobbed. I bought some and thought them delicious. They were just what we craved. He had no trouble selling out. Wish we

could get them every day together with the money to buy. Dreamt last night I was going through the campaign again although rarely dream: most of my dreams are of home.

Friday 19th June

Sugar stuff must have been too much for me. Could not go to sleep until the early hours of the morning, not very good for the peace of mind. I think too much. When I did go to sleep I again dreamt I was back in action. Rumours today that Newcastle had been shelled again. It is very worrying but to me does not make sense. If it is correct, then our coastal defenses must be a failure – Hope I can sleep tonight with this shelling business on my mind I will be letting my imagination run riot.

Spent the day disinfecting our quarters and I pulled my bed to pieces and debugged. Without exaggeration I will swear I killed 500 and destroyed thousands of eggs. It's a wonder I have a drop of blood left in me in the mornings. They were all well fed. It gave me great pleasure slaughtering them. If the news is correct that the Japs dish up to us, we might just as well do ourselves in as die here of old age, so we just don't believe anything they tell us.

Shadow stew today and believe it or not a pineapple tart with real honest to God pastry. The stew is called Shadow Stew, due to the statement of one chap that they hang a small piece of meat over the boiler which throws a shadow into the boiler. Just where the meat goes no one knows unless it is the cooks and they become very annoyed if the question is asked of them; rice still on the nose.

Just received some wonderful news. The Japanese have given us permission to write one short card home, we all feel delirious with delight and did we cheer. Sincerely hope they will go further and allow us to receive one. Our existence will improve a millionfold. Have not heard so much laughter and joviality since I joined the army as this news had caused. Trust they don't keep us too long waiting for the cards. I feel very sad for the many wives and mothers who will not receive one. With all the excitement I'm sure I won't sleep tonight.

Saturday 20th June

Did not sleep too well as was expected, today being our day off (yesterday Japanese holiday) and as I had completed my chores I was able to doze during the day.

There are 23 men in our cubicle and just at present 9 are suffering with slight dysentery, 2 with acute, all have the scalds, the remaining 12 have had dysentery in some form previously, so it is not something to take lightly, we are as hygienic as it is possible, but it still persists.

Near our camp is the Ford works and it was in this building that the Capitulation agreement was signed. The building is well guarded and I believe the room where the signing took place is also guarded night and day and is considered sacred by the Japanese, it is just as it was that day with scripts telling the history etc. The English and Indians signed at 4p.m. on 15/2/41 and the A.I.F. at 8.30p.m. 15/2/41 (during those 4½ hours we had numerous casualties and we fought right up to time word came through that we had signed) during that time advanced 1½ miles.

Had an impromptu concert last night, unearthed some very good talent, it was exceptionally good.

It's very humorous to see the men lined up, (you don't notice it until you look from the front). They can't stand still for a minute without scratching like blazes and when you see 90% of the men scratching at once it certainly looks funny. Hope it does not become a habit as it will sure be very embarrassing back home. All meals plain rice and when I say plain I mean plain. It was that plain it was ugly. My scalds very sore tonight. If no improvement tomorrow will not be able to go to work.

Sunday 21st June

Today was one of the most uncomfortable days I have spent. I went to work and the march irritated my scalds so much I thought I would go mad, thank God I did not have to work today as I was substituting an officer who was sick. Something happened to me that has never happened before, my mind went completely blank; I could not even frame a word. I was like that for a matter of half hour or so. I then felt all right as far as my mind was concerned, but my scalds just gave me plain hell. I'm practically sure I will not be able to go to work tomorrow; everybody has it now, but mostly mild cases as yet, but some have it bad and are in hospital. The Doctor cannot analyze its cause, but we all are inclined to think it is due to lack of salt and the excessive perspiration around the parts affected.

They were quite congenial today and we knocked off at 5.30p.m., no one seemed to work too hard and they did not take any notice, can't understand them, they are certainly inconsistent.

Fair meals today, very little meat in the stew, but quite a few vegetables; no sweets. Have a very terrific thirst, cannot satisfy it, have drunk gallons of water, hot and cold.

The news we are hearing is very bad and if right, things are going bad for the allies in all fronts, I hope it is all propaganda, the trouble is we have no way of checking up. Heard the figures of the A.I.F. casualties today, they are 1,100 killed, 500 missing believed killed, 1,700 wounded and about 500 missing: the ----- about 5,000 can't remember the correct figures but it is a good percentage considering that there was only about 10,000 actually went into action, the balance being about 5,000 non-combatants and of the 10,000 only about 6,000 would be actually fighting.

Monday 22nd June 1942

Did not go to work, scalds very bad, received medical treatment all day, feel slightly better, due no doubt to the lack of perspiration. Looks like I will be laid up for some time, worst of it is no pay and believe me the few pence (6^d day) I receive means quite a lot. It does not buy much but usually eases some craving for a day or so. Loaned a book called "An Anthology of World Poetry", very good never knew poetry could be so soothing, probably finish it knowing all the poets and their work; have decided to buy this book for my library. Have not heard anything more regarding the letter cards for writing home, sincerely hope they keep their promise, it means so much to us and we are all very anxious. No news yet of Heck Burns or Fatty McLean, they must be getting well or I think we would have heard.

Thinking of Dud Munro all day wondering how he is and whether he was lucky enough to arrive straight back home, also whether he contacted Mae, hope so, must look him up when I get back.

Sure to put on some weight with this idle life, must weigh again, last time I did so I weighed 10.7 lbs, big drop from my landing in Malaya weight of 14 stone 4 lbs, but a lot of water has passed under the bridge since that day.

I believe there was quite a lot of drama on the hill today; it appears that two Chinese were caught taking wood (I think they have to pay a fee to collect fire wood now). They were caught by the Japanese who made it known that they would be beheaded. Two Chinese women, possibly their wives approached the Japs and pleaded for their lives. I am told they knelt and prayed to them for at least 1½ hours, eventually their prayers were received and the Chinese were released but not before they had been beaten up badly. Later an old Chinese woman was caught selling pineapples, they took her away and locked her in a house, she was still there when the boys left. During the day a Chinese woman and three children came to the camp all crying bitterly. I don't know what the trouble was but the women had been struck in the face and was very bruised, she spent some time gesticulating and crying to the Japanese guards and later left still crying.

Tea fairly good tonight, date tart, other meals more plain rice.

Tuesday 23rd June

Will be glad when I am better and able to start work, time goes very slowly and gets extremely boring: paper is very scarce or I would try and do some drawings, will have to hunt around and see what I can find to do, too much of this life and I will go crazy. I doze during the day and cannot go to sleep at night.

A few of the boys went on a pineapple scrounge today, they found a few but the season is going out and they are getting scarce. We will certainly miss them when they finish.

The news received today is very bad and downheartening, we never seem to receive any good news and as we do not see any signs, it is not very encouraging as I fear that in time we will be forced to credit some of the news we do hear: God forbid.

Food good: breakfast rice; Dinner rice and the shadow of the shadow stew. Tea: good stew (with real meat, only a little but still meat) and vegetables, rice and a rock cake (we grind our rice for flour).

Another exhibition of their national sport just now, a young native woman kneeling in front of the guard house appealing to them with heartbreaking sobs; they seem to be thoroughly enjoying it judging by their laughs and gesticulations: I don't know what the trouble was; maybe just fun.

Later: I believe the Chinese woman was caught by the Japanese guards in our area collecting the scrap rice we had thrown into the bins.

Wednesday 24th June

Scalds improving, very well might try and go to work tomorrow. Sid Stairmont died here today, he had a bad go of dysentery and died before he could be transported to Changi hospital.

Had a few planes over us today doing all sorts of acrobatics including practice dog fights; hope there is a reason for it, last time these practice stunts were on two planes collided in mid air, we watched them today and did a little wishful thinking.

More plain rice for breakfast and dinner, vegetable stew and a cake for tea.

Cigarettes very short, looking forward to pay day: pay day is always a wonder day, no one seems to know when it is until the moment it arrives; a few times it did not eventuate at all and we were therefore sealed, this only happened with the last lot of guards.

We buried Sid Stairmont at 7.30pm. Everybody attended the parade and although the dress was not quite up to Regimental standard it was the best we had; the parade was very impressive and I think the Japanese guards would appreciate it. I made a wreath for our Company out of paper, rubber tree leaves and a sort of yellow acacia, it turned out very nice. The Japanese also sent an offering which was placed on the head of the grave (a dish of pineapple cakes) we appreciated the gesture. We buried him in the rubber trees next to the grave of a Japanese soldier.

Thursday 25th June

Still off work, time drags and am heartily sick of being sick. Was able to procure a little rock salt today, ground it up as best I could, it certainly will be appreciated. Just heard a rumour that we will be paid today, mine won't be a very big one as we are only paid for the days we work, but as small as it will be I'm anxiously awaiting it.

Had another hot shower today, my second in just on 12 months, nice clean man.

Numerous Japanese planes flying around today, bombers and fighters, like to know what it's all about.

Did my debugging, had great success with my catch, they certainly thrive on the Croft blood and by the age of some of them breed well, bugs in this country grow like all other insects, reptiles and vermin to, enormous size.

There is an epidemic of tropical ulcers going the rounds, they start with the slightest cut and in a few hours are disgusting looking sores. I'm free from them so far; here's hoping.

The boys arrived home late tonight with the report of another blitz, not doing enough and made them work till 7.30pm.

Received my small portion, hunting around to try and buy something sweet, my cigarettes allowance is going to be very short this pay day.

A rather funny incident just occurred, one of the lads and dry stick Johnny Pearce is a great lover of eggs and all his spare cash is spent on them. Yesterday he brought two and found they were bad, he performed and said some nasty things. Not deterred he brought two more tonight, cooked them and the first one he opened spoke for itself. He placed it on a seat next to the other one and what he did not say about the Malayan breed, both eggs, and people was no one's business, after exhausting his

vocabulary he sat down with a bang right on top of the eggs and thereabouts came the divorce of eggs and Johnny Pearce for life, at least these his words: I can see him washing his trousers at this moment, still putting his thoughts into words.

Friday 26th June

As every Friday is a Japanese holiday the boys take the opportunity of doing their washing and their displayed garments would put any rag merchant's store to shame.

One of our Padres (we have two, Roman Catholic and Presby) the Presby one just went past our hut arrayed in Tam-o-Shanter, a Gordon Highland Skirt and a pair of sandshoes, no shirt. He certainly looked cute, he is a great cove a real man's man and is always up to some caper. The Japanese leave the trucks that we use during the day in a shed at rear of our quarters and every night this Padre sneaks up with a piece of rubber tube and a couple of gallon tins and milks their tanks, he then sells it to a Chinaman who pays him between 2 and 3 dollars a gallon (6/- to 9/-) who resells it in Singapore up to 10 and 12 dollars per gallon. The money the Padre gets he uses for buying food and necessities for the sick. There are a few roughs in the camp (one the chap I had the fight with) and we have named them the Forty Thieves, it appears last Sunday afternoon the Padre caught them making for the petrol, he told them he would go nits for them, which he did, but for the price of his service he made them get dressed and attend his Church Parade; they all attended and brought their mates. The Roman Catholic Padre is a decent sort of chap but just mixes and sticks with his own and we don't see much of him.

Could not sleep last night, decided to go and sit out in front, it was a gorgeous moonlight night, and found a chap by the name of Jack Manusa who also had decided to sit out, we had a great yarn about horse breeding also sheep, etc. He has a station in Queensland and his father has property in N.S.W. They own the horse Reading. He is a great cove, natural and likable and very interesting, we did not turn in until the early hours about 4a.m. Letter cards have not come to light yet and we are getting restless, although we are in a pretty fair frame of mind having heard rumours to the fact that we have had some successes around the East Indies, we are always ready to believe these rumours.

Soon as the boys get any money it's the same old tale "Two Up" the game has been going strong all day, the bets ranging from 5/- 20 cents 1½^d to 6^d. But those cents are a lot to us.

Saturday 27th June 1942

Spent most of the day making pair of shorts, afraid my hemstitching was not a seamstress's dream, more like a nightmare. I don't suppose anybody will be very concerned what they look like. I doubt if you would be noticed here if you did not wear any.

Received a copy of the "Syonan Times" (Syonan is the new Japanese name for Singapore. I think it means "Great Victory") and have extracted a few of their headlines:- "Axis Forces smash into Egypt: Sollum and Sidi Barraani occupied", "Remaining Forces of British 8th Army complete routed. Occupation of Kiska and Attu Islands in Aleutians announced by Dai- ----"; "Fall of Sebastopol will open ----- to Axis forces"; "Allies have lost 319 ships off US Atlantic Coast"; "Wavell to replace

Ritchie: 'Big Red losses in Sebastapol C Sector'; 'Our Navy puts lid on Stimson's Lies'; 'Shelling of US proves that we rule Pacific'; 'London worried about Aleutians. Proof of American inability to stop us'; 'Tobruk Provides Good Lesson for Allies'; 'Face Saving Statements will not improve Allied situation. Demand for the truth after unbroken series of reverses'; 'Vital supply Sources lost to Britain'; 'Gandhi said to have sent Ultimatum to Viceroy'; '119 Planes shot down over Australia since 15th January'; 'What our Success means to India', 'Heaven sent Opportunity'. The news is not the most encouraging to us although we take it with a grain of salt.

I'm off to work tomorrow or die in the attempt, I'm also broke again and looking forward to the next pay day.

For the last few days truck loads of P.O.W.s have been going past, presumably to somewhere on the peninsular, working parties of some sort or perhaps under that guise to split us all up and scatter us in case anything happens. The Japanese seem more on their toes now than at any time since the Capitulation, hope its a good sign. "Time staggers and drags on."

Plain rice for breakfast and dinner, vegetable stew for tea: God help us when the vegetables stop, we are told that the reason for our receiving vegetables is brought about by a glut and when that ends so does our supply; we seem to be receiving less now, so it looks as if it won't be long now. Blast the rice, still, without it we would starve.

I've noticed that this lack of food is tending to make everyone inclined to be greedy and some it has made extreme beastly gluttons and it is peculiar that the latter type were the ones that talked most before and lost their nerve first during the action, and some were even taken from the line, but most of them have again found confidence in their tongues and are gradually becoming heroes in their own minds especially if there are none of us around and they are relating their experiences to the reinforcements who did not join us until we were on the Island.

Heard a great deal of laughter coming from one of the huts, went and investigated and found four men with boots killing bugs by the hundreds, someone would bring out his bed (the poles joined and covered with bags) and bump it on the concrete, then the slaughter would start amidst roars of laughter, the game has started to catch and some more huts have started and is there a row, expect the Japanese guards any minute.

Muster parade has just been called presumably for a check up and the opportunity was taken to inform us that Cholera has broken out on the island and that Singapore town is stricken badly, we cannot now buy anything from the natives.

Sunday 28th June 1942

I certainly stepped into a Blitz today when I started work, it's the best turn put on so far, they kept us up there until about 8p.m, sent down for our tea then tipped the lot onto the road, they like their little fun; but our cooks were a bit too canny for them and only sent up rice and a little tea; the stew which was made of meat, and a good one, also the nice rock cake was hidden and under cover of dark we

attacked the stew and cake so we did not have to go without our tea as was ordered, there is no doubt they are the most inconsistent possible.

I'm actually writing this on Monday as it was too dark last night after we sort of settled down and as there is a blackout on (no lights) it was not possible to write; will no doubt find out today if there are any repercussions from yesterday.

For three days it was marvellous weather, not a cloud in the sky, then yesterday about 5p.m. there was a deluge and was it uncomfortable. As a matter of fact, this was to some extent the cause of the blitz: as the guards in charge of the Tommies and the Scotties allowed them to go home and when we approached our headman for the same concession the fun started, naturally we were not anxious to work and it was near impossible to keep our feet on the extremely slippery clay.

Heard one of the Tommies trying to teach one of the Japs to speak English. The Tommy was that broad it was impossible for me to understand him, God knows what the result of the lessons will turn out like.

It is rumoured that the cholera scare is over-exaggerated. I sincerely hope so, we are not taking any risks and are still going to take all precautions even though it is going to make our existence more miserable, especially as far as eating is concerned.

Monday 29th June

Bitter aloe to honey, yesterday they were like bitter aloe, today the candiest of honey, they could not have been nicer and knocked us off at 4.45p.m., we did not work near as hard today as we did yesterday, they are certainly hard to understand.

Heard some very pleasing news today, Hector Byrnes is back at Changi Convalescent Hospital and is doing OK. He was given up for dead when they took him from here. Have not heard anything about Fatty McLean, hope he does as well as Old Heck.

Two Japanese killed in a motor accident today, maybe that was the reason for our knocking off early, hope it happens every day.

The Japanese have woken up to the petrol milking racket and they now empty the tanks every night and take the petrol away: the boys still get a little by unscrewing the plug at the bottom of the tank.

The road we are working is to be finished by 15th February 1943, that would be the 1st Anniversary of the signing of the Capitulation. They must have great confidence in themselves which I sincerely hope is misplaced. I don't fancy another 6 months here, by the construction programme they have set themselves it would seem they are going to retain Malaya for ever; what's holding those Yanks up, we look for signs of them every day, and every day we say tomorrow, what a day that tomorrow would be: God how we are looking forward to it.

Tuesday 30th June

No work today, spent most of the day doing a good scratch, between the sandfly bites and scalds, I'm nearly driven frantic. Did some more debugging and met with great success, it's marvellous where they come from, it's only a few days since I thoroughly fumigated and scalded my bed.

We were again mustered and warned against Cholera so there must be something in the scare; all fruits, biscuits, cakes, lollies and anything handled by natives are taboo.

Have used up all my salt, don't know when I will be able to procure more. I'll certainly miss it.

The Japanese presented us with a piano which is kept in the rear of our quarters, we have an excellent player in Den Magee, one of the boys of the hut and it is very soothing and beautiful to lie back and listen to him play, which is every opportunity he gets. He has already composed a very charming piece which he has called "My Love for You". I think it should go over well back home.

Was able to see another copy of the "Syonan" and took a note of some of the headlines as follows:-
"SPAIN MAY ENTER WAR ON SIDE OF AXIS"; "Britain said watching developments with deepest anxiety. Alexandria being excavated"; "Wedge driven into Sebastopol defences"; "Axis forces hold decided edge in North Africa"; "Imperial navy has sunk over 2,000,000 tons of allied shipping"; "Germans sink 15 allied warships between June 25 and 26"; "World's final war now being waged. Australia must co-operate or be conquered"; "Downfall of Britain now inevitable"; "Lack of shipping imperils allies future plans"; "Churchill returns to angry nation after his talks in Washington, Faced with Political crisis British Premier told, 'We will no longer stand for evasive statements.' Asked to quit portfolio of Defense Minister"; "U.S. administration charged with hiding shipping losses"; "Roosevelt discloses a serious shortage of raw materials"; it's certainly not the greatest cheer-up paper.

Fifty men and two officers of our working party have been sent back to Changi today. I believe this has happened also at other working parties, it would appear that the Japanese have some reason for these changes, possible that this means they will sort of mix everybody up and thereby split any organisation that may have existed.

It came to my mind that I have not owned a match for the last 4 months. This also applies to most everybody, yet we manage to light our cigarettes, no doubt one match lights thousands of cigarettes in a sort of continuous chain from man to man.

Meals excellent today and shadow of the shadow soup for breakfast; shadow soup for dinner and a fine meat stew for tea, no sweets, but feel full and satisfied.

Wednesday 1st July 42

Well, it appears that the 50 men being sent back to Changi was punishment for the other day's episode, they also have taken us from the job we were on, which was ¼ way up the hill, and put us on a new job right on top of the hill. This unbeknowing to them suits us right down to the ground as, although the march is hard, there is nearly always a pleasant breeze and something beautiful and interesting to look at. They measured out a task for us which looked colossal and told us that it had to

be completed before we left, we checked up and asked did we leave as soon as it was completed, they said yes; we finished at 3.30p.m. God knows what they will set us tomorrow, possible enough to start the blitz again.

Presented with a razor blade today, I have used the one I have ever since I have been a P.O.W. and I shave at least one per week. I sharpen it on a piece of glass, it has done Yeoman service as I have also shaved my head with it twice.

Breakfast and dinner the lowest ever today but tea was a crackerjack, vegetable stew, meat rissole and a date cake and do I feel good, our bellies certainly rule us.

For the past few mornings I have wakened up about 4.30a.m., with very bad pains in my kidneys, it doubles me up for an hour or so. On enquiry I find that about 4 others suffer with the same complaint and on comparing notes we came to the conclusion that it was brought about by hot showers we have recently been taking. I did not have one yesterday and incidentally did not have a pain this morning, will see what tomorrow morning brings.

Thursday 2nd July 1942

A Red Letter Day. They have increased our task on the hill by one third today, with the promise of letting us go when we finished, we left the job at 3.30p.m.; they don't know what to think of us. 2nd cigarette issue today, 14 each. 3rd more meat rations today than we have received previously. 4th a good tea, although breakfast and dinner were on the nose. 5th last but the greatest of all; we were issued with our letter cards which we have filled in and returned with a prayer for their speedy delivery.

Heard lots of gun fire and saw troop movements last night, got a real thrill, it turned out to be an ammunition dump on fire, what caused it I never heard, but I have my own ideas and possibly there will be a few poor Chinese less around the area.

Great air activity today and we were treated to some great stunts and mock air fights, some of these chaps can certainly handle their planes and one of them was exceptionally good. Had a terrible nightmare last night, made me depressed most of the day and it took the letter card to bring me back to normal and I now feel much better. Pain in the kidneys not noticeable this morning.

A lorry load of Jack Fruit just passed, they have a very pungent odour, which hangs in the air for a considerable time. Jack Fruit is supposed to be a great help in the population of the country. There is a saying :- "When the Jack Fruits come down the sarongs go up", they taste very tropical and leave a taste like the morning after a supper of onions.

Friday 3rd July '42

Day of rest for our Company; the idea is 2 Companies rest today whilst 2 work and rest tomorrow. The 2 working Companies arrived back today at 11.30a.m., it appears they were allotted their task and were doing so well that they put some more onto them, as they would have finished even then in a reasonable time they did not complain but whilst they were working "Snow White", that's the name

we have given the Jap-in-charge (most all of them we have nicknamed) arrived and gave them another additional lot. This was too much, not the work, but the principle, so the boys with the assistance of the officers, lodged a protest through the interpreter, a practice which Snow White insists on although he speaks English, with the result that he told the interpreter to inform them to cease work and go back to camp. What the backwash will be we don't know as yet but we can bet it will be something, and from the look of Snow White when he drove down in his M.G. (like a pig eating strawberries), to see the Camp Commander it won't be bouquets or chocolates.

Scalds pretty bad again, will try another day's work tomorrow and if they get worse I'm afraid it's a case of no duties again.

Debugged, helped wash and disinfect the quarters and did my washing, gradually getting rid of the bugs, did not find more than 100 this time, seriously considering pulling down all the woodwork in the place and burning it.

Still plenty of air activity, but not ours. We all look to make sure and there is not a plane that goes over that we don't make sure.

Rumour has it that things are going pretty bad for us on all fronts in Europe and Egypt, we don't hear anything regarding the Pacific and take it that no news is good news; we would certainly like to see something happen around here.

I am still reading "An Anthology of World Poetry", there are some beautiful poems and prose in it, one especially written by Bilhana (in the 11th Century) a Hindu (Sanskrit) and is called "Black Marigolds" a prose, it is a wonderful beautiful thing and I never get tired of reading it. In fact, I like the Persian and Hindu (Sanskrit) much the best. The Arabian prose is also very beautiful.

Saturday 4th July '42 (not our Independence day)

No fireworks from the Yanks here, hope there were plenty other places.

Well, as we expected they piled on the task for today, nearly 3 times what they gave us our last working day; we decided that it was time to pull up a little, so we just plugged on, not over-exerting ourselves with the idea that it did not matter to us what time we finished, as we weren't going any place tonight. We were still plugging along at 5.30p.m., when the Jap guards started to become a little uneasy (we found later they wanted to go on leave) and finished up grabbing a pick, one started first then they all started and went at it like mad men. They kept it up for about 20 minutes and the pace began to tell (Snow White was not about), they were a lather of sweat and blowing like whales, they knocked us off at 6p.m. amidst cheers from the lads. We always seem to be put into a good humour by these incidents.

I never dreamt that I would work harder than a Navvy with a pick and shovel all day. Through extreme tropical heat that even a mad dog or an Englishman would come out in, I don't know how long it will take to have any disastrous effect, up to the present its not doing me any harm with the exception of the scalds.

There has been no cases of dysentery in the camp for the last nine days, possibly due to the precautions taken to stop Cholera breaking out. Have not heard any reports regarding the Cholera position.

Extremely good concert last night, no doubt they are unearthing some good hidden talent amongst the boys. During the show a rather humorous incident occurred: one item included a recitation, a piece made up here and some of the wording was not very complimentary to the Japanese, calling them little yellow B_____s etc.;. While this was being put over a very nasal voice broke in with the words 'a little louder please', we all knew who it was without looking and everyone roared laughing. After the item the chap running the show said a few words to the effect that we had one of our hosts with us and as he was sure he understood English, although he spoke American, he would possibly know a song or something which he would no doubt allow us the pleasure of listening to. He stood up and walked to the piano asked the pianist something, then turned to us and asked could anyone play 'Micky', a 25 year old song. No one could so he tried singing without the accompaniment, not much of a success so he apologised and said 'Anyhow I've got a bloody sore throat', and that's Australian not American; he is not a bad sort of a Jap.

Two of the boys were caught taking car parts from the dump today, they were tied to separate trees from 9a.m. to 5p.m. and only allowed 1 drink of water.

The General-in-Charge of the Japanese forces in Malaya arrived on the hill today, surrounded by numerous guards, we were lined up, well covered by the guards until he had finished his inspection.

Breakfast and dinner b_____ awful, tea the best yet, three courses, to wit, fresh (and very nice too) vegetable stew with the inevitable rice and a pineapple cake, but I'm still hungry, I forget what it feels like to be satisfied.

We are all a little disappointed, in our hearts we were hoping that the Yanks might give us a little encouragement today, we all know it would be a miracle, but still we hoped.

Sunday 5th July 1942

Five lunar months today since we've become P.O.W.s hope we do not get another five months. They gave us another big task on the hill today and started the day by trying to stand over us, it did not bear fruit and they gave it up as a bad job and instead the guards (Snow White not being there) hopped in and started to work with us. Evidently, they were anxious to finish early. We did not over exert ourselves but then put up a fair show and were able to knock off at 5p.m. They were pleased and we did not mind.

Someone suggested what they could do to Snow White if he ever came our way. He said he would lay down a new concrete floor in a wooden building, strip him and sit him on the wet concrete so that parts of him would be embedded in the concrete, he would then wait for the floor to dry and harden, holding him secure he would then hand him a very blunt knife and set the building on fire. I don't know whether its original.

The thing I have noticed since we have been on the hill this time is the conspicuous absence of shipping going en route of Singapore. I would say that the whole time we have been working I have not seen more than four ships, before every day I would at least see twenty or thirty, may have some signification, here's hoping.

Had tea but could eat a horse and harness. Saw another Syonan Times today: headlines as under:- "British to destroy Suez Canal to cover for possible retreat through Red Sea"; "Fall of Alexandria regarded as matter of hours"; "Soviets announce Fall of Sebastopol"; "Germans take 50,000 prisoners and vast booty"; "Britain facing crises unequalled since fall of France – Churchill"; "Damascus heavily raided by Luftwaffe"; "British Navy like homeless orphan"; "German Victories Influence Indians"; "Egypt's Struggle for Freedom". Not very encouraging, that is if we believed it.

An incident occurred at the camp today whilst we were at work. It appears that a Chinaman accompanied by his son who is about five years old pulled up in front of the camp and tried to sell some of the boys pieces of pineapple. The Japanese guards saw him and took him to the guard house, hit him over the face a few times and made him stand against the wall with his hands above his head for two hours. During all this the poor kiddy cried and pleaded, even on his knees to the Japanese, who thought it was great fun, especially when they picked up a rifle and kidded to shoot his father. They certainly like their jokes, and I'm glad I did not see the incident. I wonder can they take a joke?

Monday 6th July 1942

Slept very badly last night, early hours of the morning before I eventually would sleep. This was due I have no doubt to an over indulgence in coffee before I went to bed: no more. Another chap, Aub Marsh and myself managed to scrounge ½ Kotte and although no sugar or milk we just filled ourselves to the brim.

I was thinking last night that sex has completely lost first place as regards topic of conversation. It is something that is rarely spoken about these days, the main topics being food, home, news (if any) and revenge; food and home being the main.

Day off today, did my washing and made up a little sleep. Concocted a marvellous lunch; ordinarily we would have had plain rice, but one of the boys was on kitchen fatigue peeling vegetables for tea, he saved the skins, scrounged some curry and fat renderings, mixed them together and boiled until it became a thick gravy which we mixed with the rice and boy was it good: plenty of it, I even feel full.

One of the boys just arrived back from Bukit Timah and stated that he saw two severed heads of Chinese on display. There under them was a notice of some description, he didn't ascertain what it displayed; it's always the Chinese, never Tamils or Malayans, worst luck.

We have just heard the story of our kitbags and if true is an absolute rotten reflection on the A.I.F. Command, as a matter of fact I don't know of anything that has upset more, it is a darn disgrace and a filthy action. The story is: Firstly, they informed us that the Japanese and natives had broken into them and that there was no chance of us ever receiving them, we were quite prepared for this and

naturally accepted the story. It now appears that they had not been interfered with and the Powers-that-should-not-be thought that rather than give them to the individuals to separate their personal things of any sentimental value, that a unit called the Ordnance (the lousiest lot in the A.I.F., non-combatant, buried themselves in the bowels of the earth during action and could never be located) go through the bags, take all clothing and military gear for distribution, and tag any personal or private property which was to be handed to the owners; they certainly went through the kits and what they did not want, which was not much, tagged the rest. It is a known fact that they were selling anything of any value they found and cases where they tried to sell the owner his own property had been noted and severely dealt with by the boys, also reports had gone into the property authorities, of course they were fined, but that did not alter the racket. I personally did not receive one thing back, not even the most personal; my kit was seen by Aub Jones going to the sorting depot but they would not allow anyone to claim their own; only officers; as they would be opened and sorted and later distributed. This did not happen whilst we were at Changi, and we have been expecting them to be sent out here. Eventually we asked why and were informed that some personal stuff, letters etc., had been delivered to the 2/15th which they placed in the barracks awaiting transport out. As the number of personnel had depleted considerably in our Regiments due to working parties, the Regiment shifted to another barracks which was occupied by the balance of the other Arty Regiments, and whilst this shift was taking place, the unit 9th Field Ambulance (a lot of b_____s who robbed the sick in the hospital of most of their rations and thereby lived like lords themselves) who occupied the ground floor of our late barracks, raided our gear etc., took most of it down in the bush and what was no use such as letters, photos, they distributed to the four winds. This was told us by our officers and I have no reason to disbelieve them as I know what a filthy crowd they were. These non-combatant units seem to hate us worse than the Japs, possibly they feel jealous of anyone that fights – God knows what the reason is, but they always look uncomfortable when they have to mix with us, we certainly don't love them now, as a matter of fact I have never felt so mad in all my life. I would not have cared if they had taken anything they wanted provided they had the decency to leave my letters and photos. The letters I can never replace and I prized them highly. I will say this for the Japanese, they will not tolerate looting in any form, not even by their own soldiers and I have seen and heard the drastic measures they dealt out to looters.

Tuesday 7th July 1942

Scalds have practically disappeared, give the credit to the salt that I was able to get, used my last tonight, must try to procure some more. Have another complaint which I have been suffering with the last few days, aching eyes, possibly due to the glare of the sun on top of the hill, numerous others complaining of the same thing. The fever and dermatitis seems to have deserted me but I'm certainly not going to shed too many tears about that.

Great celebrations by the Japanese today to mark the 5th Anniversary of the Chinese affair. All the flags were displayed, games played, sporting events, concerts etc., but the poor P.O.W.s still worked, and worked pretty hard today. I can't remember when I felt more tired, I'll undoubtedly sleep tonight.

Heard the story behind the executions of yesterday, it appears that 8 natives were caught by a Japanese soldier presumably looting, they killed them and paid the penalty by having their heads severed and displayed to the public.

Saw two of our Flying boats today, my heart nearly stopped but when they came close enough they had the red dot on them, they were two they had captured here. I believe they also have seven Hurricane Fighters which they have reconditioned and put in the air.

Just had tea but feel that I have not eaten for a week, could not eat my rice for lunch, just could not put it down.

I just heard a story repeated by one of the boys that was told to him by an English Officer. Some days ago I mentioned repeated explosions which were alleged to have been petrol explosions; the English Officer's story is that Indians are used as a working party on one of the aerodromes, they are treated very badly and almost starved. During this day bombs were being transferred from lorries to a shed where they were stacked. The Indians worked very hard receiving quite a lot of beltings mostly about the head, two of the number fell down with fatigue and were belted to their feet which sent them crazy and they ran into the shed and somehow set alight to the bombs blowing themselves, other Indians and quite a number of Japanese up. The fire caused by the explosion set alight to the trucks which were loaded with bombs, caused the intermittent explosions and the red flashes that we heard and saw. The story about the petrol was told to us by our Japanese guards.

Wednesday 8th July

Worked pretty hard again today, feel very tired, good it's our day off tomorrow.

Quite an air pageant today, planes of all shapes and sizes flying in all kinds of formation. I think there must have been some kind of manoeuvres on as there was also gun practice with large calibre, field guns and anti-aircraft guns, of course, when the show first started we got our usual thrill thinking it might be the day. We had a grandstand seat from the top of the hill.

We had a few Tommies and Scotties up on the hill doing a job, they were absolutely nonplussed to see our officers working with the men (they are not supposed to but they hop to it) also eating with us and eating the same meal. They said their officers stand over them and keep them at it all the time, also their lunch is also separate and is cooked by special cooks, they also have men detailed as stewards to wait on them back at the camp and 5 cents for pay is taken from the men to make up these cooks and stewards pay, they are very crooked about having to pay them out of their pay. Our officers are with us to a man as far as jacking up if the Japs get too solid and they are always telling our guards off, not that it is much use, but it makes us feel much better, and we certainly appreciate the officers we have with us here. They are the pick of all decent fellows and appreciate that this is not the time or place for anything very Regimental, naturally we don't give them any trouble and everything goes along smoothly at work and camp. Naturally, the English officers look upon them as renegades, they don't worry about that.

Food too lousy to mention today, just rice. I'll say no more, but by ___ I'm empty.

Thursday 9th July 1942

Very quiet day, did the usual disinfecting and debugging with the usual results, also did some washing.

Food problem must becoming very acute as far as the natives are concerned. Quite a few Tamils and Malayans come begging around the camps (making sure the Japanese do not see them). They curse the Japanese now, a few weeks back they were all flag-waving, now they are beginning to appreciate they were sold a pup. The Japanese have taken off their kid gloves and donned the mailed fist. I feel a little sorry for the Malayans although I should not as their treachery cost us numerous lives and was a big factor towards our defeat. Tamils I have no sympathy for as he is naturally a two-faced traitor and did us a lot of harm. This also applies to some of the other Indian races. They at least would not have thought they were acting for the benefit of Malaya and what they did was purely for gain. God help these Indians and Malayans when the Japanese have been beaten and the Chinamen come back to his own. I hope I'm not here to witness it.

Had some good news today. It has been confirmed that some of our chaps whom we thought lost and possibly dead are P.O.W.s in Kuala Lumpur, including three of our officers, Ms. Edwards: McLeod; Withycombe.

News received today very bad, we are trying not to believe it, but it rings a bit true and is very hard to convince ourselves.

Meals a little better and only feel a little bit hungry tonight.

Another concert tonight, should be a good show. I can hear it starting now, will need to be good tonight as everybody looks a bit down in the mouth.

Friday 10th July 1942

Snow White has not graced us with his presence for a few days and things have gone off very quietly on the hill. We received a reasonable task now and have finished around 5p.m. the last few days. The task consists of 2 cubic metres per man to be excavated and carried in baskets about 30 yards. It is sufficient to keep us working hard and consistent but we don't mind when we know that we can do it in a reasonable time, although it is 8 hours solid in the worst heat of the day. God knows what my skin will be like after all this as we only wear shorts, hats and boots. We must be in pretty fair condition to stand up to this work in the heat. I know I'm not carrying any superfluous fat and if we had the food we would all be in excellent trim.

Another 1500 P.O.W.s have left Changi for a place unknown. I think there must be some method in all this movement of P.O.W.s to different and widely separated places.

Whilst marching to work today an incident occurred. We were passing the Ford Works, which the Japanese use as some kind of Headquarters. and sentries are posted on the road and numerous other places, when the sentry on the road rushed across and hit one of the boys with the butt of his rifle. It appears this chap had a cigarette in his mouth and we now take it that it's something that is not done

when passing a Japanese sentry. The natives have to walk over to the sentry, first removing their hat, and then make him a very respectful bow and pity help the poor boong if it does not please the guard. If the boong happens to be on a bicycle he dismounts and does it. They also have to remove their hat, stop and bow if in a car, which of course is not very often.

Saturday 11th July 1942

Things are going along very humourously on the hill. The guards are very congenial (due no doubt to the absence of Snow White). We finished again today at 5p.m.. Work pretty hard. Had a visit from a very high Japanese General. We were lined up after stacking tools neatly, and had to stand at attention for about half an hour, was pretty uncomfortable, but we all stood up to it. I wonder do they realise how hardened we are becoming and might come in very handy to us and not so good for them.

Cut my hand on the top of a crossbar which we drive by means of a 10lb hammer into the dirt, it is as sharp as a razor. The number of accidents is negligible. I think the most serious was one chap caught by a fall of about 3 tons of dirt, he escaped with a shaking and bruising.

Food very ordinary, plain rice for all meals, with the exception of tea which consisted of rice and boiled green pineapples which was not very nice. Saw a convoy of 4 ships today, the first for some considerable time, they were well out of the water and did not appear to be loaded. News very scarce, and have not seen a Syonan Times for a few days.

Sunday 12th July '42

Day off and we certainly need it, two days of that work and I'm ready for a spell. Nothing of any interest today, not even the meals which were very poor. We received our cigarette issue of 12 but they only last me a day. I just chain smoke them.

Hand not giving me any trouble but have had a bad headache all day, hope its not forerunner to the fever.

Played a game of poker in the morning, won 5 cents = 1½^d, headache too bad so gave it up and slept most of the afternoon. Warned by the Japanese that if we buy from natives the same action as taken against them will be taken against us. Have not heard any more regarding the Cholera outbreak but we are still taking the necessary precautions.

Monday 13th July '42

Another tomorrow gone. Very peaceful on the hill today with the exception of a small incident of a guard (not one of ours, one guarding a reservoir) who hit one of our chaps with his rifle butt for crossing his beat, which of course our fellow did unknowingly. Anyhow he was, i.e. the guard, severely spoken to by the N.C.O. of our guard and no further trouble came from that quarter, and, wonder of wonders, Snow White spent most of the day on the hill and never once interfered with us and we were able to complete our task and go home at 5p.m.

Heard some good rumours today, too good to be true but nice to hear after all. The best news, they were as follows:- half million Allied troops landed on the island of Sardinia, also landing on Italian

shore: Burma bombed by R.A.F.: Hitler sacked all his Generals bar two, Rommel being amongst those sacked; Russians holding their front and things are much better; Libyan campaign now going our way. All marvellous and devoured by us like starved men.

Feel very good today, headache gone and never felt better; also meals good, breakfast plain rice, dinner plain rice with half a tin of pineapple per man, and was it good? Tea, vegetable stew, rice and rock cake.

Tuesday 14th July 1942

Very quiet day on the hill, although someone pinched the Jap N.C.O.'s silver cigarette case (probably one stolen by him in the first place), we knocked off again at 5p.m. Had an issue of soap made by Kitchen room and made me feel homesick. There are only two of our troop left at Changi, also heard that Fatty McLean is doing well and is convalescent.

Rumour afloat that the Japanese are going to pay us 10 cents a day since we have been POWs. Hope there is some truth in the rumour, also that we are to receive half a tin of pineapple per man every fortnight.

Nearly all our good news of yesterday refuted today, I thought it was too good to be true.

Had a quiz contest tonight 2/15th versus Ordnance, we won 209 to 207, doesn't say much for our intelligence to only beat them by 2 points.

Marvellous meat stew and rock cake for tea actually felt satisfied after eating but feel a little peckish now.

Saw some of the boys from Newcastle, Grant Gobel, Roy Finney, can't remember the others names, they were on a truck and are camped at the New World Singapore; they say that they are having a good time and also can obtain beer, actually I've forgotten what it tastes like. They looked well and have all put on weight, I think I have put some on the last few days.

Wednesday 10th July 1942

Five calendar months today since the Capitulation and five long weary ones, hope the months seem as long and are as happy as they are now miserable when the great day and the long looked for and anxiously awaited day of my reunion with my wife, son and family.

Day off today, did the usual washing, cleaning up and debugging with the usual results of a great massacre of bugs.

Talking to an Ordnance cove today who stated they had a great time whilst the campaign was on, they had their quarters near our present camp and were able to go to Singapore every night either on leave or AWL, they, i.e. those that drank, were drunk nearly every night, during the day they had air-raid shelters to go as soon as a plane was sighted. This explains our trouble in getting anything that was required from them, also the scandalous condition that the guns were in when we received them. I personally sent back four that after having one to eight rounds fired from them were absolutely

unserviceable and useless and I certainly told this cove what I thought of him and the Ordnance in general. I think he was sorry he spoke and I was glad of the opportunity to speak, they still live up to their standard and any trouble we have with the Japanese authorities is mostly brought about by them.

It was quite a few days since we had rain, but this afternoon it made up for lost time, came down with terrific force and quantity, it has eased off somewhat now but is still raining. I think it may be the beginning of the rainy season, it's going to be very uncomfortable working on the hill when the season does come.

Was given a new razor blade, tried it out on my weekly shaves, if it lasts as long as the previous one I will be very satisfied, not a bad effort, one blade in five months. The toothbrush I am using has also been in daily commission for the same period, and is beginning to show marked signs of wear. I don't think the last bristle will stand up much longer. A trip to a dentist would not do much harm and I've a feeling that one of my teeth is not the best, don't think rice diet is an improvement to the teeth and I'm afraid if we cannot get dental attention there is going to be quite a few gummy smiles arriving home.

Still have the book of poetry which I frequently read. Am hanging onto it as long as possible. It's something I can read and never gets tiring.

Exceptionally good concert tonight, some very good singing, and a very humorous sketch, one or two parts of it I remember. One was the chap asked the supposed girl applying for a job what was her education standards; she replied she had a fair constipated education as she never passed anything, or something to that effect. The other: one chap asked the other how he liked his new boong-a-low and also asked him if the food was good. He answered 'Yes! If you were quick'. Mr. Quick is our C.O. and rumour has it that the Japanese guards look after him very well as regards food. Another good turn was a song, sung and composed by one of the boys, called "Who Killed Snow White?", sung to the tune of Poor Cock Robin. It was extremely good.

Meals rice as usual, with a little vegetable stew for tea but something else right out of the box – a bread roll with real margarine and did I enjoy it? The margarine tasted to me nicer than the best butter I have ever tasted.

Thursday 16th July 1942

Rained like blazes all last night and was still raining this morning, had visions of a holiday but it cleared up about 8a.m. and off to work we went. Had quite an easy day and finished at 5p.m. When we arrived on the hill we saw that the shed the Japanese use as an office and tool shed had been burnt down, obviously not by the Japanese, unluckily our tools were stacked in a tent so we still had to work.

A rumour circulating to the effect that 1,400 Aussie P.O.W.s tried an escape from Burma which was unsuccessful, also that nine had been shot previous to the attempt. We had heard that a batch of A.I.F. from Changi were in Burma and some of the 2/15th were amongst them, hope this rumour does not prove true.

Tea very good, meat stew and rice, and, hold your seat, a banana fritter, and was it good.

There are two Geckos (small lizards) in our hut and I never grow tired of watching them. They run along the walls and ceilings, they run upside down on the ceiling and never fall, they catch flies, mosquitoes etc. and they are as quick as lightening and God help the fly etc. that gets within reach of its tongue. They also have a quaint sweet musical chirp when they are not hunting. They play together and I have seen them once or twice making love and am anxious to see the results running with their parents, the full grown ones are about 3 inches long so the offspring I imagine will not be monsters.

Pay day today, I think I will treat myself to a couple of cigars, to go with the Banana fritters. News just came through from Changi that poor Fatty McLean died, it is only a few days ago that I heard he was going well, must have had a relapse. We all feel pretty bad about him.

Friday 17th July 1942

Dear Old Dad and Dear Old Mum are continually in my dreams and thoughts. I am sorry I was unable to send them a card. I tried but was only allowed to send one.

Arrived on the job today met by Snow White who informed us that it was a Japanese holiday and told us to go on with a task he set, we worked for a few hours before even a guard turned up and then only one arrived. He straightaway laid down on a table in a tent forthwith and went to sleep, that was all we saw of him all day. That's what they think of our chance of escape, one guard to 600 men, we certainly agree with them. Two of our chaps did try and even got as far as 200 miles away to another island, one got malaria bad and both were near starved. They were retaken and placed in hospital and returned to Changi yesterday. There is a rumour around that they are to pay the extreme penalty, but it does not seem likely to me after they had taken the trouble to get them well again and then bring them back. No confirmation regarding the other rumour of the Burma escapes. I think it is just a yarn.

Received a bit of a fright this morning, we were working away with out guard, when over the brow of the hill pops about 40 Japanese, full packs, rifles and all war equipment. They doubled up to the front of us, formed up and waited for their officers to arrive. We thought they might be going in for some rifle practice using us as targets but they piled their arms, stripped to the waist and did their physical exercise, when finished they left, some sort of tactical exercise I suppose.

I believe the Japanese give the P.O.W.s in Malay a great write up in the Syonan Times. They state that great strides have been made in their beautification and culture schemes, partly due to the co-operation of the POWs; there is no doubt we can vouch for their culture and can describe, but would hesitate (not having the practice) to demonstrate the correct cultured methods as used by the Japanese of knocking down poor old Chinese women and men, slapping the faces of P.O.W.s and relieving oneself in any available place irrespective of time, audience or privacy. I might state that I'm sure their culture would go back even further than the ape age, but the trouble is they have not improved with the ages. Their morals are everything that can be expected of their breed which, from observation, would be a cross between the most degenerate low bred Chinese and an ape. They are

uncivilized perverted animals, all they think of is sex in its lowest form which is meat and drink to them. Their actions are that of a showoff child of the age of 4 or 5, their mentality fits in with that age. Of course this refers mostly to the common ordinary soldier. Their officers are of a different breed, but I think their sex diversions are much of a muchness.

Able to buy a tin of Polimalt today. It took all my pay but it was worth it, being a mixture of sugar, malt, eggs and other things, it certainly makes great improvement to the plain rice and I should imagine at the rate of three tablespoons per day it will last at least seven days. The weight will mostly likely make its appearance again although I think I have put on a few pounds in the last week I'm still below the 11 stone mark. Will try and weigh myself tomorrow and check the results.

Saturday 18th July 1942

Day off. General Percival arrived at the camp to bid our officers goodbye prior to his embarkation for Japan. It appears that all Senior Officers over the rank of Major are being sent to Japan. Another strategic movement on the Japanese part, they evidently expect something likely to happen.

Big Chinese funeral passed this morning, the hearse was decorated like a floral float, was very beautiful and would have been a credit to any procession. It evidently was the funeral of a wealthy Chinese as the hearse was followed by cars and lorries and at the price of petrol no ordinary family could afford the expenditure. In the cars, presumably the chief mourners, the occupants were dressed in sack cloth, the lorries had food and the necessaries for keeping the soul from hunger, also tom toms, and other noisy instruments with which the evil spirits were to be drive away with.

One of the boys gave me half a coconut which I grated up and together with my Polimalt and put into my dinner rice, it was the goods, made a very nice meal.

Had 5 cents (1½^d) left out of my pay so gave it a spin at the two-up. I'm now broke for another 10 days.

Moon in its first quarter, looking forward to the full as I think if the Yanks do come, they will arrive with the full moon; most everybody sits up till one and two in the morning those nights as it sort of makes us restless and sleep is practically impossible. Incidentally, the Japanese pick that period for the black-out practice and it lasts until the moon is in the last quarter, they seem to be of the same opinion as regards the Yanks.

Lorry loads of Jack Fruits and Mangos (the latter being the most delicious fruit in Malaya; small and not much of them) pass frequently all day, looks like an effort is being made to bring the population of Singapore, sorry Syonan-To, back to pre-war, that is if what we hear of the powers of the Jack Fruits be true, if the population live entirely on rice, it would have to be.

Sunday 19th July 42

A real bludge on the hill today, only one guard and next to nothing to do, we were naturally finished before dinner but did not leave until 4p.m. Japanese gave us some very depressing news, it appears that a Jap transport carrying over 1,000 Aussie P.O.W.s and civilians was sunk by an American

submarine not far from Singapore with great loss of life. Don't know whether it was some of our chaps from Changi, they left about the time it happened, 1st July. God knows our peers and people have had enough worry and anxiety to last them a life time without the added uncertainty of what this will cause them.

The interpreter told us this morning that in 3 months time there will not be a P.O.W. on Singapore Island. Meaning that we will all be transferred to different localities and countries. I also was told that there is going to be big changes in all the Japanese troops on the Island. They are also going to be shifted and replaced. At present most of them are occupation troops awaiting the finish of their military time before going back to the Reserve and if they are replaced by fresh fighting troops it may possibly mean something.

Meals very ordinary, without the Polimalt they would have been rotten; used $\frac{3}{4}$ of my tin already, don't think it will last 7 days.

We have just been issued with identification tags which we have to wear at all times, it consists of a piece of cloth with Japanese characters and the number of our camp stenciled upon it.

Monday 20th July 1942

Slept very badly last night, did not go to sleep until after 3 a.m. Did a great deal of thinking, felt very depressed all day.

Two of the boys from the cubicle, Tom Irvine and Bryant Isaacs (not a Jew) were taken away last night, both with bad attacks of the fever; although dysentery has decreased, fever and Beri Beri seems to be getting worse.

Work on the hill the same as yesterday, a bludge, there must be a catch somewhere.

News from Changi that there are 23 of the 2/15th prisoners at 'K.L.'. This news was brought to Changi by a Sergeant Roberts who was one of the 23. It appears they were captured at the ---- Batu Anam and taken prisoners which was very unusual during the campaign. The Japanese took their boots from them and marched them 60 miles, one chap, poor old Jack Wheeler, had a portion of his heel shot off and could not keep up, they eventually shot him. He was a great cove and I remember as if it was only yesterday an incident when we were in the train pulling into Darling Harbour prior to embarking; his name was called by one of the railway people standing near the line and when Jack answered this chap told him to look out at a certain point and he would see his wife and daughter. He saw them. Later on when we were on the boat and steaming down the harbour a launch came along with a woman and girl holding a placard with "Jack Wheeler; here we are" printed on it. I mentioned it to him after. I asked him how he thought of it and he told me that he used the same method when he saw his son aged 19 off to the Middle East about two months previous.

Four course meal tonight, fish (beautiful but not much of it), meat stew (one of the best) plain rice with polimalt, and a date bun (exceptionally nice), feel pretty contented.

Tuesday 21st July 1942

Day off today, did the usual cleaning up, washing and debugging with the usual results. Very ordinary day, no unusual happenings or anything of interest.

Just saw a very unusual thing, a flash like a kite with a tail brilliantly lit up, flashed across the sky and even although it was only 5p.m. you could notice the difference in the light, possibly a meteor, it must have been a tremendous big one. We had a similar experience about a fortnight ago but was much later at night and it lit the place up like daylight.

The usual meals. Had a rock cake for tea. Back bad last night and could not sleep too well, quite a few suffer with the same thing. We have blamed everything but I really think we are all more or less a little weak around the kidneys, no doubt the rice diet has overworked them just as it does our bladders.

Just received word that the Japanese will supply us with a cup of coffee sugared at 1p.m. on the hill for the sum of 3 cents per cup. Catch is no one has 3 cents, so I'm afraid their business venture will not bear fruit.

Wednesday 22nd July 1942

Good sleep last night, no signs of kidney trouble, it's like that, just comes and goes.

Plenty of work on the hill, new guards and by their first day's performance they're not going to be too popular. Worked till 6.30p.m. and about half finished the task they set so I suppose we will have a few blitzes before they see eye to eye with us, it usually takes the new guards a fair time to settle down to our ways of working.

Polimalt gone and do I miss it. It was certainly a great standby and made a great difference to the plain rice meals which averages at least twice a day. Hope I can afford another tin next pay day.

Thursday 23rd July 1942

Heard a marvellous rumour but I'm afraid too good to be true; to the effect that mail has arrived in Singapore for us by a neutral ship; we are not banking on it being correct, but all are saying a quiet prayer. I don't know of anything other than our release that would make us extremely happy.

Big task on the hill, tried the stand-over again but it did not work. They continually reminded us that when we finished we would be allowed to go home. We just worked along and did not bustle, we know that they go on leave Thursday nights as it's a Japanese holiday on the Friday and they are more anxious than us to get home. Anyhow around 5p.m. they started to get restless and keep looking at the time. We still had enough work to last us until 7p.m. They tried all their tricks but we just plugged along and in despair they knocked us off at 5.30p.m. amidst great cheers from the boys.

A company of Japanese soldiers arrived on the hill much fatigued after their march, we could see they were only rookies and looked like new arrivals. It was not long before the boys had all their cigarettes, they usually catch the newcomers until they wake up to them.

Big convoy left today. It was very dull and could not tell whether it consisted of transports or warships. They appeared to be very big and consisted of about fourteen ships.

Cigarette issue which means one long smoke until they are finished. Meals, rice, rice and rice, with veg. stew.

Friday 24th July 1942

Just a holiday and I made it such. Did quite a lot of Malaya P.I. (lying on the back), reading the book of poetry, also did a piece of washing but on the whole had a very lazy day.

Although it was a Japanese holiday a few had to go on the hill to finish a special job. I believe one of the Jap guards lost his temper and hit one of our boys who likewise did his block and hit the Jap back. Luckily the Jap went away, much to the surprise of everyone present, thank God, and the incident closed, we hope. I'll say this, he must have been a decent Jap as he could have made it very uncomfortable for our chap. Meals good: meat stew with rice and date cake.

Saturday 25th July 1942

As yesterday was a Japanese holiday, today is our Company's day off. Spent a very busy day with the needle and cotton, repaired my trousers, darned my sox[sic] and did a few other repairs. Also played a rubber of bridge, I soon sicken of cards and don't seem to be able to work up an interest in them.

We have searched every avenue for verification of the rumour regarding the mail for us without any results, so have decided to forget it. Kept us excited for a time but was too much to expect. All anxiously waiting for pay day. I'm afraid Polimalt will be off the menu for me, can't afford it this pay, will certainly miss it.

As there is sometimes a cake or little stew over after all have been served, and as they or it is greatly sought after, we have now a system by which everyone is given a number, which we call the backup number and by this method we all at sometime receive a turn and it's mine tonight and I know there are some very nice cakes on for tea and I am wishing my hardest that one will be over. It's a great event in your life when your backup number is called. It's something you think about for days before the marvellous event happens.

Moon at its full and still hoping but looks like another miss. I suppose we are impatient, but it's just hell waiting and waiting. It's about 12 months ago since I last saw my wife and son and family and it seems a life time. Was very disappointed to wake up this morning. In my dreams I was home, enjoying life and extremely happy with the world in general. It seemed so real and everybody so distinct, it certainly was a contrast to my dreams early in the night. I seemed to go right through the campaign, which is a thing I rarely dream about and I suppose made the dream of home so beautiful.

I can't believe it, we have just been issued with a fresh egg apiece which I have already cooked and eaten and was it any good and did it make me hungry, and there is still another hour before tea. I certainly would have appreciated a little bread to go with it, but still.

Very disappointed, no backup tonight, will have to wait and see what tomorrow will bring.

Exceptionally good concert, unearthed some more good talent, it will now be possible to have a change of artists each week.

Ship news: Muir wounded. Dutch gone. P.O.W. K.L.

Sunday 26th July 1942

They left us alone on the hill today. Finished 5.30p.m. Had a visit from a General, 10 Lieutenant Generals, 1 Admiral, 1 Vice-Admiral and a big shot from the Air Force. They made us line up some distance from the party and put guards with rifles and bayonets around us. When we had been inspected from a distance of about 80 yards we were ordered to about turn and marched over the brow of the hill out of sight. They were there for about an hour, they never took the slightest risk with us.

It appears that the chap who was shot by the Japs when the prisoners were taken at the Muar was not Jack Wheeler as we were told, but another chap Rube Keeler, also a good chap. He was suffering with dysentery and fever and I believe he asked them to shoot him. Jack Wheeler was left with the wounded when they were put in the lorries and abandoned, after we had placed a red cross flag in the lines; it's another story and a very gruesome one and authentic.

Pay day today but won't have much left after I pay a few debts; no luxuries this pay.

Fair size convoy arrived in Singapore this morning, they must have the freedom of the surrounding seas.

Beri Beri is fairly bad and seems to be getting worse. I think we all have it slightly, my ankles are a little swollen and all my bones are a little sore, most everybody complains of the same thing. Yeast is the only thing we get to take for it, mostly yeast we manufacture ourselves but sometimes we receive brewers yeast from the Malayan Breweries. We have not been able to scrounge any pineapples lately and possibly this may have something to do with the increase.

Very disappointed tonight again, no backup, see what tomorrow brings.

Monday 27th July 1942

Finished on the hill at 4.30p.m. They set a task which they divided us in halves, half to the 30th Battalion and half to our camp. We then split our portion in halves and gave half to the Ordnance crowd and kept half (the largest) for the 2/15th. The Japanese promised the camp that finished first 100 pineapples and packets of cigarettes: we worked like hell and were finished by 4.30p.m.. The Ordnance loafed most of the day and had quite a bit to go – typical of them. We were disgusted and decided to come back to camp and not help them. I believe the 2/30th Battalion finished about 5.10p.m. and the Ordnance 6p.m. therefore the other camp gets the pineapples etc., but we don't mind them winning but did object to the Ordnance mob trying to impose on us.

Still quite a lot of shipping coming and going from Singapore, another fair sized convoy today.

Rumours that our officers are to be taken from us and I believe sent to Japan, things are going to be pretty tough for us if this happens.

Weighed myself today, have gained a few pounds, now am 10.12; believe there is only a little meat left in Singapore and will soon run out so when this happens expect to lose what I have gained. Meals pretty rotten today, mostly plain rice with a little vegetable stew for tea.

Won my heat in the Crib tournament tonight, don't know much about the game but was very lucky.

Just had a visit from one of the Jap guards, he invited himself in, sat on the bunk and produced some filthy photos, no one was interested and did not take any notice of him or his pictures. It appears he wanted to find out if we had any of Australian women, naturally he did not get any encouragement from us.

Moon still at the full but no appearance of anything exciting. The nights are beautiful and the sunsets beyond description. Missing Mae, in fact everybody would certainly be thrilled with them, wish they were all here, under different circumstances, to enjoy their beauty. Like everything else here they go to the extremes.

No backup again, hope its a good one when it does come.

Tuesday 28th July 1942

Company's day off today, did some washing and general cleaning up.

Took a double dose of salts, I'm certainly not suffering from dysentery. Cholera precautions lifted, could not have been as bad as first thought.

Have had one case of Typhus in the camp, were not told about it until today, we were also told that the person who had it was not told he had it and will never know, so I take it that the person must have died. It's a very serious disease and only about 1 in 4 recover, it is also very catching. I don't know their reasoning for not telling us.

Received my backup tonight, a rock cake and was worth waiting for as will be ages before I receive another. Tea good, meat stew and rock cake. When I say stew I mean 1 small ladle of stew, about two soup spoons and the rest is rice but it flavours the rice, if you receive a small piece of meat you are extremely lucky. The cooks have grilled steak and they all are as fat as pigs and look like them, they are the most disgusting lot. We are always complaining about them, we know for sure they eat most of our rations and also sell some of it. We can't catch them but have gone very close a couple of times. The worse of the whole thing is that the Commanding Officer and officers won't have anything said or done about them. They certainly have the men thinking and some of their thoughts would not flatter our officers.

Wednesday 29th July 42

It was 12 months today that I sailed out of the Sydney Heads, feeling very glum and depressed. I feel the same today, little did I visualize the happenings of the past 12 months, everything that happened would have then seemed impossible, of the twelve months the time spent in Malaya before the Japanese entered the war was full of interest and very pleasant, the period during action was crammed with danger, excitement and sometimes thrills but at no time was I conscious of any pending disaster to myself, although quite frequently I had cold feelings up the spine, but at all times I was confident of seeing it through which by the grace of God I did, my greatest worry was what worry it was causing Mae, Dad, Mum and everybody at home. This is still my greatest concern. This last period that of a P.O.W is just hell, not so much the conditions or hardships or lack of food, but as I said before the worry of the inability of us being any use in defending Australia or continuing the fight. I would a thousand times prefer to be in action again. Still who can tell, the miracle might happen, anyhow I hope before another 12 months to be sailing back through the Sydney Heads feeling the happiest man in the world and fervently looking forward to the reunion with my wife, son and family.

Work very easy on the hill, the N.C.O. in charge had a night out and did not feel the best so half way through the task he gave up and went to the tent where he laid down. We finished the amount of work he had marked out, this was about 3p.m. so we just hung around until 4.30p.m., woke him and home we marched; probably he will make us for it tomorrow. It's a funny thing these guards when they first arrive always put on a blitz for a while then they just settle down and don't care much. Our first guards who had left Singapore were drowned in the Coral Sea battle, so we are led to believe.

Won another heat of my Crib last night, also won another tonight, very lucky. I am sure it's not good play as the players I have beaten are considered experts.

Beautiful day, wonderful cool sea breeze blowing on the hill all day, it was a pleasure to be there.

Meals also good, plain rice, breakfast good shadow stew (found a piece of meat) for dinner and a good meat stew for tea and last but not least a bread roll with margarine, wish I had another just now.

Thursday 30th July 1942

Work fairly hard, but as it was Thursday we knew we would not have to finish the job before we left as it is their pay and leave night and also a Japanese holiday tomorrow, we were knocked off at 5p.m.

Played two Crib heats off tonight, I now have to play the final. Not bad for a novice. The first prize is worth \$1 (1 dollar), 2nd 20 cents, so no matter how I go I will win 20 cents.

Just heard a very bad rumour to the fact that Russia had laid down her arms. If this is so I hesitate to think what will happen but I certainly won't give up the ghost. This is one rumour I sincerely hope is not true. Fish, veg soup with rice and cake for tea, pretty good too.

Just heard that six Tommies tried to escape. They got as far as Johore where they were recaptured, it was stated that one tried to resist and had his head cut off and another tried to help him and his arm was cut off. Also that the English Officers from the camp that they belonged to notified the Japanese of their escape. If the latter is true, they certainly will have a heavy conscience. Also heard that the

rumour about the Russians came from the Japanese guards, felt much easier about it as I take their news with two grains of salt.

Friday 31st July

Did the usual cleaning up and debugging, only found four bugs which was very encouraging, we are gradually ridding our quarters of the bugs, we will sure miss them.

Just settling down for a little snooze this afternoon when we were called out to fight a fire that had started in a pineapple plantation. The fire brigade were there in charge of two Englishmen who I suppose are on parole, they were unable to do much about putting the fires out as they were unable to move the hoses about due to the pineapple plants. There were about fifty of us, mostly all country coves used to fire beating, we soon had it under control and then sat about looking for pineapples, they were very scarce but I managed to scrounge about half a dozen and most of the others did likewise, so we did not mind the fire much.

Two of the chaps from our hut sneaked out this morning and went on a scrounging expedition, they arrived back with 2 tins of butter, 2 tins of meat and vegetable stew, and a couple of pineapples. We did ourselves well for dinner and as we had an excellent tea I feel full and very satisfied. Have my pines for tomorrow so will be able to mix them with my rice. They are very small about the size of a large grapefruit but very sweet.

One of the firemen told us that the public were allowed one Katte (1lb 3oz) salt per month per person; one Katte sugar per month per person, no flour; no bread; no meat; they practically live on dried fish and rice, they say they are not allowed sufficient rice the amount being 20 Katte per month per person. On the whole I don't think they are too happy. One chap (Malayan) who seemed to be a Captain, he was next in charge to the Englishman, told me before the war he received \$300 per month, he now receives \$50 only, \$250 loss. He also said the Englishman in charge prior to capitulation received around \$1,000 per month, he also receives \$50 now.

Saturday 1st August 1942

Good days work on the hill, kept us going until 5p.m.

Had a very lucky escape this afternoon. Was sitting in the shade under a bank of earth about 20 feet high, I felt some earth trickling onto my back and on looking up saw the face starting to move. I moved a little quicker and saved myself from being buried under about 7 or 8 tons of earth and boulders.

Nothing of interest, tea very ordinary, plain rice and vegetable soup, ate one of my pineapples for sweets, but still feel hungry.

Have not played my Crib final as yet. Thought we might receive our cigarette supply tonight, but so far they have not arrived. I could do with one just now.

Sunday 2nd August 1942

Things very pleasant on the hill. Knocked off at 5p.m. without finishing our task, also during the day they bought up a lorry full of small pineapples which they distributed, there's no understanding them.

Was beaten in the Crib final tonight, the other chap was about my standard but a little luckier. Still it was close. Also beaten in the 500 tournament heat, most unlucky day. Should not have played on a Sunday, 2/15th's unlucky day.

The Ghekkos (lizards) have results from their affair running along the ceiling. It made its appearance tonight. Have only seen one, possibly there may be more.

Quite a lot of air activity today, a big flight of medium bombers and one very large bomber accompanied by fighting planes passed over us and made out to sea. They returned some hours later, would like to know what was their mission, perchance it was only manoeuvres.

I believe the shifting of our Senior Officers to Japan has been either cancelled or postponed, maybe it means something. I also believe the Chinese affair is not going well for them, that may be the reason.

Have a large Zinc [?] ringworm on my chest, it's about 2 inches in diameter, they usually come in numbers but so far there is no sign of any more. It feels just like a fairly bad sunburn, that's what I thought it was until someone informed me otherwise.

THE DYING M.T. DRIVER

(Anon)

Oh a poor MT. Driver lay dying,
At the end of a bright summer day
His comrades were gathered around him
To carry the fragments away

The engine was piled onto his wishbone
A ramrod was wound round his head
A sparkplug stuck out of each elbow
T'was plain to see he'd shortly be dead

He spat out a spark plug and gasket
And stirred in the sump where he lay
And then to his wandering companions
These brave parting words he did say

Take the manifold out of my larynx
And the butterfly valve out of my neck
Remove from my kidneys the piston
There's lost of good parts in the wreck

The crankshaft take out of my stomach
The cylinder out of my brain
Extract from my liver the dashboard
Assemble the engine again

I'll be riding a cloud in the morning
With no rattle before me to curse
So take out the lead and get busy
There's another lad wanting the hearse

So stand up your glasses ready
This world is a place full of lies
Here's health to the men dead already

Monday 3rd August 1942

Day of rest and that's what I did, most uneventful day, slept most of the time, did a little washing and copied out the above poem, which I thought rather good.

Rained a little for the first time for I think a week or so, which is considered drought conditions here. I suspect the wet season will come with the waning of the moon. I am very disappointed that things did not happen with the full moon, and as it is now nearly the last half it is too much to expect anything now, so it looks like another month to wait and then hope.

Miserable meals today, felt hungry and unsatisfied all day. I believe only 20lbs of meat came in this afternoon and that amongst 300 men won't go too far. We usually receive around 80lbs to 100, that including bone etc. I think the meat supply is practically done. Paper nearly run out. It's very scarce, will have to look around and try and buy a notebook which are very expensive.

Excellent concert tonight with some damn fine comedians, also sketches and singing very good.

Heard anti-aircraft fire just before the concert started, probably only practice as I saw them shifting one into a different position during the day.

Tuesday 4th August 1942

Worked the hardest I have ever worked in my life. I used a pick to dig up huge granite rocks with small pieces in between, it had been the foundation of an old road and believe me it was solid going for 8 hours, finished at 5.30p.m.

The Japanese soldiers wear long top sandshoes which button at the back, they are made so that the big toe is separated from the other toes and have a cloven hoof effect. This allows them to climb trees etc. with more ease than the ordinary type, they wear them as much as possible and I'm sure they will all finish with flat feet, ordinary boots seem to look very awkward on them. One of the guards today pointed to my boots and then to his shoes and said British march, much noise, Japanese no noise. This was very forcibly brought to my notice during the latter part of the action on the island, I had to take up an Anti-tank position at a cross road near Government House so I left the gun and tractor and walked about 300 yards to the Coors roads to select my position, where I felt the bullet whiz past my ear. I went to ground and waited, he took another shot (it was just about dusk) and I noticed it came from a house about 200 yards away. We eventually found the sniper and he turned out to be a Malayan civilian. He was taken away. I never heard what happened to him. Another incident happened when we were making what we thought was our last stand at Tanglin Barracks which brought the sniping incident very much back to my mind. When night came it was noticed that the top windows in a two storey house about little over half a mile away would light up intermittently. We could not make out what was happening and the officers thought it might be some sort of signal or a sniper. Anyhow they decided it needed an investigation and I and a gunner were chosen for the job. Well we started off and as it was a thickly housed area the only way to go there was by road or the

footpath and as both were made of concrete and as at that time silence reigned, our boots sounded to me like sledgehammers ringing out in a blacksmith's shop. I was pretty uncomfortable, especially as I continually thought of the other sniper, funny it did not occur to us to take our boots off.

Anyhow, we eventually found the place and I went inside with a funny feeling inside me, and found that the light was caused by the reflection from a fire caused by bombing, the noise I imagined my boots made on the footpaths did not compare with the noise I imagined they made inside the house, believe me we were pretty glad to arrive back. Although we did not know where the Japs were I knew I would strike our Infantry before the Japs and it was the noise of our boots that sort of gave us the creeps.

One of our Companies just arrived back, they were kept back to finish off their task. It appears that after we left they did not hurry themselves, the guards tried to urge them on but they just kept going at last the N.C.O.-in-Charge rushed down and started whacking into the boys with his stick (a golf stick without the head). Things looked pretty serious for a while but the boys kept their head (possibly both ways) and finished the job without going any faster, the N.C.O. seemed to go mad for a minute but was alright straight after, it's typical of them.

Think I am still putting on weight, but not getting any fatter. Feel extraordinarily well and in good condition.

Wednesday 5th August 42

Fell for quite an easy job today, went by lorry to a granite quarry where we loaded the lorry with very small metal, three loads in all and it took about 5 minutes for each load. We waited there for the lorry and as we had plenty of time on our hands did a little roaming, found a soap factory and received from the chap in charge quite a quantity of soap. Also found what appeared to be trenches, three of them still open but the rest about 100 or more filled in. They were about 25' x 3' x 6'. I enquired from the Indian their meaning and he informed me that hundred and hundreds of soldiers, mostly Japs and some Australians, were buried there. It appears that a section of our machine guns were surrounded at this point, they were wiped out but they took hundreds of Japs with them.

When we were coming back to camp from the quarry we passed two lorry loads of men who when they saw us cried out 'Hello Aussies' coo-eed, shouted, threw their hats up and generally seemed to be crazy with delight at seeing us. They were in all modes of dress, we found out later that they were Aussies and New Zealanders and had only left Sydney six weeks ago, probably sailors off some ship that had been sunk and picked up, they were coming from the direction of the Naval base. I would have given anything for an hour's talk with them. Hope someone contacts them and relays the fair dinkum news from back home, also the real situation. The information as to who they were was obtained by one of our chaps further down the road who was able to get that much from them as they slowed down at one of the road blocks.

Two of our chaps caught outside the wire tonight by the Japanese guards. They were luckily handed over to our guards and are to come up before our C.O. tomorrow morning. You never now how the

Japs will jump. I think a lot depends on their mood. Yesterday (as the Tommy driver of the truck we were in told me) one of the Tommy drivers was backing his truck up an incline, the engine stalled, the Jap guard got wild and went to hit him with a stick, the driver knocked the stick away and told him what color he was and made some remarks about his birth, the Jap guard ran to the Jap officer or N.C.O and said the driver had struck him, four guards grabbed the driver, held him to the ground by holding a bayonet to his throat and then belted him with pick handles. The Tommy officer and Sergeant tried to interfere and they were both hit on the head with pick handles and knocked cold (rumour has it, which I don't believe, the officer later died). The rest of the Tommies were made to stand at attention in the sun for a considerable period and any that moved were given a taste of the club. This story I can't vouch for, but I believe there is some truth in it.

Thursday 6th August 42

Day off; did my washing, mending and darned my one and only pair of soxs, played a few hands of crib, 500, and bridge, soon got bored of cards, slept a little and read some poetry, also bought a coconut, grated it and then baked brown over the fire. I am going to try it out on the plain rice. Managed to buy half a pound of sugar, worth its weight in gold, but I'm afraid it won't last too long. Had some on my rice at breakfast and the sweetness clung to my palate for hours after.

The two chaps who were caught out of the wire were given detention for 21 days, which means they are confined to our Guard Room and live solely on rice for that period. I think it would send me mad. The Japanese instructed our Commanding Officer to give that punishment.

Tried the roasted coconut and a little sugar on my rice at tea, it was delicious, just as well I had it to fall back on as the tea was b_____ awful, watery vegetable stew, not much vegetables and plenty of water and plain rice.

Japanese army are doing quite a lot of manoeuvring around our camp and I suppose other parts of the Island. They seem to be at it day and night, hope they are expecting. The Island is just seething with Japanese troops.

Friday 7th August 1942

Uneventful day, work on the hill quite easy and finished at 4.30p.m.

Confirmation regarding the Aussies off the ship, it was travelling from Sydney to India and was sunk. They are at Changi and we expect quite a lot of home news tomorrow. I believe one of the Officers from here has already contacted them. We are all waiting very anxiously.

Another half pound of sugar today. I'm afraid this rich living will cause me to break out in boils or something. My ringworm tinea has become larger and now practically covers my chest, also one small one on the stomach, looks like I'm going to have a batch.

Tomorrow can't come quick enough for me. I'm just excited as a school kid going on his first holiday awaiting for the morning. Sincerely hope the news will be something to give us hope and dismiss the dismal thoughts and depressed feeling we all have.

Had 15 cents left and decided to give it a go at two-up. Have now in my larder 1 tin Polimalt; 1 bottle Worcestershire sauce; 1lb sugar; 1 Katte salt; 1 tin pepper; 1 coconut; 4 oz tobacco; 3 packets cog. [cig.?] papers; 1 bottle soft drink; 1 packet sugar candy, and still have 70 cents. Not a bad buy for 15 cents and if everything is bright back in dear old Aussie I will be as happy as possible under these circumstances. Only need a letter from home (have not given up hope of that miracle happening) I will be sitting on top of the P.O.W. camp (our world).

Saturday 8th August 1942

Easy day on the hill, home at 5.30p.m. Very disappointed our C.O. was unable to contact the party who had the news from the sailors at Changi; it will be worth waiting for.

Two of the chaps from our hut tell a story and they vouch for its truthfulness. They were detailed to go on one of the trucks and driven by a Jap to procure some wood for the job. Whilst trying to turn the truck on one of the roads the Jap put it into a gutter where it bogged. They tried to get it out but were unable to do so, and were about to go for assistance when along comes a Chinese funeral. The Jap walked out, stopped the hearse and made the driver pull out of the funeral procession a wire rope on the hearse attached it to the lorry and after a few unsuccessful attempts managed eventually to pull the truck out onto the road. During all this time the mourners etc. had to stand by and watch and wait. There is certainly something to say for the Japanese culture and initiative. Another instance of their gentlemanly instincts and culture happened today. One of the A.I.F was driving a truck which cut in and collected a Japanese truck coming from the other direction (the A.I.F cove's fault). No damage was done, only bent guards, and no-one was hurt. The Japanese truck had about 12 soldiers in the back, they all jumped out and all together including the Jap driver tore in and belted the Aussie. This story was told me by a Tommy driver who was there. He said the Aussie was knocked about considerably but grinned all the time and still grinned at them when they had finished.

Signs of three more ringworms on my stomach. Looks like I'm in for it in a big way.

Ate well. Breakfast rice, ground coconut and sugar, also sliced bananas for breakfast. Dinner up on the hill plain rice; tea vegetable soup and rice with sauce, salt and pepper; rice with coconut and polimalt, tea with sugar. Do I eat well?

Another very good concert tonight, some very good jokes, sketches and singing. Also some excellent poetry written in the camp, there are quite a lot of very good poems, very humorous and well worth collecting if I can get some paper or book to take a copy of them I will certainly do so.

There are so many different brands of boong cigarettes now on the market I have decided to try and make a collection from them. One chap started collecting them about a month ago and has already over 200 and he collected them around the camp and on the roads going to the hill.

Just bought a note book for my diary and now have only 5 cents left. Could not afford to buy one for the poetry, might be able next payday.

Lecture given by Group Capt. Rice Changi 10/8/42

I make no excuses for the R.A.F. or R.A.A.F. in Malaya during the Malayan Campaign, for, indeed, there is no excuse to make. With the personnel aircraft and equipment at their disposal they went all out and lived up to the true traditions of the great service to which they belong.

At the Singapore–Far East Defence Conference in October 1940, it was decided that the strength of the R.A.F. should be 566 first line aircraft for Malaya and Burma. In the review of the situation in July 1941 when it was submitted to the War Office that the Military requirement should be brought up to a strength of 6 Divisions of 3 Brigades each, it was pointed out that the Air Force requirements would be 368–1st line aircraft for Malaya alone with this number of modern planes – as opposed to the obsolete craft with which we were equipped – we would have been able to effect the 40% destruction of enemy landing troops counted on in the general scheme for the defence of Malaya.

But in place of 368 planes what do we find? The figures which follow are merely approximate but they furnish the answer. In Fighter Command we had 6 squadrons – later added to by a portion of another squadron after it had been crippled at Sungei Patani – and of these 7 squadrons one squadron had only 3 aircraft, a deficiency which could not be made up because of lack of machines. One squadron was detached to Burma, and another to 3 Indian Company, that left approximately 4½ squadrons comprising 50 aircraft.

Bomber Command was in a like condition. It had approximately 7 squadrons, excluding No. 205 Flying Boat Squadron and a coastal Recce Unit.

The total number of available bombers and fighters in Malaya at the outbreak of hostilities was approximately 146–1st line aircraft, made up for the most part of obsolescent aircraft. This position discloses the sad state in which the M.O.C. Far East found himself at the outbreak of war, when instead of having the anticipated 368 modern aircraft, he had much less than half this number, and those available were, as has been said, obsolescent. I will deal with the tasks allotted to the Fighters later. I may say at this stage, that I propose to deal only with Fighter activities, as my duties did not, of course, bring me into contact at all with Bomber Command.

Reverting to the original estimate in assuming that 368–1st line aircraft would be forthcoming, a programme of aerodrome construction was embarked upon from which it was hoped these planes would operate.

As the defence of aerodromes was an Army commitment, these aerodromes and ground strips caused considerable dispersion which apparently was not warranted, in the light of subsequent happenings.

The programme for aerodrome construction included the modernisation of the old landing ground at Kota Bahru, construction of another one 22 miles down the coast at Gong Bedah, one at Quantan, the modernisation of the one at Alor Star in the NW, the construction of another at Sungei Patani, and the construction of another at Butterworth in Province Wellesley: and later there were more aerodromes constructed in the North. Included in the original programme was the construction of aerodromes at

Kahang, Kluang and Batu Pahat. In addition provision was made for the construction of three more besides Kallang on Singapore Island.

Later it was decided to build a third aerodrome in Kelantan, 27 miles from the coast, at Machang. Another was to be built near Alor Star and numerous fighter strips throughout the country. The aerodromes at Taiping, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur were also being enlarged.

It may be considered that the aerodromes at Kota Bahru and Alor Star were wrongly sited. This would not have been the case had the "Matador" scheme, of which you are all aware, been put into operation. However, as the scheme was not implemented I agree with the expressed view of your senior Officer that they were wrongly sited.

What was our conception of what the Japs were likely to do? The G.H.Q. appreciation was that the Japs would not attempt to land at any place held by troops unless they could support the landing by shore-based aircraft. This protection was afforded by the action of the defence authorities in Indo-China, which meant that the machines based on Saigon were within 630 miles of Singapore, and 130 miles of Khota Bahru. This allowed of long distance fighters being employed, a contingency which had not been foreseen.

Later, due to the action of ... (*paper torn and missing*) ... another aerodrome at ... (*missing*) ... was placed at the disposal off the Japs, though it was heavily ... (*missing*) ... by our Air Force. From these aerodromes the enemy was able not only to capture all aerodromes in Malaya, but to afford his bombers fighter escort on every daylight raid.

In November of last year Japan began to make her intentions quite clear. PIO machines were observed early over the North frontier of Malaya, and even as far south as Ipoh. As you all know, part of a Jap camera dropped from a plane was picked up about this time. This course of events determined our G.H.Q. to order the 2nd degree of readiness.

On the 6th December we received our first report of Jap movement south of Saigon from aircraft which had taken off from Kota Bahru. These spotted convoys almost 100 miles SE of Cape Cambodia. This contact was lost, and later two Catalina aircraft were sent out to make further contact, but these planes never returned and were presumed shot down.

On the 8th December a message was received direct from Kota Bharu in the Fighter operation room, to the effect that transports were lying off shore preparatory to attempting a landing. Hudson aircraft from Kota Bahru were ordered to attack. The result of this operation was 1 cruiser sunk, 1 transport set on fire and 1 transport sunk and several landing barges destroyed.

This fell short, of course, of the estimate of 40% of landing troops destroyed, but the original estimate was based on a conception of over 150 1st line planes, and I maintain that the damage actually inflicted was in proportion to the number of planes available.

While this action was going on, Filter room picked up 5 Raiders 130 miles north to Tioman, i.e., 200 miles north of Singapore. Guns and searchlights were immediately informed by Liaison Officers

situated in the Operation Room. The Civil Authorities, however, could not be informed as they had packed up and shut down for the night. The result was that after great delay, H.E. the Governor was himself approached, and, I believe blew the first siren. Even after this street lights could not be put out as the responsible authorities could not be found. The result was that the lights were left burning until dawn presenting a lighted target to the enemy, which not only hazarded the defense of Singapore, but lives of the civil population.

During the 9th Sungei Patani was heavily attacked where there were two Squadrons, one of short-nosed Blenheims, then under H.Q. Far East, and one Squadron under Command 3 Indian Group. These Squadrons were warned of the impending possibility of attack but given no instructions. The result was that they were caught on the ground with engines running, and approximately 75% of their aircraft destroyed.

On the 10th it was decided to vacate Sungei Patani aerodrome, leaving 9 Buffaloes and 6 Blenheims derelict on the ground. It has been suggested that this is about the scale of damage at both Kota Bahru and Alor Star. This may be so as regards bombers, but I am not prepared to agree on the question of fighters, as none at all were lost at Kota Bahru and only two at Alor Star.

The loss of these planes, however, was a severe blow to our operational strength, and after Singapore was found to be open continuous bombing raids were made. Fighter Command found itself in the position of being almost exclusively committed to its original role, namely, interception of enemy bombers before they reached their targets, and less and less able to fulfill army requirements. Fighter Command also had the very difficult task of escorting in from as far north as the 4th Parallel all convoys and ships bringing troops and stores when these airways were being escorted in, no fighter aircraft whatsoever were available for other purposes here, with the exception of the detached Squadron with 3 Indian Group. This considerably reduced the assistance we would have liked to have given the army. In passing I may say that it has never been explained to me why the squadron which was at the Army's disposal was not made more use of. In fact, so little use was made of it that on several occasions I endeavoured to get to use it for special tasks, but the A.O.C. would not agree.

On the 26th January, during the landing at Endau, two Bomber Torpedo Squadrons escorted by fighters on the first occasion were ordered to attack transports landing troops. These attacks were carried out with obsolete aircraft, with the result that two complete Squadrons were annihilated with the loss of a great number of lives. This grave loss furnished adequate proof – if any were required – of the effort made by the Air Force to assist the Army to the utmost of its ability.

Of the 24 aircraft in those two Squadron manned by R.A.F., R.A.A.F, R.N.Z.A.F. personnel, only 9 returned to their base. During two attacks Fighter Squadrons brought down numerous aircraft and had a gala day. One Sergeant Pilot of 232 Squadron brought down 4 Navy ----- during the action. These figures were authenticated. Numerous other pilots brought down ones and twos. We lost two fighters.

The convoying of ships, the escorting of bombers, the defence of Singapore with the very limited number of aircraft left, simply meant that machines were not available to assist the Army except in cases of dire emergency when considerable risks had to be taken in withdrawing them from their tasks.

You will remember that Fighter Command started with 5 so called Squadrons but which were in reality 4¼ Squadrons and ended with the same number of Squadrons despite heavy losses.

During operations No. 488 N.Z. Squadron, in addition to the short nosed Blenheim Squadron in which there were only 3 machines, was disbanded because of lack of aircraft: the Australian Squadron and the R.A.F. Infiltration Squadron were combined and handed over to the Army. Two further squadrons arrived from overseas to relieve the pressure. Squadron 268 arrived on 1st February and left for N.E.I. on 3 February, and No. 323 arrived about middle of January and left of the 10th February for Palembang. This latter squadron was a complete one made up in Durban from personnel and machines proceeding to the Middle East. The machines had to be unloaded, uncrated and assembled. On the 4th February it was ready to function, and until 9th February, its final day of operations had claimed 28 enemy aircraft.

During the final week of operations, when Bombers were coming over in flights of 81 machines each of three flights of 21 escorted by a similar number of fighters, only 5 sections of two machines each were available.

We also had loaned to us No. 2 Squadron Royal Dutch Air Force. This Squadron fought brilliantly, but was recalled to the N.E.I. for home defence after about 10 days here. They arrived about a week before Christmas and departed about a week after Christmas.

During the whole of the war in Malaya the odds taken on by Fighter pilots averaged at 6 to 1 against. In the later stages when mass raids were being launched on targets on the Galant [?] by the enemy, interception was carried out by as few as 10 aircraft against odds so great as 182 as happened on several occasions.

The Air Force claim to have brought down 183 planes between 9th December and 9th February but lost over 100% of its own original number of aircraft. The excess of planes lost over these which we commenced the campaign is explained by the fact of reinforcements and reorganisation of the squadrons consequent on the heavy losses sustained.

No. 224 Fighter Group left Malaya for the N.E.I. on 12th February, from which country it was then hoped to carry on operations over Malaya. Due to the rapid collapse of the N.E.I. this became impossible and personnel were evacuated as far as possible to Australia and Colombo.

You may wonder ... (*torn and missing*) ... factor ... (*missing*) ... with regard to air raid warnings, ... (*missing*) ... sometimes just before or just after the signal had been given. This only happened, you will remember, in the latter part of operations. The explanation is that when Mersing had to get evacuated and our large G.L.H.I set demanded we lost the benefit of the best part of 200 miles. With

this set in operations at Mersing, Singapore was assured of a minimum of 82 minutes warning of any approaching aircraft. Out of operation and withdrawn to Johore Bahru (in the first place and latterly to Singapore itself), the time factor shortens proportionally, and it meant ultimately that the operation of fighter craft from Singapore could no longer be continued, as the time factor for placing aircraft in position to intercept or even attain a height was not nearly sufficient.

During these operations I must mention Observer Corps and the Dutch Authorities. Observer Corps in hastily pulling down and reconstructing stations at both extremities of the country did superhuman work in endeavouring to keep fighter communications and intelligence in top line. The Dutch in the N.E.I. at Tanjong Pengang did the same in respect of Borneo, Sarawak, and north to Medan. This service was also kept going to the end and great credit is due to both these organizations.

Before I conclude, I would like to say that the remark heard in Australia and made by a foolish young member of the R.A.F. in a public house must on no account be thought indicative of the national sentiments of every member of the R.A.F., who had nothing but admiration for what the P.B.I. (Poor Bloody Infantry) had to go through in this campaign.

Sunday 9th August 1942

Our day off, did the usual debugging, washing, mending etc. Bugs getting very scarce. Think we've just about beaten them, only found three. Also played 500.

The only information our C.O. could gather regarding the news etc. from home was everything in Australia was under control. The people were in good spirits, things are going well for the Allied powers and there was no need for any worry. Australia was a hive of industry. Twenty-one Axis submarines have been sunk in Australian waters and no more danger was expected from that quarter. Fremantle has been evacuated and turned into a substantial base: this news was very acceptable although I expected lots more, still we might hear more later. I was anxious to hear something regarding the alleged shelling of Newcastle and what damage was done.

A tragedy has occurred in our hut. I found a full grown Ghekkko with the latest arrival in his mouth. The little fellow was wriggling and kicking about so I managed to frighten the old one who let go but it was too late, he had already bitten off one of his back legs and tail and it died that night. I was very sorry as I wanted to watch the little fellow grow. I was very surprised at the action of the cannibalistic large one as they are usually friendly and seemingly much attached to one another.

Ringworms expanding. I receive medical attention twice per day.

Must weigh myself at the first opportunity, seem to be putting on weight very fast even starting to show signs of fat and I don't think it can be caused by my larder as I have only had it a couple of days. Meals themselves are of no better quantity or quality.

One of the Jap guards at the camp put on an act the other day. I mentioned before that the piano is parked on the rear portion of our hut. This guard arrived whilst one of our chaps, Don Magee, a damn good pianist was playing, he wanted to interrupt and play himself. Of course some of the boys told

him to wait. He then got very hostile and threatened to smash the piano and also clean up all an sundry. Naturally they let him play which he does with one finger and from then till now he spends every spare moment he gets torturing us with his one finger music and believe me there is nothing more irritating, especially if you are playing cards, writing or anything that requires concentration. As a matter of fact he is pretty near driving me mad right now.

Monday 10th August 42

Lottie's [*Jack's younger sister*] birthday.

Just an ordinary day on the hill. Just feel very tired and are aching like blazes.

Pudding Head (that's the name we have given our budding Japanese Paderewski) finished his act in the approved Japanese manner. Just before Lights Out we told him that we would shortly be putting the light out and that it would be advisable to stop playing. Of course we told him this by means of signs. He took no notice and kept playing, so when the bell rang we switched off the lights. There was a slamming of the lid and a rush of slippered feet into our hut accompanied by a voice saying switch on, we took no notice until things started to fly around the hut, so one of the boys thought it about time to switch on the light. When he did Pudding Head went straight over to him, gabbled something in Japanese and without warning punched him in the face. Just at that moment one of our officers arrived on the scene. He could hardly control himself and everybody in the hut were just about ready to do anything, but discretion ruled us all out and the outcome of it all was that the officer with our C.O. reported him to the Japanese N.C.O of the guard who promised to severely deal with him. Nothing has been heard further as yet.

The Exchange Ship which took allied diplomatic prisoners to Portuguese East Africa and brought back Japanese diplomatic prisoners arrived in Singapore yesterday. Some of these people arrived on the hill today. One asked us how long we had been there and was answered "Too b ____ long. When are we getting some mail?" Also how we like Japanese rice, reply 'b ____ rotten, but might go alright if there was anything to go with it'. Then one of the boys asked him who was winning the war, he did not reply and moved on. We all are harbouring a little hope in the heart that there might be some letters from us on this ship, but its only a hope.

One of the Japanese guards told us that Deanna Durbin had died giving birth to a child, it's a great pity if true. Speaking of film people, one of our guards, the ugliest and most ferocious and evil looking man or animal I have seen, told us one day that he liked pictures and that Shirley Temple was his favourite; the only pictures you would imagine him liking would be the inside of someone ripped open by a bayonet.

Miss my cute little Ghekkko.

Two six foot pythons were killed on our camp area today, there is a rumour that some of the boys ate them. I at least saw them being cooked, but did not actually see the eating.

Tuesday 11th August 42

Hard work today, feel tired and feet aching like nobody's business. Finished at 6.p.m. Came back to camp to find Pudding Head flat out at his practice on the piano, I believe he started at about 5p.m. and it is now 8.30p.m. and he is still at it. We are patiently awaiting Lights Out, that is if we are not all driven mad before they ring the bell. I'll swear the African tom-toms have nothing on his efforts.

One of the boys was caught under a fall of earth today. He received severe shock and a broken pelvis, they took him to the Japanese hospital at Johore, will probably send him out to Changi from there.

Some time ago arrangements were being made to shift the Senior Officers first and then the Junior Officers later to Japan. Nothing has yet been done regarding the movement. I heard today that the reason is the Japs have left it too late, sounds pretty good to me and if true they cannot be having it all their way.

Ringworms still thriving and have now sure signs of Beri Beri, that is when you press the skin on your legs the impression or dent remains there for some time. It is that which makes my feet and legs ache so much, most all of us have it.

Wednesday 12th August 42

Day of rest, most rudely broken by our Pudding-headed friend at numerous times during the day and he is at it again. If practice makes perfect he should be perfection itself. The only results from his practice seem the gradual process of sending us all crazy. Big Indian day, all rushing around (mostly Tamils) madly with some kind of flag of Independence together with Japanese flag. Don't know the full strength of the whole business but I believe it's something to do about Independence for the Indians. They received plenty of cat calls from the boys as they passed our camp.

(no date ... page before seems to be missing)

. . . . day, ate very well, vegetables with sauce and rice; rice with egg and sauce with pineapple and sugar (tin of pineapple issued one to two months --- of a cigar, feel pretty good. Believe more news has trickled though, alleged to have come from the torpedoed mariners, have not heard it yet.

The chap sent back to Changi with ----- died, also the chap that had his leg fractured yesterday was found to have two more fractures in his ankle bones, making four fractures overall. He showed great spirit all the time and never whimpered at any time. Just smoked while we moved his leg and put splints on his legs. It ----- considerable time to move the ----- first attempt being unsuccessful.

Sunday 16th August 42

Easy day on the hill only extremely ----- on us and time went very slowly. We had a job of pulling a roller up a grade of about 1 in 2 about 50 feet ----- there were about forty men and it was quite simple. Large convoy of transports arrived this afternoon, all looked to be loaded. Looks like the job will peter out shortly, will be moving on ----- sorry to leave the hill, it looked purple in the morning -----smoke hangs over the surrounding country --- the look ---- sea with trees and islands ----- reminding me of Kangaroo Valley [*which Jack visited during his honeymoon in 1940*] ...
(rest of page unreadable) ...

Monday 17th August 42 (*Pages torn on both sides and at bottom – a lot unreadable*)

Another easy day on the hill at the ----- started to rain and looked as if it had set in but did not last long and the sun came out with added urgency making it unpleasantly hot. Full moon tonight my hopes rise with the coming of the full moon and ebb with its going out some day the --- will be fulfilled and I somehow feel that it will start with the full moon. Beri Beri worse, my mouth has become ulcerated and very uncomfortable. Had the Japanese official artist on the hill doing some oil colours. I spent my smoko watching him and gleaned a few points, he is a fairly old man I should say around the 76 mark. Rumour regarding the taking of the chap --- left on the boat prisoners has not ---- less been confirmed, also more news from them, they were --- reserves in Java ---- first reported --- Sumatra, one --- wounds received as they left Singapore Island, one made another ----- (Ken Lester a Lieutenant) and he was executed for trying to escape, a --- Jones and another who, they are ---- of, also the one that died was ----. (*unreadable*) A boat went up in smoke yesterday. The Japanese had a strong suspicion ----- so I believe they executed ----- Chinese who would not help to put out the fire. The remaining Chinese ----- ... (*unreadable*) ...

Tuesday 18th August 42

Day off, but spent busy day debugging, washing, etc. Also the Japanese allow us an hour per week to collect firewood. This means for that hour (usually ... (*unreadable*)) ... we are flat out to get enough for the week. It has to be carried about half a mile. Where we went for it today there are two Jap 20--- tanks absolutely burnt out terribly knocked about. I think our anti-tank guns must have got them as I don't remember the Battery being in position there unless they happened to be fluked with indirect fire from us, we were firing in their direction, there are signs of charred bones, as evidently the crew went with the tanks.

Two of our boys have been in Changi hospital for some time with very bad cases of tinea. I heard yesterday they became so bad that an operation was necessary, poor coves, and they are now only fit for a job in a harem. They were two fine fellows too, it seems a shame. Thank God my tinea is where it is. My Beri Beri getting worse, mouth ulcers extremely bad, very hard to eat or smoke, also my aching bones kept me awake last nigh, both leg and toes feel as if they are burning. Had a pineapple each to go with our rice for breakfast, it was pure agony trying to eat it, had to give it away. Receive some brewer's yeast now, perhaps it will make a difference. Here's hoping.

“BUKIT TIMAH LAMENT” 2/15th

Here is a new ode to Nippon
And things that are pleasing and nice
But what are the Nippon-Zin doing
But filling our stomachs with rice

—
He is forcing us to sweat and to labour
And we are toiling against our will
The rewards ----- (*unreadable*)

—
We're chasing and eating Boong tucker
Which we don't enjoy very much
We're watching old Nippon gloating
As the boys get the Tinea Crutch

We pool all our troubles and worries
And do our best not to shirk
And then watch old Snow White chuckle
As he tips out our rice in the dirt

Some say he is treating us kindly
---- into arguments they slip
But where are the medical standby
When they boys go down with the s _____

Our materials he is scrapping and wrecking
And carting it down the wharf
But really the jokes on our side
He can't ship the b _____ stuff off

We pool all our ten cents each pay day
And try to improve on our tuck
But old Nippon just gleefully gloating
Refuses to lend us the truck

He boasts and he struts like a peacock
As the Bull _____ to us does he dish
Then old Tojo well manneredly sneering
Doles us out bags of crook fish

We hear grunts and jokes by the dozen
And news that is awfully nice
But we stroll home tired in the evening
And fill up our guts with rice

Some of us have no beds or blankets
And are using our rain capes as rugs
Added to the bastardry of the country
We wake up all crawling with bugs

Suppose this poem is boring
And the language is really not nice
But what else can you expect
When a man has to live on rice

You can see by my verse I hate Nippon
The slant eyed dirty twerp I despise
And when their turn comes to go under
Nippon-Zin bastard --- dies

Perhaps I have seen some good Japs
That have not shown us a bad trick
But there are in ground six feet under
And the place is marked out with a stick

And now that my poor verse is ended
And the close of day has begun
May the Japanese slant eyed bastards
Get a belting the same as the Hun

THE HAPPY P.O.W. (Anon)

Got no matches, not no dough
Got no leave, no place to go
If I'd taken my wife's advice

I wouldn't be here existing on rice
In the army but where's the war
Is that what God made soldiers for
Chased all day like silly mugs
Bitten all night by bloomin bugs
Got no papers. Got no smokes
No new books and no new jokes
Got to work in the sun or rain
Bootey food gone up again
Got no money. Got no pay
Got no meat in the rice today
Can't give lip and if I do
It gets me six day fatigue
If only I can get back there
I'll never winge again I swear
I'll do the things a husband should
I'll help wash up and chop the wood
But if another war should start
And I'm called up to play my part
I'll fall again just like a dill
Will I what? Like bloody hell I will.

“FURFIES” (Anon)

Life In Changi prison camp
Is not all Irish stew
We haven't any air-mail
And news, none old or new
We hear a lot of furfies
Here are just a few
I will try and keep them in my mind
And write them down for you

First there's Gordon Bennett
With his belly full of meat
We hear he's back in Aussie
Teaching chockoes to retreat
Next there's General Wavell
Advancing from the top
Doing up the Japs
They say he'll never stop

Kingsford Smith then we all know
Has turned up once again
Teaching the Japs dive-bombing
In a new type aeroplane
Then we have John Curtin
A clever chap no doubt
His skiting back in Aussie
On how to get us out

The Yankees they are coming
Ten million men or more
With every type of air-craft
And destroyers by the score
Of course there's Mr Churchill
A major part of the plays
He's coming to relieve us
In another sixty days

Russia has a leader
The Huns have learnt to know
They are going to surrender
In another day or so
----- turned it in once more
He's made a separate peace
He's given up his Navy
Alone with Crete and Greece

There's fighting in the desert
General Rommel's on the run
Leaving tracks, guns and ammo
England's winning, by gum

There's poor old General Percival
No doubt he's feeling sore
We hear he's rickshaw pulling
Around the streets of Singapore

They are bombing Broome and Wyndham
And Queensland's in revolt
There's Martial Law in N.S.Wales
And not a ship afloat
The prize goes to this one
It really is a beaut

We are getting frozen mutton
And wet canteens to boot

Three bales of wool for a piper
Two for an N.C.O
One bale for a Private
Well; that how the furies go
We are waiting for tomorrow
For the news they will relay
There's bound to be some beauties
As it's April Fool's Day

“ON HOLIDAYS” (I. Christie)

The sixth are being battered
The seventh are copping hell
The ninth are on no picnic
They're getting theirs as well
Whilst in a distant jungle
Many thousand miles away
The eighth are on a holiday
And all they do is play

Because there are no shells here
No bullets flying thick
We have the name of 'Glamour Boys'
That name will always stick
Every time we take a step
The sweat falls from our brow
And if we only know it
We have B.O. and how

Ploughing through the jungle
With mud up to our waist
With every step a mouthful
And what a putrid taste
Fighting Cobras by the score
And Mozzies by the ton
There's no denying it
(*next line missing*)

Then if you don't believe me
When I say it's hellish hot
I'll state a native custom
To show you what is what
Every man is buried
With his overcoat as well
Just in case he will need it
If he lands in hell

Give the Japs Malaya
It is not worth a zack
And they won't keep it long
Before they hand it back
Although we need the rubber
And find use for the tin
If they leave us here much longer
We'll be getting mighty thin

So take us to the Middle East
Where it is cold at nights
So we can join our brothers
And help to win the fight

And if you will grant this favour
Mrs Adele Smith can't say
The Eighth Divvy Glamour Boys
Are on a holiday.

“THE DESERTED PUB” (Geo Sprat 2/15)

Tonight as I sit in my dugout
Consuming a dixie of grub
My mind did a couple of handsprings
And thought of O'Donovan's pub

The ramshackle wooden construction
The pride of the town of Boopee
To some it's a job for the wrecker
It's Hotel Australia to me

Before I went mad and enlisted
It's bar was a haven of cheer
Around it the lads used to gather
To elbow their way to the bar

They say now the old town's deserted
Its streets neglected and bare
With Mrs O'Donovan's clients
Becoming increasingly rare

The Cops hang in rain round the doorway
To catch people drinking all night
The old fellows drink in the day time
The lads have gone over to fight

The jokes that they cracked to each other
They laugh at in Alien lands
They're holding machine guns and rifles
When once they held pints in their hands

They joined as their father before them
From river and valley and hill
They put down their pots and their plough shears
And went into camp with a will

They came to the counter in Khaki
They thought of the money they spent
They planted a kiss on the Barmaid
Who filled them with beer ere they went

The Saturday afternoon scramble
Today is a thing of the past
And bankrupt, the town's S.P. Bookie
Has put up his shutters at last

The brass counter-rail is now empty
Where once it held plenty of feet
And gone are the gabardine trousers
That polished the old wooden seat

The eyes of the Barmaid are listless
Her beer mopping rag quite dry
And only a few aged trappers
Help the long afternoons go by

The clock ticks forlornly above her
The beer trickles forth with a sigh
Dejected, its given up trying
To please an appreciative eye

You strangers who pause neath the rooftop
To sample the schooner that cheers
Just think of the lads who are fighting
And the pub they supported for years

And think of the hardship they're facing
Destruction and sorrow and pain
And think of the day they all long for
To set foot in Aussie again

Some day they'll land back in the hometown
To sweethearts and mothers and wives
They'll dash to the pub for a quick one
And stop there the rest of their lives

The beer will gush forth like Niagara
The larger will sparkle with glee
And glasses shall clink to "Australia"
The land of the brave and the free.

Tuesday 18th August continued

Another very good camp concert tonight, it's marvellous the wealth of talent they are unearthing, some wonderful conjuring tricks were displayed. The singing was excellent. One of the cooks is training a monkey, it made its first stage appearance, but took stage fright badly and caused a great deal of mirth by forgetting itself, obviously brought on by fright. The cook received the spoon. There were some extra good skits mostly against the running of the camp, the officers coming into the picture quite frequently and Snow White also received a good deal of notoriety.

Wednesday 19th August 42

Possibly one of the easiest days I have had. Sat on my tuc[s?]h most of the day. A big rain storm broke about 4p.m., we knocked off work and proceeded home. Got soaked through, the rain stopped just as we hit camp, usually when we get a good soaking the next morning there is a great increase in the fever cases, recurrent of course. Mouth seems a little better but still very sore, usually get everything at one time so as expected my dermatitis has broken out on my face, expect the fever any minute. They generally run together. I sound as if I am a walking Tropical Disease specimen. I've certainly got my share, most everyone has.

Came home to a good meal, one of the boys in the hut who is on no duties collected the vegetable skins and cooked them, they reinforced my stew and incidentally are one of the necessities for combating the Beri Beri. The treatment for Beri Beri is plenty of vegetables, fruit, yeast, bathing feet, etc. in Condys Crystals, massages, also for the ulcer in the mouth a wash of weak Condys.

Talk of us all going back to Changi into a concentrated area under arc lights and surrounded by electric barbed wire. It's only reasonable to expect it but we don't mind if it means that the Japs are finding it necessary due to any move made by the Allies. It shows they are not very sure of themselves.

Was told today by one of our officers they had received word from the Japanese authorities that there will be no more issue of boots, clothing etc. I'm going to find it pretty tough as far as the boots are concerned. I'm walking on my bare feet through my boots now, clothing I'm OK, but have no blanket or ground sheet, also towel on its last legs. They say in future we will have to fend for ourselves. How I don't know, hope they don't get that way about food. God knows it's bad enough now.

Thursday 20th August 42

Easier day on the hill than even yesterday. Rained like blazes at 4p.m. and again we trudged home in it, it came down that heavy it was hardly possible to see five yards in front. Lucky for the Japs that this rain did not come two or three weeks earlier. If it had I'm afraid instead of us going up to the hill, the hill would have come down to us, together with the road. They were extremely lucky to have had the weather they had to allow them to all but finish the job.

Had one of the guards explaining to a few of us how they treated the Chinese prisoners of war in China. They practiced their bayonet drill on them using them as live targets, also made them dig large

trenches and when they had finished stood them on the edge with their hands tied behind their back and their legs shackled then machine-gunned them. They also placed them on bridges they were about to blow and sent them up with the bridge. Whilst he was telling us I watched his face and I have never seen anything so wicked and repulsive. I took the opportunity when he mentioned bridges to ask about Gemas. This always excites them and they say Gemas Gemas boong bang, making noises to imitate guns and blowing up. They certainly don't like Gemas. They received a terrible belting and have a great respect for our artillery, also our bayonets.

Feel pretty hungry, very poor meals today, mostly plain rice. I tried to eat some tonight, it nearly made me vomit. My stomach could not take it although I was very hungry. I think my late larder must be spoilt.

There must be a terrific amount of petrol used on the Island. I was told today that practically every P.O.W driver pinches at least six gallons per day and sells it, also the boys have been doing a roaring trade from the hill selling axes etc. There is hardly a saleable tool left. Don't know what will happen when they take stock of their working plant, someone is going to cop it. I believe a Jap Officer belted up a Jap N.C.O yesterday when he could not find some axes. The chap who worked with him in the store took sick today and could not go to work and as tomorrow is our day off, the Jap N.C.O. might forget about it by the next working day.

Great aerial display this morning. They were practicing dog-fighting and at one time I counted thirty fighters taking part. There was some great flying. I think there are a great number of planes and also troops on the Island, and seem to be more arriving every day.

Lot of great news flying around to the effect that the Second Front has been opened with landings in France, Norway and that we have retaken the Solomon Islands and landed parachutes in Borneo. I'd like to be sure it was true but of course nothing can be guaranteed. Here we only believe what we want to believe then we usually end up disappointed. Still it's a straw to grasp for at least a short period and that's something. Would like to get hold of a Syonan Times to see what they have to say, might be able to read between the lines.

Still raining, hope it continues. I can always sleep well when it rains. Cools the air and makes being indoors much more pleasant.

Japanese officer told one of ours that the Japanese casualties in Malaya were ... *(missing)*

Friday 21st August 42

Lazy day, did some washing and just lazed about for the rest of the day. I forgot, I also cooked some vegetable peelings which were very acceptable, in fact they were the best part of the meals.

Rumour regarding the second front landing very persistent, also one starting that the Japanese have lost temporary control of the Pacific. Trust it's becoming permanent. God grant they are not rumours but absolute facts, it's time something started, but suppose they had to wait for the right time. It's only natural that we are impatient and selfish but six months to us is more than that many years. I

think that most of us have died of boredom but another thing I have noticed we are all getting short tempered and very irritable. I hope I don't turn up home a cranky old man. It's very hard to control myself at present.

Large movement of ammunition convoys and men going on during the day. I imagine they must also move during the night, a train load of Japanese troops are going into Singapore as I am writing. There's also a large convoy of material going north.

Had a Japanese Colonel visit the camp this morning. Had a good look at us and took numerous photos mostly of ourselves washing, feeding, shaving or any other thing we happened to be doing at the time.

I believe the Japanese guards have been warned to be cautious and keep on the alert, so it seems that everything is not going the best for them somewhere.

Saturday 22nd August 42

Comparatively easy day, nothing to do in the morning, but were kept busy in the afternoon, knocked off at 5.40p.m.

More aerial acrobatics today, they put on a pretty good show and kept our minds occupied for half an hour or so. Many naval men passed the camp and quite a few high Naval Officers came up the hill this afternoon. They must still have some Navy.

By the look of the sick parade tonight I estimate that at least 40% of the camp attend. At Kuala Lumpur I have been told the deaths in the P.O.W. Camp exceeded 100%, we are much better off than them only 4 have died from our camp here, but taking all the camps I should imagine the rate would be fairly high. All my complaints are greatly improved, feet and legs still very tired and ache.

We were told that the Senior officers had all left for Japan, hope the Yanks don't do to them what they did to the last P.O.W.s that left for there. I wonder do the Japs know they sank their ship.

Cigarette issue tonight, but sorry to say the tea was not worthy of the cigarette after it.

The Ghekkos were out courting again last night, its about the funniest thing ever to see these quaint little things making violent love upside down on the ceiling. I must try and learn something of their habits etc.

I mentioned the other day about some of our chaps who escaped and were now prisoners in Sumatra. The list of their names came out to camp tonight, the chap that was killed by machine gun fire was Brian West, one of the most likeable chaps in the Regiment. He was 6'3" and a marvellous statue. Everybody feels it badly and what makes it worse his brother Rus is in our hut. They were very similar in type. It was a great shock to us all, especially Rus.

Sunday 23rd August 42

New guards on the hill, case of new broom sweeps clean again, after 6p.m. when we knocked off. We seem to get these guards into our way and things go on swimmingly then they are changed and the whole business of blitzs etc. have to be gone through again. There were no incidents today only a little standing over.

Poor old Rus West seemed to be pretty shaken today, his brother's death came as a great shock especially as he has worried about him for over six months, not knowing where or what had happened to him. Then the news the other day to the effect that he was a P.O.W in Sumatra which eased his mind considerably and now to receive the news of his being killed, both he and his brother were old originals. I went through my first N.C.O school with Brian.

A few weeks ago I would say we were all in marvellous condition but today I would say that we are all very tired and weary and I understand the change probably just the Tropics or our diet beginning to take its toll, or possibly overtaxing of our energy moving up the hill and doing pretty hard work through the heat of the day has sapped us. We are unable to regain it again. We all need a good holiday with good wholesome food. I find I'm getting wearied and more tired every day.

More aerial acrobatics, also practice shoots with large calibre guns and anti-aircraft guns. Just seemed as if the show was on again. We get a quite interesting view of all these things from our perch on the hill. It would have been a marvellous point of vantage during the campaign on the Island. I can pick out spots I remember only too well.

Rissole with our rice for tea, was ... *(rest of page missing)* ...

Monday 24th August 42

Day off, did the usual chores, also did a little cooking of vegetable peelings and very small fish (like whitebait) they stink to high blazes but after they are boiled a few times, enough smell leaves them to allow of your eating them without your stomach turning over. That is if you are hungry enough.

Had a visit from some of the boys from another camp, their work is not near as severe as ours but they work six days per week, their food is much similar. They had an incident at their job yesterday when the guards asked one of the boys (I should say told) to wash out his handkerchief which he had been sick in the night before. The chap refused so the Jap hit him on the arm with a pick handle and broke his arm.

Just completed filling in a form for the Japanese, our Name, Nationality, Division and on the bottom is a space marked Welfare. No one seems to know what it is all about but everyone is of the opinion that it might be some system of recording any parcels, letters, etc. we might get. Up to date we have not received anything of that nature but who knows a miracle might happen.

Pay period finished yesterday, all waiting patiently and anxiously for the hand but think I will spend most of mine in eggs if I can buy them. I could nearly afford one per day. They are supposed to be one of the best cures for Beri Beri which is the only thing I have wrong with me at present. I attribute my tiredness etc. to it and am very anxious to be rid of it.

Hardly a night passes that I don't dream of home. They are that real I'm anxious to go to sleep and disappointed when I wake in the morning and wish I could sleep and dream until this was all over and wake up at home. God I'm anxious to hear from home and receive all the news etc. And receive a photo of Julian. I can see him growing and I would like to compare.

Another concert tonight and a very good one, even the Japanese guards attend and come up for early doors. They put on a green bottle show which went over very well, also a band consisting of instruments made in the camp, it was exceptionally good and the boys gave them a great ovation. I don't mean the Japs put these turns on, they were only spectators.

Tuesday 25th August 42

Work not very hard but consistent. Did not leave the hill until about 7p.m.. Came home to a fair tea of meat stew (did not see the meat) with rice and a patty. Was very nice but as usual not enough. Pay day today but can't buy any eggs yet, will try later providing I have any pay left, it's hard to hang on to.

Moon at its full tonight and its beautiful, the night seems like a silver day and feels like something wonderfully overpowering, just something you cannot describe.

These Japanese airmen should be magnificent pilots if practice means anything. They are at it all day and believe me some of them can make their planes all but talk.

Most of the Chinese Kampongs (these meaning for compounds) have anything from 20 to 40 houses and possibly twice that many families. These people are under the direct control of a headman picked (nearly always forced) by the Japanese and he is directly responsible to the Japanese for their behavior etc. and if found to be neglecting his duty, as the Japs term it, he is executed. I believe quite a few of these Kampongs and their occupants have been completely wiped out when a Jap soldier ---- or if something serious happens within the area. The headman's job is not all beer and skittles. These details were told me by a Chinese.

Just bought a Katte of dates, will mix some with a little hot water and use it as sauce to pour over my rice. I was very lucky to get them, although I paid through the nose, but no matter what we say to the same.

A whisper has just arrived in the hut that there is half a sausage per man for breakfast, wonders will never cease, at least we might see our portion which very rarely happens with our meat stew. Only once in the last six stews have I actually seen a piece of meat, although there is no doubt they were made with meat as the flavour is there. So tonight I hope to dream of home and family and perhaps half a sausage.

Wednesday 26th August 42

Very nearly erected the monument today, it consists of the log we dragged up the hill, dressed, and Japanese characters cut onto it. We spent most of the day yesterday erecting shear pegs and anchoring them. Today we proceeded to stand the log on its end in a hole in the middle of the hill, the monument

will be cemented in when created. We spent most of the day on it and got it up to about 80° when crash and down came the shear legs and monument. No one was hurt only the Japanese Engineer's pride.

Was given a great exhibition of the Japanese humane method of dealing out punishment. Three of our boys went into a Chinese Kampong and bought some banana fritters, they were caught by the Japanese guards and were made to take their hat off and stand at attention with their arms held straight out palms up and the fritters placed on their fingers. They were made to hold that position for 20 minutes, then they were stood at attention, still with their hats off (the sun was very hot) for four hours including the dinner period. They were not allowed any dinner. Another chap who was digging with a chunkel (hoe) laughed at a Jap when he told them to do something, he also was made to stand at attention with the chunkel held over his head for an hour. One of our officers told me that he had heard that a Jap lost his temper at another camp and used his bayonet on one of the A.I.F. to the extent of his dying in Changi hospital. The two chaps I mentioned before as having to be operated on for very bad cases of Tinea both died, perhaps it was better that way.

The half sausage for breakfast was the answer. They served it up with curry water, and of course the rice, wish they would allow us a whole one next time. Tea tonight very ordinary but I was able to supplement it with rice and dates, made a big hole in my dates.

Thursday 27th August 42

Made up my mind to do a lot of washing etc. today but only went as far as washing our hut and carrying a load of wood when it started to pour raining, so finished up spending a very lazy day. Tried to read a book but could not get interested.

I believed they worked in the moonlight last night and erected the shear pegs and had everything ready to erect the monument this morning, and now after six months the temporary monument has duly been erected. I'll admit there is a big modification from their original plans. I suppose we will straighten the place up and go back to Changi or to some other job. I understand the Tommies have already gone back to Changi.

Nothing of interest today excepting the meals which were the most uninteresting as regards food since we have been on the job here.

Friday 28th August 42

Lumped granite block about the hill, took our time and did not over-exert ourselves. Received a fair scratch on my shin, have to be very careful that it does not go bad. Quite a few tropical ulcers going around. There were some Chinese stonemasons working on the hill and during smoko one of them told me by signs that they had rifles and were being trained in their use, also that we would be relieved by the Chinese.

One of the Jap guards tore into one of the 2/30th Battalion boys with a stick and knocked him unconscious and then started to kick him. An officer tried to intervene and he turned the stick on him. Another guard stopped the show just as it looked as if it would become sticky. It was half an hour before the chap regained consciousness and the Jap guards would not allow any medical attention. I don't know whether the matter will be taken any further. It's just so much time and trouble wasted. Whilst I'm on their kindness I might mention a very common practice of theirs, told to me by a Chinaman who supposedly saw one Jap soldier do to a Chinese girl and mother who were not ... (*missing*) ... He grabbed hold of the woman first and jammed the lighted end of a cigarette up her nostril. He did likewise to the daughter. If the Chinaman had interfered he would have received the business end of a bayonet, no wonder these Jap soldiers are never game to go out singly or go into a Kampong after dark. Some did but have never been found.

Saturday 29th August 42

Very easy day, just potted around the monument clearing up timber etc. Knocked off at 5p.m. The log itself is set in 46 cubic metres of concrete so they mean it to stay put; concrete was mixed and put in last night. One of the Companies worked until 2.30a.m. this morning doing the job.

Nothing happened as regards the incident yesterday with the exception of the Jap concerned being very congenial and polite, the only reason we can think is that "Sandshoe Charlie". that's the Jap Company Commander, must have told him where to get off. This Sandshoe Charlie is a most peculiar man, he comes up the hill in a beautiful car and is nearly always dressed in his uniform, sword complete, riding breeches and tunic, from his head to the bottom of his riding breeches he is

immaculate and from there it all finishes, no leggings, no sox and sandshoes hence the name. The Colonel is called Half Moon for he always (unless special occasions) wears a pair of breeches with the seat out and showing the next half moon, the most immaculate one being Snow White who mostly appears in white shirt, white trousers, white sox and tan shoes. Incidentally he is a black Jap also a black b_____.

Another very good concert tonight, some excellent community singing.

Moon on the wane and my hopes for this month wanes with it. Still there is another full moon to(look forward to. If I was to suddenly find myself at home I wonder what I would find to ... *(rest of page unreadable)* ...

Sunday 30th August 42

I took the day for the deed and made it a day of rest, did very little, too lazy to do much washing: cooked some vegetable skins and believe they are doing my Beri Beri the world of good.

Another death occurred in our camp today. I think he died of either malaria or dysentery or both. He died very suddenly, one moment he was up for a call of nature, and the next he was dead. His body was taken to Changi and he will [be] buried in the A.I.F. cemetery, his name was Happy Rouse. We formed a guard of honour as they took his body away. I think orders have been received from H.Q. that all bodies have to be returned to Changi for a Post Mortem and I think it a very wise decision and undoubtedly a great help to our doctors and incidentally to us as we will benefit by any knowledge gained.

Meals good today. Breakfast, rice and a spoonful of sugar. Lunch, vegetable water and rice. Tea, meat stew, rice and a rock cake, and wonder of wonders found a piece of meat as big as a date. Received some corn meal concentrated soup and jam from Changi. This has been donated to us by the South African Red Cross and I believe works out at 2 oz. per man of each, for how long I don't know but I should imagine not too long. We are very thankful and anxious to get at them. I don't know how we will eat the meal. Imagine it will be made into porridge or perhaps cakes. The cakes would be the best as we have no sugar or milk for the porridge. The issue for breakfast (sugar) came as a surprise and I fear was a mistake.

Just heard another chap, Arthur Norman, died at Changi and was buried today. I fear there will be a lot more that will never see Australia again, it's certainly an inglorious end dying of some minute germ after missing death so often during the campaign.

Monday 31st August 42

And another month draws to an end, trust next month will produce some results. Shovelled and carried blue metal, hard work, but we did not exert ourselves. One of our boys, Blue Kennedy, damaged a basket with a chunkel and had to stand at attention with the chunkle held over his head, for twenty minutes and then received a hit in the stomach for good measure.

Rumour afloat which I'm afraid is more than a rumour to the effect that the Duke of Kent was killed in an aeroplane accident. The Syonan Times I'm told also mentioned it. Once the Jap officer who we call "Speedo" did not like the manner in which our chaps we[re] putting pitch into the boiling arrangement, it was not fast enough for him so he pushed them away and gave a practical demonstration with the result it backfired and covered him with boiling pitch. He was rushed away pretty badly burnt. I'm sure he must have suffered great pain but stood up to it well.

Had our first meals donated by the South African Red Cross. For breakfast we had corn meal porridge, much like Breakfast Delight, would be very nice if it had sugar or something to mix with it. Still it was much nicer than rice. For dinner (lunch) dehydrated vegetable soup, was extremely nice. I understand we have these meals every second day. The jam hasn't yet been issued, but there is a possibility of our receiving 1lb of tomato or pineapple per man tomorrow. I heard that we are going to receive comforts from the same source each month.

Three of the anti-tank chaps who were amongst a party taken from our camp to Mersing to clear the place of land mines were killed removing one of the mines. Damn hard luck. I've helped to remove some on the East Coast of the Island and did not appreciate the job.

I was only thinking today, even if I die now I will at least know what it feels like to be 75 years old for that is how I have felt these last three weeks, but pleased to state the last couple of days I have felt much brighter and better and I think the Beri Beri is improving rapidly.

Tuesday 1st September 42

Knocked off work at 1p.m., did very little, in fact, four of the chaps came in for a little trouble for alleged loafing on the job and were made to stand with their arms extended in front of them, holding up a shovel. This happened about 15 minutes before we knocked off. They were still standing there when we left and arrived back at camp about half an hour after us. The reason for the half day holiday was brought about by a change of guards and the General-in-Charge arrived at our camp this afternoon, counted and inspected us. These new guards are not fighting soldiers and their purpose is simply to guard and generally look after our welfare. At least that is what we were told. It appears from their remarks that we have paid our penalty, to wit working hard for six months and we now become the Guests of Nippon and will be better treated and fed, it sounds alright but hasn't that true ring about it anyhow we will find out. I can still see a fair amount of work in front of us. Received our issue of jam, 1lb per man, melon and pineapple and could not resist trying a couple of spoonfuls. It was exquisite. Felt like eating the lot at once but determined (developed a very strong will power) and allow myself 1 tablespoon with my rice, also received 5 lollies and 13 caramels which are supposed to contain the vitamins we are lacking. I allow myself one of each per day. They won't last too long. Another type of porridge was issued for breakfast. It was a blackish colour something like mushroom gravy, but was not too bad to taste. This is also supposed to be very beneficial. I will be trying hard to get some sugar next pay day.

Another one of the boys, Bob McDonald, died at Changi yesterday (did not hear what caused his death).

My memory was never much good, but I find that is worse now and everybody seems to complain of the same thing. Picking up on my weight, jumped on the scales this afternoon, weighed 11.1½ , big improvement.

Wednesday 2nd September 42

Spent two solid hours washing, making up for my laziness of last day. Just put them out to dry and down it poured. Luckily it cleared in the afternoon and I as able to get them dry. If it had not cleared up I would have been in a bad way as I had washed everything I owned which was washable.

Cooked more vegetable skins for lunch and tea and appreciated them as rations were light, supplementary rations are two days overdue, this usually happens with the change of guards. Worst part of it is the cigarettes did not arrive.

Four A.I.F. caught outside wire at Changi. The Japs have promised them the extreme penalty and have taken them away. I think they are only bluffing, sincerely hope so. I have heard also that the Japanese have issued to the Changi people (and I believe we are to receive them) cards to be signed, promising on our word of honour not to try to escape. They were returned unsigned. It is understood that the Japanese Authorities are very hostile at the result. Hope it does not rebound on the four chaps caught outside. When the cards are presented here we will do likewise although there is not a chance of our escaping at the present moment. Possibly the promise is what they mean by finishing our six months of slavery and becoming the guests of Nippon.

A very large train filled with Japanese soldiers went past making for Singapore today. They seem to move them in by train and out by lorry and waggon.

Very sore throat, have had it a couple of days, much like the Show Ground throat its running through the camp like fire. It lasts only a few days.

Thursday 3rd September 42

Worked fairly hard today. Lifting granite rocks, knocked off at about 6.30p.m. Things were not too pleasant. The Jap guards seemed to be antagonized all day. Gave the impression they were trying to create incidents. Our officers noticed this early and warned everyone to be careful. We were very circumspect and nothing happened. Things did however happen in Changi. Four men, three A.I.F. and one Tommy, the Tommy being a Captain, were shot this morning for being outside the wire. The shooting was carried out by Sikh Indian Guards, some of our officers including Colonel Gallagher were forced to attend, heard they were shot in the stomach and every time they moved the Indians shot them again. Things cannot be too wholesome at Changi. They have herded 18,000 of our troops A.I.F., Tommies and Scotties into the barracks we occupied where we were there, over a 1,000 men to a floor. They are heavily guarded by Japanese and Indians and there is talk that all this has been brought about by our refusing to sign the agreement regarding our not trying to escape and that they intend to starve us into submission. All this after their nice talk of us becoming the Guests of Nippon etc. of the other day. I think things must be pretty hot for them at other quarters. I expect we will be

herded out here or to some other place very shortly, probably accounts for the big rush with the work on the hill, also their sullen mood today.

Just plain rice today, used my jam, had the porridge for breakfast.

Just heard the names of two of the A.I.F. chaps who were shot, Beverington and Gale. They tried to escape some months ago from the camp we are in. They were recaptured 200 miles away and returned to Changi. I think I mentioned the incident at the time. One of them was alleged to have been taken out of hospital to be executed. The other A.I.F. cove was a hospital orderly, did not hear his name.

Also heard that the place is so congested at Changi that the sleeping arrangements are controlled by making three shifts for sleeping and eating. God knows how the sanitary and hygiene and cooking is going to be kept to anything near a healthy standard. I hate to visualize what is going to happen if his congestion is for any long period.

Friday 4th September 42

One of my best days. Took a party to the Singapore Racecourse to cut and load turf for the turfing of the top of the hill. It was a marvellous vacation to see and be near beautiful things, we cut the turf from the lawns of a beautiful home probably lately owned by a Jockey or Trainer. There were beautiful flowering trees surrounding the place and in pots and growing in the gardens were some beautiful orchids. Whilst on the subject of orchids I must make mention of an anti-tank position I took up on the Island. I placed the gun in the grounds of an Orchid Nursery. All the orchids were in bloom, hundreds that I had never seen before and never likely to see again. I have seen quite a number growing in their wild state, especially coming down the mainland but some of the blooms in this nursery just took away my breath and it seems I had to say I felt if I had to die I felt that was the spot I would choose. I was extremely disappointed when I had to pull out but was glad that it was not necessary to go into action there. I did as little damage as possible to the place. That is one thing about the Japanese I do admire is their love and care for flowers and, strange as it may seem, children. Even in this house Japanese guards had their quarters and flowers adorned every table etc. also there were about four or five boys about 7 to 10 years of age who seemed quite happy, more than likely their mothers and fathers had been foully murdered by the same persons who were befriending them.

The "Flame of the Forest" trees are out in bloom again and are a picture. I hope mine have grown, just in case I will try and get some more seeds the first opportunity. There is another tree, seemingly the same species, its flower differs only in the colour, which is golden. I would call it "The Forest Gleam". It is also beautiful. Another glorious tree is out in flower, the shape of large Christmas bells it is a very pretty green tree. I hope also to be able to get some seeds of it. The racecourse and the surrounding appointments, attached residences, and gardens are truly beautiful. I'm sorry I did not take the opportunity of attending a meeting when we were stationed at Nee Goon. I'm sure with the local colour then available it would have been something outstanding. One of the fiercest battles of the Island was fought in that area and the place is just strewn with Japanese graves and as it is said they only marked the graves of their officers and N.C.Os their losses must have been terrific.

No news from Changi.

Saturday 5th September 42

Still no news from Changi, seems as if communication has been stopped. Hoping for the best.

Very unlucky today, should have enjoyed our day off but owing to the numerous cases of sickness in the camp it is necessary that a certain number of men must work each day. It was necessary for 33 of our platoon to substitute. We had a pretty busy day turfing the bases of the monument. It was just on 7p.m. before we were knocked off. Came home to a pretty rotten tea, could not cook my vegetable skins which I now make a habit of doing on my day off. The percent of men off duty through sickness etc. is 15% and the percent receiving treatment is 65% and as the Japanese do not supply us with medical supplies we buy what little we can from a fund that we all subscribe to.

Usual weekly concert on tonight. Still exceptionally good and well received, especially -----.

Throat and mouth still bad, also my old kidney complaint is at it again. The Medical Officer said it is lumbago; it's a pretty common complaint amongst us all.

Saw a big flock of curlew flying over us today, migrating no doubt to Australia. God knows I enjoyed those birds, possibly the same birds may fly over my own home, who knows.

Sunday 6th September 42

Work very consistent, did not let up until about 7p.m. If Mandi's ears did not burn today there is ---- in that theory, he went out of his way to make things as hot as possible. Some of our camps were told to build the monument for our dead, they have two days in which to ----, the Japanese build the cross which is to be erected on the monument. The workmanship is not too bad but the wood is not of the best, solid enough; our monument will be about 20 foot high and is situated in a position rear of theirs which is about 80 foot high. Naturally ours cannot be observed unless you go to the rear of theirs. Still I suppose it is something of a gesture. Below is a rough sketch of both front and angle view, showing position of cross.

(Julian sketch to go in here)

Some of our boys from another camp who were working at the bottom of the hill visited us. They said they caught a 10 foot python the other day and it went the way of all flesh (at least to our way of thinking these days) They state it was pretty good eating although a little tough. They did not cook it long enough.

Heard Changi is back to normal after 72 hours of hell, also a new light has been thrown onto the cause. It appears that Headquarters sent in their daily returns and the Japs called a Muster Parade and it was found that 60-odd men were missing from the camp and that the return had been faked. The punishment was meted out on the lines taken as for the executions. They had already been sentenced to be shot. At least one must be reasonable and admit the provocation and possibly the justice of the penalty of the whole camp.

Pay day is already four days overdue and as expected we are not too happy about it. No cigarettes and nothing for the rice although tea tonight was pretty fair, meat stew, rice and a cake. Failed to find the piece of meat again.

Throat still very sore, very hard to swallow, other than that I don't feel too bad.

Monday 7th September 42

Steady, easy job, knocked off at 5.30p.m. but some of the other boys did not leave until about 7p.m.

Another death from dysentery, chap named Shakleton, also another will lose his eye due to an ulcer. There is an epidemic of these eyes, quite a few are under treatment.

P--- Mandi told a few of us that he had heard from Colonel Gallagher that the two chaps late of our camp who were executed died a real Aussie's death. One chap, Baverington, the elder of the two, somewhere in his forties, made a last minute appeal to the Japanese, stating that he was quite prepared to pay his penalty, but as Gale was much younger it was purely his fault that they tried to escape. He asked them to consider Gale's sentence. They refused. Just before they were shot Gale took his wife's photograph out of his pocket and was still holding it when they fired. The rotten filthy Indians fired at their stomach, not even giving them a quick death. Several more shots being fired at them whilst they moved in agony. I don't think those Indian Guards will be forgotten.

Tea extra good. Fish/beautiful but not much vegetable stew, rice/much better than usual and a cake with marmalade jam on top (exquisite). Still no pay, not a cigarette on the camp.

Just heard a rumour supposedly to have come from Changi to the effect that instructions had come through from Tokyo demanding the signing of the conditions regarding escaping and that if we did not comply the sick and wounded were to be taken from the hospital and placed with the rest of the P.O.Ws in the confined area and if this was of no avail a certain number of prisoners were to be shot each day. Naturally our H.Q. agreed to the signing under compulsion. I'm inclined to disbelieve the rumour, even a blood-lusted fiend would not suggest those conditions.

Tuesday 8th September 42

Our Company's day off and by the reports from the hill by the other Company we were very lucky as they turned on a real blitz, slapping officers in the face and knocking some of the boys over. It appears Mandi got a kick in the pants for something and passed it down with interest. They also took our chaps off the monument presumably so that they can state that the monument to our dead was erected by them.

Received our pay today with another kick in the pants. There was a 75% decrease throwing everything into a state of financial chaos, commitments could not be met. I'm afraid there won't be too many luxuries this pay. There was no reason stated, they just said here it is sort of thing and instead of so much per day we will pay so much. Sent my boots in for repairs or replacement, have not received a pair in their stead. It's either no work tomorrow or if there is it will be on bare feet which I certainly don't fancy.

Spent most of the day resting. I've never felt so tired and worn out in my life, in fact it's a general thing, it's the continuous working in the extreme heat of the sun which has gradually sapped us of our energy. It's real unadulterated Tropical Inertia. The difference is very marked when we come in contact with other camps that do little or no work and what they do is done in cooler places and not continuously under the sun.

Wednesday 9th September 42

Easiest day on record. We marched up the hill, did nothing, marched back to camp, was home at 11.30a.m. Talk of five days holiday during which time the monument will be unveiled and celebrations and reports will be carried out by the Japanese for that period. There is an extremely nasty type of Jap Warrant Officer in charge of the bottom of the hill (rumour has it that he was a boss Japanese Gangster before the war) a fine big specimen of a Jap but very evil looking. I should say naturally he has all the Japs bluffed and their officers seem to be awed by him. A couple of days ago he slashed one of the infantry coves across the face with his stick, the chap put his hands up presumably to ward off any further blows, this Jap swore the chap attacked him and he went to his Commanding Officer and asked permission to behead him. The Officer refused and I believe the Jap was so sincere in his request that he actually begged and nearly cried to the Officer for permission. They say the Officer gave the request serious consideration but the attitude of the prisoners looked like very threatening and he did not agree. My informant, one of the infantry coves, said he felt that if it had happened he was sure our coves would have moved regardless of consequence. The chap nevertheless received a few more cuts with the stick.

Five new cases of Malaria were admitted to our camp hospital yesterday and another three today.

Felt better today than for some weeks, the lazy day yesterday must have done me some good. If this talk of holidays is correct, will do quite a lot of good as far as our health is concerned.

News very scarce, but have heard we have complete control of the Solomons, also things are serious on the Russian front.

Delightful meal for tea, egg (kindly donated by Nippon) thick meat stew with actual meat in it, baked sweet potato (the size of a bantam egg but marvellous) and an effort of our own concoction consisting of one coconut ground with juice; 1 grated pineapple; boiled rice; rice flour; two brown sugar cubes (Gula Malacca); pinch salt; dates, all mixed together put into a tin and boiled for 4 hours, turned out a bit sticky but stuck to us and filled out the corners. The attempt was to be called a steam pudding but was more like an uncooked dumpling, still we enjoyed it and next pay day we'll try for an improvement.

Thursday 10th September 42

Very busy day washing, debugging (with good results) and cooking vegetable peelings. Boiled them and then fried them, mixed with rice they made a very nice meal. Otherwise the day was uneventful.

Have borrowed the book 'Winston Churchill', very interesting, there is no doubt he is an exceptional man and if any man should win this war for us it will be him.

Friday 11th September '42

Invitation extended by Nippon to the three camps, 3, 4 and 5 (ours is 5) to take part in their celebrations today, they erected a boxing ring and an inter-camp boxing match was arranged. We received quite a few entries from our camp, all men who did not have to work on the hill. They were our permanent guards, cooks, water duty men etc. I don't think there is a man who works on the hill in good enough health to participate. Some of the fights were very good and our camp won the point score. The winner of each bout were presented with 3 bottles of beer, tin of pineapple; 1 tin of meat and vegetable stew and 3 bottles of cordial by the Japanese. All the boxers received something. The Yankee Jap was the referee and knows his business. The spectators, of which I was one, were supplied with cold tea (no sugar).

The Japanese also had wrestling inter-Company competitions, they don't wrestle like us. They have a round ring about 10 feet in diameter, the two men face each other and at a given signal rush in and the first to put their opponent outside the ring are the winners, each bout lasts about 3 to 10 seconds; not very thrilling. Before the sports started the monument erected to our dead was unveiled by us.

Found a scorpion under the bed this morning, we were scared stiff of all these sorts of things twelve months ago, now we just ignore them.

Fair tea tonight, meat stew and rice, boiled sweet potatoes, my lucky day, had a back-up and scored two baked sweet spuds, mixed them with rice and at last feel full.

As nothing seems to be happening we have all more or less resigned ourselves to a long wait and our greatest hope is the possibility of a letter from home, there is an exchange ship on which some Japanese officials are coming from Australia and our hopes are centered on this ship, it seems to be our last chance.

Saturday 12th September 42

Just signed under instructions a promise to effect that I would not attempt to escape; the threat from Japan I mentioned previously has been confirmed and we had to sign under duress, wording of the promise is as under:

I the undersigned hereby solemnly swear on my honour that I will not under any circumstances attempt escape.

While writing one of the boys is singing out the back. He just finished the song about "Honey you stay in your own back yard" and is now singing "I want the world to play with"; they have taken me back many many years and I can plainly see myself crawling onto dear old Dad's and dear old Mum's knee asking them to sing more, especially "Neath the coral reefs they laid him", also "the parson came too late" (I don't know the names of the songs) most of them always brought tears to my eyes and sometimes overflowed. My thoughts make me very much regret all the heartbreaks and troubles I

have caused them and my stupid ego that caused me frequently to suppress my real feelings and emotions of love for them, but how often have I sneaked into a quiet unobserved place and had a good cry over it.

Amongst our pets (bugs not included) we have a new arrival of about two weeks standing, a chicken. It was about two weeks old when it arrived, it's about the most friendly thing I have known. It wanders around amongst us, the men and huts and if you are sitting down it will climb up onto your knee and chirp away to you. It will perch on your shoulder and pick playfully at your ear, in fact it will do anything but talk. I feel sure as hungry as we all get [but?] his destiny will not end inside any of our empty stomachs and if it does woe betide the owner of the stomach.

Plenty of bubble and squeak for lunch and tea, the cooks discarded a stew of fat which had turned for the worst and beggars can't be choosers, so with this fat and the vegetable peelings we cooked the mess, it certainly tasted a bit off, so we put plenty of salt with it and down it went. Afraid I ate a bit too much and I'm at present wondering if up it will come.

In our hut (worst luck) we have an extremely nasty type, a renegade Jew. He disdains anything Jewish yet he is typical of their worst type, although his features are very Jewish, he is a very good looking one and of course appreciates his looks; his name implies a Jewish ancestor, Isaacs. He is the filthiest example of a man mind, body, and soul, he openly boasts that he will do nothing unless ordered (and I can certainly accommodate him there and do). I've not put a man under arrest as yet and I hope I never do, in fact, I'm sure I never will for I will have much pleasure in doing my stripes over him, but I venture to say the day that I do will live long in this [his?] memory. He is despised by all and sundry. Even coming down the mainland I threatened to give him the hiding of his life first and then drag him up to the C.O. if I ever heard him repeat his defeatist talk and rumour-mongering, a continual habit of his. Also, on the Island after we were pushed out of our position he jumped into his truck (he was a driver) crying 'every man for himself' and drove off at top speed notwithstanding our calling it for the convoy. Anyhow he ran out of land and found he had to find us to find himself; now in his own estimation he was fearless and I believe he has nearly convinced himself to the effect, but when he does so, he will be the only one that thinks so. My greatest fear is that someone will beat me to the killing, there are numerous applicants waiting for the opportunity but he is just shrewd enough to know when to get off. Some day he'll slip up and I'll get my resignation ready in my pocket.

Treated to another extra good concert, they are great help in breaking the monotony and bringing back some of our lost spirit.

Rumoured that another 400 men come into our camp, possibly tomorrow. I believe the other working camps are being broken up, it will necessitate our quarters being rearranged and there is talk of all the Sergeants sharing a cubicle which is a pity as most of my friends are just gunners.

I think everyone is benefiting by the holidays. I know I feel a thousand times better. There is a probability of our starting work again on Monday and instead of one day off every third day, it will be one off every six. My boots are still being repaired and I have been borrowing a pair from one of the

sick boys. They were not too comfortable and I don't think I will borrow them any more, but wait for my own to return.

Think I'm going to have a bad night, the bubble and squeak is not lying too substantial and I'm afraid there is a distinct possibility of it coming out by the same door as in it went (apologies to Omah [Omar Khayyam?]).

Sunday 13th September 42

Shifted to the new Sergeant's quarters, not too happy about them although there is much more room.

Another death in the camp today a chap named Bolinger. I did not know him very well, have not heard the cause on inquiry. I just found out that malaria was the cause, this fever has become very prevalent the last week or so.

Heard some alleged B.B.C. news, was not very encouraging. Russia seems to be in a serious position and also we don't seem to be gaining much ground in the Pacific.

Could do with a good cigarette, even the poisonous weed I have been smoking is gone. I'm glad my old friends the Ghekkos are plentiful in our new quarters. They help to pass many a tiring hour being on my back watching their antics and habits.

Four hundred new men arrived from other camps today, some of the poor coves are sleeping on the ground in tents and I believe some tents have ten occupants. They have my sympathy, especially if it rains before they have time to settle in and make themselves as comfortable as possible. Most of them are Infantry coves.

One of my section, Tom O'Mullaine, has just been taken to the R.A.P Hospital, bad case of malaria, has only been three days back from hospital. He looks very bad. There are quite a few serious cases in there, all touch and go cases.

Monday 14th September 42

No boots: no work. Spent the day mostly on my back, very delightful. Collected a few peelings and made myself some bubble and squeak which sat much easier inside than my last effort, did not put in so much sour fat.

Mutton stew for lunch and tea, was very nice, mutton seems to have a greater flavouring quality than beef. What would I have given for a few chops?

The additional personnel in the camp made the place seem like a small city tonight. Men walking around everywhere, impossible to get near the canteen, music everywhere. It looks as if our concerts are going to benefit, judging by the number of instruments going last night. We should get a complete orchestra, most of them are home-made, banjo, mandolin, guitar, ukes and unknown original instruments, all strings with signal wires and very effective and quite good.

More mutton, three whole sheep arrived today, also our cigarettes, pay and soap, of course, everybody as happy as possible.

With the new Companies now here I believe our working days are altered, we now work three days and then have two days off. Won't be hard to take.

Saw a pitiful thing happen this afternoon. A Chinese woman and a kiddie, about six, were walking past the camp. At the same time there was a terrific clap of thunder, the child screamed and rushed straight to the stormwater drain which was half full of water and threw himself into it. His mother had a task convincing him to come out, he was just a nervous wreck, shaking and whimpering all the time. There must be thousands like this poor little chap, the civil population certainly received more than their share of war these last few days.

Reading a very interesting and thoroughly engaging play entitled "Victoria Regina" by Lawrence Houseman. I think it must be the play the Motion Picture was produced from.

One of the boys just told an experience, or more like a sight, he saw whilst he was at base waiting to return to his unit. There were about fifty Chinese women and quite a few children making camouflage nets about 300 yards from where he was. A bomber came over, dropped its bombs and one landed right in the middle of the women and children. Only three kiddies escaped, the rest were blown to pieces. No wonder these poor kids are just wrecks.

Tuesday 15th September 42

Seven months today. Also a new moon, it's in its first quarter and I will be again looking anxiously forward to the full as I have done for the last six months hoping, always a little optimistic, for something to happen. Trust this one does not disappoint me. I know someday will be the day but that someday is too much like the tomorrow.

Our Company's day off, although it would not have made any difference to me as I am still bootless.

One of the Jap guards at the camp (a new one) is a very nasty type. I watched him for an hour this morning and in that hour he gave fifteen Chinamen a hiding. He stands near the road where it is nearly impossible to see him and if they don't dismount and bow (mostly all riding bicycles) he calls them over to him and bangs into them. He made one chap hold his bicycle over his head ... (*missing*) ... impossible to hold it longer, he then hit him with the butt of his rifle; nice man. I'm sure the Chinese will repay all kindnesses with interest some day, they won't forget their obligations.

The mutton was delicious today and with the help of the bubble and squeak, thoroughly enjoyed my meals. There is no doubt our export mutton far exceeds what we have for home consumption. It's a pity that it has to be stewed, still beggars cannot be choosers and I feel very grateful to McArthur Onslow for his foresights in being instrumental in allowing the P.O.W.s to appreciate good Australian mutton.

Have developed a fair sized tropical ulcer on my leg, came up in the night. Felt as if something had bit me, scratched it and in the morning there it was. It's not sore. Would not know it was there otherwise, in fact I feel very well and I think am putting on weight.

Wednesday 16th September

Boots have not arrived yet, rained most of the day, no work for anybody. Collected more peelings and cooked them. I'll sure need them when I start work again. The same Jap guard tried to appease his sadistic nature again today, remarkable he does not tire of bashing the poor old Chinks about. We spoilt quite a lot of his fun by letting the Chinks know he is there, but we can only do this from one end, so he is able to catch one now and then from the other end.

Think I will get my hair off again. It feels fresh, cool and clean. I've not many other than grey hairs left now. Julian will wonder who the old cove with the grey head is. He'll surely think it would be impossible to be his father. Hope I won't be too much of a disappointment to him, 15 months old, 1¼ years, and nearly 13 months since I last saw him, of course, he is talking and walking and sometimes my mind runs riot and he is doing all the most impossible things, a real genius. I wonder what white people look like. By white people I mean civilians. I suppose it must be nine months or more since I have seen a white woman, if we saw one now probably think it was a vision sent from heaven.

Often wonder how the kids are and what they are doing, whether Rod [Dalglish, nephew] passed his Inter. I suppose all of them are used in some [kind?] of war effort. Bobby [Grundy, Mae's second cousin, evacuated from Liverpool, England, or Bobby Robertson] I imagine would be verging towards manhood by now. The war no doubt has affected all their schooling and studies and will change most of the ideas regarding their future. John [Robertson, nephew] and Lex [Dalglish, nephew] would be at the age where they get a thrill out of anything that is war and would not appreciate the rottenness. God I pray Julian's life will not be interrupted by another war. I've seen too many young men not properly matured grow old in a few weeks and will never know delights of budding manhood.

Thursday 17th September 42

Had a very busy day, washed all my clothes, darned my sox, did quite a lot of sewing repairs and built myself a frying pan, kept me going most of the day.

Received an old second-hand pair of boots, in ordinary circumstances I would not pick them up in the gutter. Will try them out at work tomorrow. Hope they don't cripple me, they don't feel very comfortable. A party of our chaps went cutting turf for the hill this morning and came across six bleached skeletons. Could not distinguish their nationality, they gathered the bones and burned them.

No doubt I will miss my bubble and squeak, have not felt hungry since I started cooking the peelings but I suppose one must work for his keep and then there is the possibility of my getting too fat so maybe it is just as well that I go to work tomorrow.

We were talking about English speaking, and one of the boys tells a tale about the time their Battery was cut off and surrounded by the Japs at the Mour [Muar?]. Our fellows were having a very rough spin. Major and ---- had been killed and numerous others also. The Japs had crawled up to within a

few yards of the position (it being a very dark night) and were deflecting mortar fire onto them. After a heavy barrage a voice in perfect English came from the front saying "Don't you wish you were back in Sydney, now Aussie?" One of the chaps answered "Too bloody right, have you ever been there?" The answer came "Yes, lots of times." Our chaps – "Well here's something to bloody well remember it by" and let go a Mills bomb at the voice. There was no more talking and in the morning they found the bodies of three Japs 15 yards away. They think one of them must have been the chap that spoke English – his knowledge brought about his death. If he hadn't been able to speak English he would not have given his position away. It was dear knowledge. Quite frequently the Japs would call out "Hello Joe" and if anyone answered (we did not as we had been warned) the Jap would let go a Tommy gun, that was only one of their methods for drawing our fire and thereby disclosing our positions. The only weapon we were allocated to use at nights were bayonets.

Friday 18th September 42

Raining when I woke up and work for the time being cancelled. Had to hold ourselves ready for five minutes notice. Rain stopped at 11a.m., proceeded up the hill to work. On arrival found Japanese had not then arrived, waited until 1.30p.m., decided to go back to camp and had the rest of the day off.

Japanese N.C.O. of guard climbed into a visiting truck last night and started pushing and pulling things about until he pulled the starter. The motor was in gear and away she went, straight for an embankment about 20 feet high ending at a stormwater drain full of water. It knocked down our urinal and then went over the bank nose first into the drain. The Jap jumped out as it went over. Tried every way we could think of to get it out. Some of the boys, with due consideration no doubt believing it would help to lighten it, milked the petrol tanks of 12 gallons (the present market price over the fence being \$7 per gallon (1 pound)). Also removed the battery and spare tyre (great demand on the market for both) but this did not help much either. Tractor from the hill had to be brought down before we could get it back onto the road. This thoughtful help in lightening the lorry was done right under the Japanese noses and petrol could be smelt for miles, some of the boys ate very well today. I believe good tyres bring anything up to \$40 and batteries \$25 to \$30. Have seen quite a lot of tyres and batteries come and go lately. The Padre helped with the petrol, in fact I think he was the first to conceive the idea (he uses the money buying cigarettes and comforts for the boys in the hospital).

At least 30 aeroplanes were towed along the road in front of the camp this afternoon, presumably taken from a ship to the aerodrome nearby, they did not look very modern, much similar to the type they used to dive bomb us with on the mainland.

Meals seemed rotten today, due no doubt to the lack of bubble and squeak and I again feel unsatisfied and hungry. I'm sure I must look very old. Just left the R.A.P. the Orderly there who must at the least be 39 or 40 called me 'Pop' and other chaps who I don't know also refer to me as 'Pop'.

I wonder how the Champ [Charles Champion, father-in-law] is doing. I bet he is running around trying to do something substantial for the war effort and probably telling a few off. I often think very kindly of him and Mrs Champion, they [are] both good scouts and pals; sincerely hope everything is

OK with them. We have all had some good times together which are often in my mind, it is a great consolation to know that Mae and Julian have their love and protection. I will never be able to repay the debt that I owe them.

Saturday 19th September 42

Today we worked at the quarry, it was a good long march. The work was not extremely hard, loading skips and pushing these to the crusher. Some of the boys worked in the crusher. It was very uncomfortable there due to the dust. When they had finished they looked like ghosts. I had an easy job just supervising. All our officers in our Platoon are on Sick No Duties, and I was in charge of the Platoon. We finished all the crushing they required by 12.30p.m. and were then allowed to go back to camp. The quarry itself is an enormous place, the walls and sides are at least 150 feet high and solid granite. There are thousands of tons of rocks on the floor, their fall must have been a magnificent sight. A Chinese worker told me that \$15,000 worth of explosive was used, all they had on hand, when the Japanese broke through. The method of blasting is done by means of tunnels which are dug with automatic drills, they crisscross the tunnels and the charges are sat inside. The quarry was owned by a Dane who still seems to be running the show, but of course under Japanese jurisdiction.

No peelings, life as a P.O.W. is not the same without them; feeling pretty hungry just now.

Saw about two battalions of armed Indians marching up the road, obviously turned and have gone over to the Japs. Also am told that most of the anti-aircraft guns are manned by Indians, that should be to our benefit as they are worthless, or at least were on our guns. I think the only planes they were credited with were a few of our own. The Johnnie Ghurka or what is left of them are still with us. I think Nippon will have to do some good talking to convince them. I don't know whether the Jap has much Navy left, but I can personally vouch for his sailors, every day lorry loads go past our camp, evidently going on leave and they appear to be different lots each day, so his Navy and power does not seem to be affected.

Usual weekly concert, great ----- the attendance increased greatly by the extra men, there were at least 700. There were some great turns, the new troops supplied some very good artists and excellent musicians. Our concerts also attract attention from the outside of the roadway in front of the camp, has its usual crowds of Indians, Chinese and Malayan patrons.

I long for the time to go to bed my dreams mostly are of home and I lead my normal life with my wife and son. I hate the awakening and the day seems so long.

Sunday 20th September 42

The first day of our two days off, made certain of collecting vegetable peelings and now feel satisfied again. There is no doubt about them. The balance of the day I spent in a very lazy manner, too lazy even to read.

There are a terrific number of cripples hobbling around the camp, due to their suffering from Beri Beri in the feet and legs. Mine have improved considerably although I still have the ulcer which is much better and answering well to the treatment.

We are having beautiful moonlight nights. The moon is past half and coming to the full, looks like another disappointment. The sunsets have also been outstanding in their magnificence. Lately, they stun me to look at them.

Was home again in my dreams last night. Mrs Champion was very prominent all through them in fact I cannot remember anyone else being there, sincerely hope everything is OK. It is very rarely I dream of the war, but when I do it's some nightmare and I'm not sorry when I wake.

Still getting mutton but very little of it. Luckily our vegetable rations are being kept up, it will be the end of us if they ever stop, the yams and sweet potatoes grow here in profusion and like everything else here are abnormal. Before we went into action vegetables of any kind were taboo to us unless passed by a special medical committee. They were supposed to carry every kind of disease imaginable, now we eat anything and they are now our only medicine, circumstances alter cases.

Included in our Reinforcements is a full blooded Abo named Suey, naturally they call him Chop Suey, he is a fine chap and a white man, also great worker. Often when we are sitting down on the hill a Jap will come over and after a while will point at Chop and say 'Indian'. Chop gets extremely annoyed and usually says, 'No Australian. Australian you yellow _____'. There is nothing that gets his back up more than any one to ask him if he is Indian.

Monday 21st September

Another day of rest, at least it was supposed to be, but somehow I seemed to be going most of the day: The usual debugging was carried out, bag very small, I think I have worn them out, collection of peelings and cooking them; washing clothes, muster parade and a pep talk by the Commanding Officer. Shaved my hair off, feels very nice and cool. Collected fire-wood from opposite camp, the N.C.O of the Guard (camp) told us to go there. When we arrived and started to remove the wood the Jap occupants of the place took great objections and showed their annoyance in a very substantial way, to wit, belting all and sundry with sticks. We informed our Camp Guard N.C.O., he went over to the place also armed with a stick and I have no doubt he used it freely and we were then allowed to take as much wood as we could carry without any more objections. This Jap guard N.C.O. is one of the nicest Japs I have yet contacted everybody in the camp likes him.

The Dane that owned the quarry we were working in told one of our officers that he had been very friendly with an English ----- the Japanese noticed it and took him (the Dane) to Headquarters where they put him through a pretty severe 3rd degree, he also said at the same time he could hear screams, howls and weird noises obviously coming from Chinese whom the Japs were trying to get information from and he personally knows there were all kinds of tortures on these poor creatures.

Have a few nasty blisters on my feet from my second-hand boots, do not appreciate having to wear them tomorrow.

Lots of air activity about these last few days.

Tuesday 22nd September 42

Had a great bludge turfing the hill, the Japs did not seem to care whether we worked or not, so we naturally only worked when we liked. Although they were easy going the day did not finish without an incident and I am sorry to say I do not know the outcome yet as the chap concerned has not yet returned. As I have mentioned before, anything that has a market value disappears from the hill, this has been going on for a considerable time and very few implements are left today. They must have taken a count of the number of axes and just as we were leaving the job we were all halted and informed that an axe was missing and no one would be allowed to leave until it was returned. We waited for about half an hour then one of the chaps produced the axe. The Japs called him out and started to whale into him with sticks, one of our officers rushed between them, and received a few himself and took the stick from the Japs, they eventually took the chap away to Japanese Headquarters regardless of our officer's protests. They also would not allow any of our officers to accompany him. A similar incident occurred at another camp this morning, the difference being they were milking the cars of petrol. Four were caught and severely dealt with by the Japs using pick handles, they were carried away. I believe the amount of petrol which disappears per week is in the vicinity of 1,000 gallons. Just heard a sequel to the hill episode, came in the manner of a warning, a civilian is at the rear of our camp for the purpose of buying tools etc., and two Jap guards are in the bushes behind him, no tools were sold tonight. Just heard, one of the four chaps beaten up is in a very critical condition, ear severed off and fractured skull, the others also are in a bad state, their camp also is to suffer to the extent of not being allowed to participate in any comforts that might be available, also their rations have been cut one third; hope we don't suffer the same fate from our episode.

Cigarette issue tonight, enjoying a good smoke, don't suppose I will stop until they have all gone. Very overcast night, so no hopes for tonight, very near a full moon, as I am writing there is going on an awesome electric storm, with extremely violent thunder. I don't mind as I am lying down on my bed and watching it, the thunder is vividly like the barrage the Japs put over onto us whilst they landed on the Island the only difference being the thunder is intermittent and not so consistent but the same volume of noise. Hope it does not bring about one of my nightmares, would greatly prefer to dream of home again. Julian is still the baby as I remember him. Felt hungry tonight, no bubble and squeak. I sure do miss it; note the American influence.

Just heard a statement made and assured it was correct; that this petrol racket had gone that far in one camp that they had a pipe line laid from the waggon lines to the Chinese Kampong about 300 yards away and one of the chaps would go to the Kampong and distribute the petrol from there to the various buyers, it seems a bit tall but improbably possible.

Wednesday 23rd September 42

Cutting turf at the Singapore Race Course, very pleasant surroundings. For some unknown reason we finished at 12.30pm and were allowed to go back to camp. Were expecting a few fireworks after yesterday's effort but received a half holiday instead. Don't know where the catch is. The lad they took away to Headquarters has not yet returned, no one can obtain any knowledge regarding him.

Big smash yesterday along the Bukit Jemah Road, four lorries telescoped, five Japanese naval ratings were killed.

When we arrived back at lunch time I noticed two Chinese children, aged about 8 and 10 (boys), standing on the corner holding baskets above their heads, apparently caught within the camp bounds, they come in for left over rice. We have persistently warned them but they take no notice. I don't think they were hurt in any way. Chinese women also climb under the wire and find the refuse cans. God knows whether they eat what they find which is mostly rice, they have also been repeatedly warned but to no purpose. They will be the most caught, they are very embarrassing at times.

Ulcer has practically disappeared, feet still sore and ache quite badly. The chap that sleeps next to me, Sergeant Cox, bought some yams yesterday. I got up early this morning and cooked them for breakfast and I'll say we enjoyed them, much nicer than rice a la Japan. Muster parade tonight and a talk from Mandi through the Yanks, the gist of the talk being that Mandi is now in complete charge of P.O.W.s and as the British and Australians are world known as being gentlemen, he wishes us to act as gentlemen and not to steal petrol etc. and to cause no trouble at work or in camp. If we require anything not to steal them but to ask Mandi and he will see what can be done about it, mentioning petrol for cigarette lighters and tools for little jobs we wanted to do. Someone must have put over their wants as excuses, but I think two gallons of petrol per week would be a little too much for lighters, also at 700 tools too many for our little personal jobs, still it was nice of him to put it that way.

Noticed some of their planes up tonight first time I have seen them flying at night since the Capitulation, probably doesn't mean anything.

Thursday 24th September 1942

Plenty of rain, no work, very lucky. We were due to work in a new quarry today and I'm told it is pretty hard work.

Collected peelings and had good meals. I believe that Yank and Mandi consider now that we are definitely not gentlemen. After driving their car about a mile from the camp they ran out of petrol. Someone must have been short of petrol for his lighter.

The chap that borrowed the axe to cut some firewood for the hut (that was his excuse) is doing three days detention at Japanese Headquarters, his food being plain rice and water.

Pay day today, still suffering the cut in pay, looks as if it is permanently cut. This barely enough now to buy cigarettes such as they are, the tobacco consists mainly of coconut fibre, coloured to look like tobacco and a little poor quality tobacco mixed to give it a certain amount of taste. What would we give for some good Aussie tobacco, doubt whether we would taste it for a while. I think our taste has been utterly spoiled for good tobacco.

One of the boys, with odd parts etc., is building a wireless. We have great hopes and he is practically certain that it will function, it will be great to get first-hand news and we are all anxiously awaiting its completion; trust the news is good.

Friday 25th September '42

Well this P.O.W. business is developing into a real bludge. Arrived up the hill this morning and no Japs. Sat there for about half an hour when up comes a truck driven by an Aussie, handed a note to the Officer in Charge, reading "No work today – all soldiers go home". We did not argue the point, but left before they changed their minds. Just arrived back in camp in time to collect the peelings.

Gave 20 cents a fly at the two up last night, won \$2 and came away, think I will spend most of it on eggs if I can buy some.

Our Jap guards appear to have had a few today and the game of pulling up the Chinese in the roadway, they think it is great sport.

Meals were very good, mutton stew and plenty of vegetables.

Young Hewitt arrived back from detention tonight, he said he was treated well after he left the hill, he was lucky to have a Jap we call Smiling Mitch, the most popular Jap we know, as his jailer. He was supposed to be on plain rice and water, but he said Happy fed him much better than our army ever did. This Happy is a marvellous cove, always a smile for you, continually covering up our misdeeds. I'm sure if he ever comes to Australia after the war there is not one man amongst us who would not ask him to their home, he is as far removed from the average Jap as Hitler is from London. He also kept him supplied in cigarettes and gave him a lot to bring back with him, it's very pleasing to us to meet a Japanese of this calibre.

Saturday 26th September '42

Another day of rest, had bad luck with the peelings. Too many after them, everybody collecting them and now a case of queuing up.

A couple of Jap guards arrived back full last night. The N.C.O. in Charge gave them a decent sort of belting up, just a natural thing for them to do. I could just imagine what would happen in our Army if that sort of punishment was allowable.

Talking to Sergeant Fowler who was present when Major Julius collected his rates when he did. I asked him the story. It appears that a conference of Officers of the Brigade was to be held in a two storey house, the house itself was in a concealed position but just before the conference was due a Jap plane arrived and circled around the position, obviously there for the purpose and it is presumed that 5th Columnists had somehow gained knowledge and passed it on. The number of officers assembled was in the vicinity of 100, the plane was noticed and all took cover until the plane appeared to go way and when it seemed to have gone the officers moved toward the house, some gaining the inside and the others in the immediate vicinity. At that moment the plane again appeared from another direction and dropped one very large bomb which landed on the building which it completely demolished, killing 70 and badly wounding 20 (the wounded all died later), making a total of 90, some of the bodies were blown in halves and he states they found in one case the two halves 50 yards apart. Major Julius had his arm blown off above the elbow, both buttocks cut off and one leg just hanging by the skin of the thigh. He was conscious and they did what they could for him and the others wounded, put them in trucks and tried to get them back to base hospital, but the road was found to be blocked

and ambushed, quite a few of our chaps being killed and wounded in the attempt (there were two Newcastle chaps amongst the killed). Whilst held up in the block Major Julius died but Chook Fowler said it would have been a miracle if he had lived. There is no doubt that the plane that dropped the bomb received some kind of a signal as the timing was perfect. A remarkable escape from injury happened to the Brigadier. He was standing not five yards from where the bomb exploded and was able to walk out with his pipe still in his mouth, very dazed but otherwise unhurt (he was later killed by machine gun). The carnage as described by Chook was horrible, heads, legs, arms and pieces of body strewn everywhere, even hanging on the rubber trees. After attending the wounded they did not have time to bury the dead and what remained, as everyone was required to stem an attack that developed and he said they passed the place two days later and the stench was so bad that most everyone that passed were violently sick. In this sector there were at least 150 wounded including about 30 of our Regiment and due to the road blocks it was impossible to get them out. They were placed in all available vehicles and when it was found necessary to leave them, they were, that is all that could use them, were given rifles bayonets and grenades. That was the last seen of them, but since it has been ascertained that those that were not killed or killed themselves had petrol thrown over them and burnt by our chivalrous enemy the Japs. I must mention also that a representation carrying a white flag contacted the Japs and asked that they allow us to take out the wounded, the only condition which they would allow this was an unconditional surrender of all the forces on the front. Of course this was unthinkable and the wounded had to be left to their mercy. When the breakthrough of Japs lines was attempted and successful by a handful of men, lots of men lost their lives in the attempt including a lot of my friends.

We have not got the wireless going as yet. One of the parts necessary cannot be procured or made, but we are trying other avenues which might bring results. Will appreciate some reliable news. I suppose the British are still fighting to the last Russian and the Americans to the last Chinaman.

The repatriated Japanese diplomats from Australia passed our camp today. The ship arrived yesterday and we are all anxiously waiting to see if any mail arrived for us. I'm sure all of us would forgo any comforts etc. for just one card or letter from home.

Was able to buy six eggs, felt like eating them all at once but limited myself to one, might give myself a treat and have two for breakfast and share the rest with a couple of the boys who are broke, made a big hole in my winnings.

A remark passed by the M.C. of the concert, who happens to be one of the R.A.P. orderlies tickled my sense of humour. He was called away by one of the Jap guards during the concert and on his return he apologized for his absence which went something like this:

“Sorry chaps that I had to leave in such a hurry, but there is a Jap down there who is frightened he'll die and we're frightened he won't.”

Pretty original I thought.

Sunday 27th September '42

Just can't understand this working business, arrived on the hill this morning, given a job of turfing, the Japs did not seem to care whether we worked or not and we were of the same mind. At 12.30pm they told us to finish and go home. We wasted no time in carrying out that order. The only conclusion I can come to is the mornings are devoted to work and the afternoons to their military training as I have noticed lorry loads of Jap soldiers with equipment passing the camp in the afternoons and with them I have noticed some of our guards. They return past the camp in the evening and look as if they had been in some kind of manoeuvres judging by the camouflage which is usually on the trucks and sometimes on the men themselves.

Some of the boys that went to the quarry to work told me of an incident that made their blood boil. It appears that two small Chinese children came to the quarry to collect pieces of wood that were lying about. The boys gave them all they could carry and they started to make their way home when they were intercepted by a Sikh guard who took the wood from them and gave them both a hiding with one of the pieces of wood, then made them pick up the wood and take it back to the quarry. Our chaps told him off in no mean manner and left him no doubt as to what the Sikhs are to expect from us when our turn comes. Things looked pretty bad to him and he pulled out a revolver and made his departure. The Jap guard seemed only to be amused. I suppose in their own heart they look upon these Indians as traitors and although they answer the purpose required by the Japs.

Ate another egg and gave the other two away, have enough money to buy two more if I can find the two eggs.

Rumour afloat to the effect that on the next Rep--- ship to leave here 500 A.I.F. ----- are to go back to Aussie by way of Portuguese East Africa. We will all be glad and possibly a little jealous if it is true. We will all benefit as they will be able to relieve any anxiety at home regarding our treatment and thereby relieve us of the worry of our people worrying. Bit Dutch.

Its a real ----- at our camp. I just noticed the Church parade being held. At one place or two, two-up games going on not 20 yards on either side. I will say this for the chaps playing, they did not speak any louder than a whisper and could not be heard at the Church Parade.

In Mandi's estimation we are not even gentlemen No. 100 to him. Now he paid the camp a visit just before dark, pulled his car up in front of the Jap guard house where three guards continually sit to pay their respects to any officer passing on the road. He left it for about a minute and returned to find that his carton of cigarettes, some 200, had disappeared from the front seat. The Jap guards received most of his wrath, and he went away in disgust. I think some of the Ordnance mob took them but how, they only know.

Monday 28th September '42

Another bludging day on the hill. The Japs did not arrive until 11.30am and we finished at 5.30pm. Some of the turf cutters were not so lucky. A Jap guard picked on one of the boys a great worker too, Vic Jellerman, into him with a stick. Vic called him a couple of dirty yellow B___s and the Jap apparently understood that much English, and made the section he was in cut all the turf without a

stop, allowed the rest to go home then made this section load it all and then unload it at the hill. Had a magnificent tea, fish, mutton stew with rice rock cake, and I supplemented it with bananas and rice with a spoonful of sugar which was given to me. I feel really full to the brain. Six other coves had two roast ducks which they pinched from the Japs to supplement theirs – did they smell good.

When we first arrived in Malaya it was an unusual sight to see a fly, now they are here in millions, no doubt due to the unburied dead.

Boxing on tonight. Everybody arrived at the ring early to obtain seats and found a Confirmation Service being held in the ring. The Service was given by the Bishop of Singapore and when the boys arrived there were only the candidates and a few congregation there. The service finished up with about 600. Its marvellous what trouble some people will go to in obtaining a good seat. They turned out a good congregation so I suppose the Bishop was delighted, in fact, he said he was, although he felt that quite a number thought they had to pay dearly for the seats. He attended the fights after the service and appeared to thoroughly enjoy himself.

Mandi has graced us with his presence and is staying in our camp for one week. I believe he bought all the available books in Singapore.

Tuesday 29th September '42

Quarry today, even a better bludge than the hill, although personally it does not affect me as I am acting platoon leader and wear an officer's arm band and therefore do not have to work. The job was quite simple. All they had to do was carry the stones about 15 yards from where they were being broken by Chinese and to each breaker there were about 10 carriers, so if they carried a load and every half hour they would carry more than the Chow could break. The boys finished up having the Chow's as bad as themselves, told them they worked too hard, made them knock off breaking and have a smoko when we did, which was pretty frequently, as only one Jap guard was on the job and he disappeared most of the day. The old Chows thought it was a great idea and entered into the spirit of things with great enthusiasm. One of the poor old Chows early in the day just before we started work walked over towards the Sikh guard house, and picked up something from the ground. The Sikh caught him and they tied his hands behind his back, then tied him by the neck to a pole, took his hat off and left him tied there until 5pm. The heat was terrible and I'm sure the poor cow will have a sun stroke, he sure looked washed out, we called the Sikhs everything we could lay our tongue to and told them a few home truths and also what to expect from the Chows and ourselves at a later date. I have noticed a peculiar thing, all the natives, black, tan and brindle, including the Japs are frightened of the sun and keep themselves well covered (I have learned that they suffer with sunburn) whilst hardly a man of the A.I.F. wears anything more than shorts and hats, very rarely does one wear a shirt, also the Tommies are beginning to go without them. Chop Suey, our Australian abo also wears a shirt, he said the sun affects him badly.

Handsome tea tonight, vegetable stew (nice and thick, plenty of vegetables) and rice, beautiful baked sweet potatoes and believe it or not, four per man, gorgeous rock cakes, and I found a nice ripe paw

paw. Feel very contented. Still very lucky and dream of home at nights, should have a good one tonight – here's hoping.

Starting to become uneasy about the mail we hoped for. The boat has left Singapore for Japan and we haven't even heard a rumour regarding it. Moon also at the last half, very disappointing.

Wednesday 30th September '42

Very uneventful day, meals the same, just lazed about and slept, probably suffer tonight thinking. I'm sure I will not be able to sleep, never felt less like it.

This complaint has certainly caused havoc amongst the boys. Men, usually big and strong are becoming weak skeletons, some are verging on hysterics, it has the doctors licked. Thank God I was rid of my share easily. I was never as near as bad as some of the cases now.

Weighed myself today, the bubble and squeak sure did a good job, and I feel in the pink.

Thursday 1st October '42

Our Company's day off. Rained like nobody's business this morning which stopped any good intentions of washing, debugging, etc.

Heard that an A.I.F. cove from No.4 camp has made a break and been missing now for two days. Don't give him much chance and certainly none if he is caught. It's nothing less than suicide to try and leave the Island. If I ever contemplate a move in that direction I will definitely make sure that our troops are somewhere in the immediate vicinity, if one can stick it for 8 months he should be able to hang on a little longer.

A nasty piece of Jap treatment was dealt out to a poor old Chinese woman today. For some time now the Jap guards have not taken much notice of the natives selling us stuff around where we work. Today an old woman was selling some of the boys of the other Company pineapples and a Jap, not one of the usual guards, but one in a roving patrol, came along drew his bayonet and split the old woman's skull. It did not kill her but went that close that she will probably die. The other Chinese from the Kampong took her away.

A young Chinaman at the quarry told me the Japanese had killed over a thousand Chinese in and around Bukat Panyang. Also a few of the boys who were doing a bit of scrounging outside the wires came across about 50 Chinamen lying dead with their hands and feet tied and they said that by the look of them they had only just been killed. Needless to say they did not stay out too long.

The camp received quite a deal of stuff given [by] the Indian Red Cross and b[r]ought over by the Repo boats, meal, sugar and bully beef also. I believe there is [are] clothes and cigarettes to come. No rumour regarding mail from home and we are all bitterly disappointed.

Friday 2nd October '42

No work: what an improvement in working conditions and the food from the first six months of the working party. At one time it was an occasion to get a second helping of plain rice, now it would be

impossible for us to get it down, then we were lucky to get any vegetables, now we get ample. But all good things come to an end and that has happened to the bubble and squeak, the vegetables are now being cooked in their skins, this should have been done before if only for health reasons. It's a great blow to us who cooked the skins.

Beautiful day with a nice cool breeze, first I've noticed for some considerable time.

For the next month the Indians fast between the hours 6am and 6pm and then all they can eat is a certain cake made from eggs so it looks as if eggs will be that scarce it will be impossible for P.O.W.s to buy them. I intended having some next pay day.

I don't know what the Japs are doing about the rubber, no one ever taps the trees. Before they came every lorry that passed seemed to be laden with rubber, on its way to Singapore and I'm sure I have not seen a load since Nippon took the reins. Of course they would not have a market for it and I suppose they get some of the other Islands enough for their own use.

Mutton stew and rice and fish for tea. Missed out on the stew and received three pieces of fish, it was delicious, would gladly go without stew and have fish any day.

Intercamp boxing tournament on tonight, some good fights but condition beat most of us. Five lost by 40 points to 10 points, the other camp No.3, arrived in force and made the number of spectators around the 2,000 mark.

The chap the Jap belted up for pinching the petrol died in Changi hospital.

Saturday 3rd October '42

Easy job turfing. Took our own time and was not pushed by the Japs. One Jap guard came across to our chaps sitting down, he walks along the line reciting 'Bludger Bludger' and so on, he thought it was a great joke. The turf cutting party again received the wrath of the Nippon and one drew his bayonet and belted one of the boys and did quite a lot of damage to his head, he had to receive medical treatment.

Comforts still rolling into camp but no mail. Have not received any as yet, but I believe there are all sorts of good things including about 75 cigarettes per man. I am told the comforts were sent by the people of India for the Indian British Australian troops c/o the Japanese Army. No matter how many or how nice the comforts I would rather have one letter from home although I will sure appreciate them.

Usual Saturday night concert, very good programme.

Received the news from BBC last night, it was not very good as far as Russian situation was concerned but pretty good from New Guinea, Middle East and Solomons. Anxiously awaiting tonight's news, trust the ----- does not break down.

Sad catastrophe occurred during our absence today, the chicken was killed. He was watching a few of the boys sawing logs and one of the ends fell on him. As much as we were all concerned about its death we did not object to its owner not burying it, it went the way of all edible flesh and I hope for its owner's sake it rests in peace or I should say pieces.

Just received our first issue of the comforts – a packet of 10 cigarettes, made in India. Found them very mild after what I have been smoking. The name of the brand is V.J. Don't know whether the significance was meant.

Sunday 4th October '42

I'm writing this under extreme uncomfortable circumstances, to wit a really full belly, received part of our comforts, biscuits, tinned milk, caramels, sugar and together with a good tea. I'm afraid I have over estimated my capacity. I went at them like a man dying of thirst would go for water. Porridge tomorrow with real sugar and milk, and either bully beef rissoles or dry fish for tea, possibly a stew for dinner and will I start to put on weight. I know all these good things will not last but I'm sure going to make the best of them while they are available.

Rained like nobody's business this morning and we were caught out in it with no shelter. Got absolutely soaked and pretty near froze. We were cutting turf on the Gold [Golf?] Links at the time: judging from the number of graves (Japanese) there must have been a terrific battle there. We were allowed to knock off after an hour or so of the rain and returned to camp for dinner.

Jap guard just caught two of our chaps outside the wire. In fact they were down in the village, they are both in the Jap Guard house, also caught one of the 2/10th with a five gallon drum of petrol. He was just about to go through the wire. God knows what will happen to them and how it will affect the camp on the whole.

Could do with some more cigarettes, smoked the last packet before breakfast.

News last night much same as the night before, will have to be very circumspect with the source.

Monday 5th October '42

What a day. Went to work in the quarry, hardest days work for many a day and whilst we were working hell was a-popping back at camp caused by the backwash of the petrol selling incident of last night. Mandi, another officer, and a truck load of Japs descended on the camp about 9am. The non working Company, being 2/10th, was called out and a thorough search made of their quarters. Petrol was found in large quantities together with other illicit articles resulting in a thrashing for the Officer-in-Charge of 2/10 and ten men taken away to Japanese Headquarters. These men, to save further trouble, confessed to owning the petrol etc.; they are being tried by the Japanese, result of trial not yet known. During the raid our pay arrived and was promptly sent back, also all camp privileges cancelled. Looks very much as if we will get a turn tomorrow, but I'm afraid as far as our Company is concerned the cupboard is now bare, can't understand why our quarters were not searched today, maybe they thought the catch from the 2/10 was sufficient for one day. I'm afraid we will not receive any news for a while. That avenue gave me and a few others a nasty feeling in the stomach when we

heard of the search being carried out the information came to us in the quarry. The two chaps from our Company who were caught outside the wire have been sentenced to 7 days in the Japanese jail and I believe consider themselves very lucky. These were Number 1 gentlemen are beginning to turn out in Mandi's opinion Number 1 B_____s.

I left this book on the top of my pack this morning, which also concerned me a little, there is always the possibility they might not appreciate some of my opinions but might appreciate some of the information. The quarry is supervised by a Scotch Civil Engineer, who was taken from the Internment camp for that purpose. He told us the story. Before the war this Scotty was a Civil Engineer living in Kuala Lumpur, a Chinese firm by the name of "Gammin" who had the contract of building underground storage tanks, Head Quarters etc. for the British Government, the contract price being around 5 to 6 million dollars, employed this cove as their Engineer Advisory. He was approached by the Japanese and asked to open a coal mine for them but he refused as it would, indirectly, help in their war effort, which he was entitled to do. They then approached him regarding the continuation of the tunnel at the quarry, his reasoning was as the British have worked on it for the last 7 years and as there is at least another 3 years work necessary, he found no objection as by the date of completion he did not anticipate the Japs still being here, so he took on the job at \$50 month. He was making about that much a day in Civil life. His first duty was to prepare an estimate of cost for the completion of the tunnel and spent a week on its preparation, he submitted his figures which were about \$2,000,000 to the Head of that particular Japanese Department who seemed surprised and asked Scotty if he had not made a mistake which he assured them he had not. The Official then took the estimate and altered the total to \$5,000,000. The Japs sure have some peculiar ideas and methods. The Scotty then goes on to tell an experience that happened to him after he had left the office and walked down the street towards Singapore. A man of European appearance stopped him and asked for his passport. Scotty asked him what the hell it had to do with him. He was answered to the effect that it was quite a ... *(pages too badly marked to read)*

Tuesday 6th October '42

Company's day off. Nothing has happened yet regarding the petrol business ... *(unreadable)*

Had marvellous breakfast this morning, beautiful porridge with sugar and condensed milk. Got a few sweet potatoes from the canteen which I made into chips and fried in some fat. Also made some gravy with rice flour. It was a great meal. Dinner was good, meat and vegetable stew (pretty weak but nice) and rice with milk and sugar. Tea, extra good stew and cake.

Received our pay today, have decided to spend most of it on yams and tobacco. The Red Cross cigarettes are only issued at the rate of a packet per man per week. Almost forgot, we are issued with a cup of cocoa each night, I believe we have enough for about 10 nights.

Accident in front of the camp, a truck loaded with Tommies skidded and turned turtle, three of them seemed badly hurt, most of the others were thrown on the grass and escaped injury.

We now have a weekly paper, edited and printed by Jes ----- of ----- fame. It is very humorous and is call "The Narrow-minded News". It is displayed in a picture frame and hung up for a day or so, it causes quite a lot of amusement.

Wednesday 7th October '42

Another Company day off and nothing of any importance happened at this camp other than we received a lecture from the Japs per medium of our officers.

Number 4 Camp have all been marched back to Changi, a matter of about 20 miles. At first no comforts or stores were allowed to go with them, this was later cancelled and transport was supplied for stores. This move is the punishment dealt out to the camp in general, nothing regards the punishment of their seven culprits is known as yet. This also applies to our camp's self confessed culprits (the Japs seem very impressed with their honesty in giving themselves up and will probably deal with them less seriously than if they had been caught). Best rumour has it that the first chap from our camp who was caught in the act will be shot, none of the 2/10 seem to be concerned about him. I believe he is a pretty rotten type.

Well the meals are so perfect now, at least I think so, it would take up all my time explaining them, so have decided not to mention meals until some great change occurs.

Will try tomorrow the "Narrow-minded News" and make a copy if possible.

Two-up has been forbidden so Housie Housie has become the rage. It's one cent a go and 33 cents paid to the winning card. I risked 5 cents and lost it.

Air activity started before dawn this morning and a considerable amount has gone on all day. I think they have turned Singapore Island into an assembling and training base.

On the next page I have taken a copy of the "Narrow-minded News".

(Jules yellow sticker on these pages – see the drawings that go with the text)

EAT MORE FRUIT

THE NARROW-MINDED NEWS

BLOGGS BEER IS BEST

Vol. No.3

Published Now and Then – P.O.W. SINGAPORE

5-10-42

Priceless

RICE RABBLE RUNS RIOT

Quarrels at Quarry

Yesterday at the quarry a serious incident occurred which may have had serious results. As soon as the Mess was served and various backups had been dispersed, a huge crowd of Chinese women and children, who had been working since 9am, mobbed the rice dioxies. Two were trampled under foot and one Mess Server bowled over. Unluckily he had not served himself, and upon rising, took place in the free for all which was ensuing.

By this time the crowd from Johore Bahru had arrived per bus and were hotfooting it to beat the train which was just pulling up preparatory (sic) to disgorging the late-comers from the mainland.

The heat was on and flying forms and empty dioxies were endangering the lives of gunners and quarry workers standing nearby. The air was rent with shrill cries and squeals of enjoyment or disappointment in accordance with the success of the persons involved. The Mess Server was next seen crawling painfully out of the melee, minus his shorts, one boot and stripes, clutching a handful of dirt and rice. His ear was torn and one rib either bent or broken.

From the other side of the surging crowd a small son of China appeared with a huge bag of rice and went faster than the 8th Division over the railway line with an aging Chinese lady hot on his heels. The rest of the crowd who had been vainly endeavouring to extricate the fistful of rice from the senseless Mess Server, gave a Chinese version of “Yoicks Tally Ho” which sounded somewhat like our own version of “There goes the B_____” and were last seen heading in the direction of the hill where Mess was just being served.

FEET SORE?

Glossy

Poor Fellow

L o v e l y

Hair Oil

HUMDRUM

HAIR OIL

OFFICERS COOKHOUSE TO OPEN

Many Modern Features

The most up to date and hygienic cookhouse in the camp will open shortly, when the officers will gladden their refined palates with food from their own cookhouse.

Yesterday a representative of this paper was shown over the building by the proprietor, Major Mackay, and was struck by the many modern features. An electric stove, Kindly Donated by No.1 Company 10 to cook the tucker, which, it is hoped, will be sent out piping hot in lace-paper frilled casseroles to appease “the working-men’s appetites”.

In the corner of the spotlessly clean room a number of hot-boxes were stated to be for “keeping the hygiene officer’s breakfast hot”.

‘Isn’t rice better eaten cold?’ asked our reporter.

“Tush!” said the Major, “who said anything about rice?” Over clinking glasses of icy cold lime-juice the Major stated that great trouble and expense, negotiations were under way to sign up Monsieur Wade, late chef at No.3 Camp and Maitre D’ Hotel of the Officers Mess, Tempin. He also stated that applicants for the job of kitchen fatigues were being turned away hourly, and that there was to be no change in the system of fast runners which at present conveys the food from cook-house to consumer.

All provisions, it is understood, will be supplied by the Q.M. Chain Stores and the contract for the supply of Farm-Fresh Vegetables etc. has already been drawn up.

“I am filled with emotion when I think of the supply of goodies the kitchen will serve” said the Major.

CAMP CHICKEN DIES MOURNED BY ALL

CLASSIFIED ODDS AND SODS

It is with extreme regret that we announce the death of the camp Chicken a few days ago. While pecking happily at the weevils round the cook-house door he was struck behind the ear by a flying lump of wood from the wood heap, and passed out instantaneously.

The chicken, who was introduced to the camp by Bluie Kennedy, for a long while formed the nucleus of the "BLUE KENNEDY UP-THE-DATE POULTRY FARM" (now defunct) and became a great favourite among the sore-footers, pecking happily at their tingling toes and affording them great pleasure and relief.

He was very musical, it is learned, and nothing delighted him more than to render an obligato to Warrant Officer Walken's rendition of "EXCELSIOR" and other popular ballads.

In forming a tasty drop of chicken soup he gave his owners pleasure in death as in life – SADLY MISSED.

FOR SALE – one large bottle of curry powder
CHEAP!!! Apply Dick H-----

FOR SALE or Given Away Free

Three or four lengths of rubber hosing and half a dozer
Five gallon drums. Owner going out of business.
Write to Box URIZ Haymarket

WANTED

BOY, to polish the rice polishings.
Apply R.A.P.

FOR SALE

One book on boxing, one skipping rope, one punch bag. Apply KITCHEN.

WANTED

A Mess-server for Officer's Mess. One arm; poor eyesight, a suffering from indigestion, and lack of appetite. Must also be able to keep a secret. Good job for right man.

NOTE: Persons inserting classified ads in this space must pay on publication otherwise steps will be taken (Ed)

SHORTS ON SPORTS

BOXING

The first round of the intercamp boxing contests were held at our camp a few night's ago..

Most of the bouts were disappointing, our camp only winning one bout. Williams of Ordnance was the winner and the crowd thoroughly enjoyed the wrestling exhibition. Wells of No.3 Camp the Queensland Champ gave an exhibition and was appreciated by our lads.

The second round was held last night at No.4 Camp but as our sporting reporter has been too busy on fatigues to interview the Officers on the results we had to go on hearsay from rumours. One win again, we believe to Williams, this time on a foul and a win also to Charlton. This boy is pretty good and should be alright in the contest.

BASKET-BALL

The basket-ball competition goes merrily along despite inclement weather, Red Cross parcels and so on. Some good games are being seen and the spirit of the games is very keen. Four teams head the list and have all to play one another. Last night R.H.Q. were successful against 2/10 B Team. Some more phenomenal goal throwing by Westy and Worby was well on his "Foul against me" game.

2/10 A's were well on their game to beat No.5. Although No.5 are newcomers and have not as yet won a game they thoroughly enjoy each match and, after all, the game is the thing – keep it up.

-

THAT'S ALL –

STOP PRESS

Next Page

“STOP PRESS”

CRIME WAVE BREAKS ON CAMP

Serious disturbance broke the even tenor of the camp routine this morning. The first serious crime occurred during the morning inspection by the 2/10 Medical Officer. A hulking big ruffian who not feeling so well, and not being in the habit of running around squealing about his ailments, was having a nap. Being asleep he did not hear the stand-to, and was severely reprimanded. Two men were shortly after found reading “Funnies” in the Sergeant’s quarters. For this major and heinous crime they were placed under close arrest.

This kind of thing has got to stop and this paper is right behind the Authorities. Only yesterday the Editor was at rear of Sergeant’s quarters doing a small job for one of them. Nearby he espied half a dozen empty M&I tins, probably placed under arrest for loitering. Before he could interrogate them they were whisked away by the R.S.M. and probably paid the extreme penalty. Serves ‘em right. Once again we stress the fact that crime does not pay (if you are caught).

Thursday 8th October ’42

Yesterday I wrote that I would not mention food again; well I feel sitting here as full as the _____, that’s tonight’s tea if ever a meal did, deserves mentioning. In fact it would be sacrilege to pass it by, here goes. 1st the vegetable rice stew (not much). 2nd, believe it or not, two rissoles, and 80% bully beef (wonderful), nearly forgot, a dash of curry in them. 3rd baked sweet yams and pumpkin. 4th last but not least, fruit salad and chocolate sauce. Oh boy oh boy oh boy.

Worked on the hill today, quite a pleasant job and was back in camp by 5pm. As a number of the camp have gone back to Changi we will now have to work six out of seven days. Still on the tucker we are getting now I don’t think anyone will mind much providing they don’t come up with their standard methods.

The rumour regarding the chap from the 2/10 has not been confirmed, no matter what he was I hope it is not true.

Nothing else of any importance.

I’m lying down watching my friends the Ghekkos (I don’t think that is their correct name) playing catching insects and making love, and have observed one thing which enables me to tell their sex. The male have a very thin tail and the female a thick one. I have made sure by closely watching when they are both together. I don’t suppose I am the first person to observe the difference.

Friday 9th October ’42

Japanese holiday and from now on it looks as if Friday will also be our only day of rest, but by the time the huts are washed out and cleaned, debugging done, washing, mending and other necessary jobs, it seems that there will be little time for rest.

Very uneventful day and up to the present nothing to write about. Food still good. Amusing incident just occurred at the entrance to the camp. At this entrance a Jap guard is posted, also one of our A.I.F. guards. A Chinaman rode past and did not dismount to make his bow. The Jap guard stopped him and made him come to the entrance, took his hat off and grabbed him [by] the forelock and pulled his hair right down five or six times. Whilst this was happening a Tamil went past grinning and enjoying the amusing scene. Our guard, who happened to be a pretty hard case, pulled the Tamil up, brought

him over and went through the same process with the Tamil as the Jap was doing to the Chow. The Jap was nonplussed and asked why. Our guard explained he had not paid his respect just as the Chinaman had not paid his, so whilst the Jap was busy punishing the Chow, he thought he would save the Jap the trouble of punishing the Tamil. The Chow rode past the camp with a broad grin and certainly appeared to have enjoyed the show. The Tamil did not look so pleased. The Jap guard eventually thought it all a great joke.

Just talking to one of the officers and he mentioned that whilst he was out with the turf cutting party, they started to cut near a Chinese graveyard and that one day he counted 157 bodies taken there for burial. They bring the bodies in coffins but take them out before burial and the coffins are used again. This terrific death rate is caused by starvation. The Japanese admit 100,000 Chinese starving in Singapore. It's a great pity something cannot be done about it. I don't think it worries the Japs very much. He also told me that 500 sick and wounded were ready at Changi to be repatriated home. Hope Jack Collins and Aub Jones are amongst them. They could get in touch with home. It would be a great relief to me to know that they knew for certain that everything there was OK.

Saturday 10th October '42

Odd job on the hill, very easy day. Last few days every now and then a train passes our camp filled with Tommies going towards the mainland. One passed as I am writing, can not find out where they are headed for.

Good news from Changi, the A.I.F. P.O.W.s from K.L. have arrived back there and amongst them are quite a lot of our Regiment. It is very pleasing to hear of their return as I have heard that the deaths were consistently happening at the rate of 10%, disease was rife there.

Saw some of the Indians who have turned over to the Japs. They were still wearing our uniforms, with a little alteration, also carrying our weapons. They are evidently training on our mortars and Anti Artillery guns. I have also seen some Brens.

Speaking of mortars: Our Regiment was trained in Australia on 18 pound Field guns for over twelve months, on the boat over we were given 3" mortars, and trained on them all the way over and in Malaya when war was declared with Japan we still had mortars and took up our war stations with them. A week before Gemas we received 25 pound guns and with less than a week's training on them went into action, never fired a round from the mortars.

The 2IC (Second in Command) of the 30th Battalion contacted me on the hill today and asked me for information regarding our Troops at Gemas, He wanted it for his war diary and wanted the information regarding tanks, bombers etc. first hand. I did not ask him who told him to see me, anyhow I was able to give him what he wanted.

I wonder what it feels like to be hungry.

Another excellent concert tonight. Still finding new artists.

Sunday 11th October

Worked in the Quarry today, extremely hot and very hard work. I only watched in the morning (still being Acting Platoon Commander) but in the afternoon I hopped on and gave the boys a hand and believe me it was uncomfortable work. During the day lorrie-loads of Chinese women came to the quarry and loaded and lumped stones, they worked very hard and would put our P.W. Department labourers to shame. I learned that these women work and live in different Kampons by themselves and different contractors own them or lease them in some kind of manner. He feeds and clothes them (they wear a sort of uniform clothing) and pays them a small wage. It appears that when a woman is found to be sterile, no one will marry her and no one wants her, so she joins one of these labour camps and takes her place doing a man's work. Regarding the statement of no one will marry her I presume the informant meant if found sterile after marriage, or it may be their custom to find out before marriage takes place; how, I cannot say.

Flash! Rumour very strong and just released, all A.I.F. P.O.W.s will be moved north within a few days, seems a possibility as I personally have seen numerous Tommies heading North by train the last couple of days.

Big Frog Derby on tonight, some thirty-odd entries and all well trained frogs. I can hear the Bookmakers calling the odds as I write, will have to get a move on or I will miss the first race. A frog called Snow White appears to be favorite.

Boots fell to pieces today and are now impossible to wear, so once again I go onto the No Boot List and will be unable to work until I receive a pair.

Weighed myself tonight, must have lost a few pounds, now weigh 10s 11lb. Can't understand it, as I have been eating like a horse.

Monday 12th October 42

No boots, sat on my spine all day, repaired all my gear, also made myself a temporary kit bag.

The Frog Derby was won by Snow White, Mickey Mouse second. Snow White went out at 2 to 1, Mickey Mouse 5 to 1. These frog races have certainly caught on and there is more enthusiasm over them than any other sport. One Owner was disqualified for six weeks, his frog was examined and a pin was found in his colours bent up so that when the frog sat down it would prick him and set him in motion. The frog's name was Victory. More racing tonight I believe there are over 100 entries. The method of racing them is as followed. A ring about 5 yards diameter is made, the frogs are placed in the centre, under a biscuit tin, when the starter says go, the tin is taken away and the first frog over the length of the circle is declared the winner. There are any amount of bookmakers and the betting is very spirited. The entrance fee is 20 cents and each heat has about 10 entries. The owner of the winning frog takes the 20 cents and if he fancies his frog back up.

Another train load of Tommies going North. They have all their gear and do not know their destination.

Once again a new moon, the same old prayer but trust with different results.

Frog races only half run when rain came and meeting had to be postponed. Dillwater 7 to 1; Greenbottle (Fair) 3 to 1; and Sebastapol 5 to 1 were the winners of their heats. The Japanese guards were amongst the spectators and seemed just as excited as the rest of us.

Tuesday 13th October '42

Still no boots, but unlike yesterday I worked like a Navvy helping to dig a trench 22' x 3' x 14', hardest work I have done for some time, felt pretty good doing it and felt good after doing it, must be the good food sticking to me. Talking of good, something happened tonight which a few weeks back I would have said was utterly impossible. It was my turn for a backup and I was too full to eat it and had a lot of trouble finding someone to give it to. Its a terrible thing to know that at present we have as much and probably more than we can eat and in Singapore the poor Chinese women and children are dying in thousands of hunger, the Japanese, of course, have our ordinary rations and stopped issuing cigarettes all together, its a great pity that the rice etc. usually issued by them is not issued to these unfortunate people. Still I suppose in a matter of a few days our comforts will be run out and we will be glad of the Japanese rations. It's hoped they will give us our original rations when this happens.

Frog racing now taboo, came out on camp Standing Orders today. It's not a Japanese order but came from our own Camp Command. Can't see what the objection is. It's not cruel. I suppose it is just naughty for Australian soldiers to gamble.

On the hill near the memorial the Japanese have erected a hoarding with the map of Singapore showing their positions and how the Island was taken. Next time I go up the hill I will try to take a copy of it. Our positions including the artillery are also shown, they knew as much if not more than we did regarding our positions etc.

Just heard the boys are running the frog races in spite of camp Standing Orders, will go up and see what happens.

A few more poems by some of the boys:

THE HOME-SICK GUNNER (Geo Sprot)

Rabbits by day and owls by night
Our life is quite exciting
We eat tinned horse and concrete slabs
Its all that keeps us fighting.

All day we live in the bloody grass
And when it gets too boring
We fire a couple of rounds or so
To keep ourselves from snoring

A couple of rounds of one-one-nine
The Japs can have with pleasure
And 'praps some one-one-seven too
To give the cows good measure.

I wish there was a shell that'd cross

Four thousand miles of ocean
I'd be the first to volunteer
To set the thing in motion.

Slinging myself into the breech
I'd leave my cares behind me
And if I lobbed in Sydney town
They'd have a job to find me.

ON DYSENTERY (Geo Sprot)

Incline thine ear towards this dolorous night
Who with such men of languor doth recite
A tale of woe unbounded. Feat of arms.
The Pomp, and fag, and fuss of war and storms.
And tales of stirring deeds he has forswore
Since Nippon hath him chained to Singapore.
Let's listen then: - me thinks his glazed -----
Bespeak a vile distemper of[t?] times seen –
Some nine times daily needs I must repair
To ease my sorrow in the open air.
Where perched on rustic bench 'neath speckled shade
Oft hath my feeble body's dross been laid.
And oft beneath the pallid arc of night
My timorous groans the anxious stars affright
As swift from adamantine couch I glide
My anguish in the cloak of dark to hide
When bright Apollo's gins his orb arise
My dull tongue doth the humble rice despise
And feeds its massy hosts on tea, I trow
Tasteth like bog, where decomposing cow
For fifteen days have fallen. Needs I must
Eat bread it straightway turneth into dust
(Unreadable) dainty foods for which I moon
They are far from grasing as that stone;
Which secret homes of Alchemy have told
Turneth the dull eyed lead to glistening gold.
The grave physician with his sober tread
At morn and evening poketh in my head
A witches glass which tell the numbers bold
Of temperature (he saith) of heat and cold
And haply, where that horned goblin -----
The pestilence which burneth in my veins
Full oft must I endure the brassy laughter
Of so-called mates, who some diversion after
Do mock at my sad sorrow, them I left
I wish that all the agonies of hell
Should fasten on their entrails with sharp prongs
Some notion to convey of all the wrongs
The malady doth cause. Then do I pray
A dose should they contract within the day
T'is now I sacrifice the printed page
The wondrous words of pope and prince and sage
And in the leaves from learned classics rent
Necessity to grosser use hath bent.
Now needs I must conclude my sad recital
I feel an urge imperative and vital
Which brooketh not delay, Good Sirs – Farewell
I crave forbearance for the dirge I tell,
Perchance when happier days have come to pass
I toast we'll drink to health, with brimming glass,
And joy shall sing on Austral's sunny shore
In alcoholic strain for ever more.

Wednesday 14th October '42

Another day like yesterday, worked pretty hard on the digging and it has now been rumoured and practically confirmed that we are to shift camp to a place in Thompsen's Road, maybe tomorrow. I don't like leaving this place, there is always movement on the main road, which gives us a certain feeling of freedom and also something to watch and keep us interested. Issue of condensed milk (2 tins) half pound of sugar, also a small piece of soap which I badly needed. Pay day, housie housie and frog racing go flat out, the housie is 1 cent card first prize 60 cents. So far nothing has been done to stop the frog racing, popular opinion too strong probably.

Just told our shift to another camp has been squashed. It appears another lot of A.I.F were going to take our place and the Jap guards at the camp and Mandi lodged a protest, maybe the old proverb 'Better the Devil You Know' influenced them or maybe we are still 'Number 1 Gentlemen'. I am very pleased as I personally would rather stay here until we are relieved, if ever.

Thursday 15th October '42

Eight calendar months today since we handed ourselves over to Nippon and I must admit our treatment has been a thousand times better than I expected. In fact I'm sure nearly every man, if he could have had his say, would have preferred to die fighting rather than be taken prisoner, that is during action. We were told of all the heinous things that happened to prisoners taken (by the Japs) and we were given to understand that no prisoners would be taken by either sides. Admittedly few prisoners were actually taken by them during the campaign, but the fact remains they did take some. I can't remember us taking any, unless it was for questioning. The rest never had much say in the matter. This was done under instruction from Malayan Command (if there was ever such a body).

Rained torrents this morning and the boys were unable to go to work and stood by on a ten minutes notice. After lunch it cleared and some had to go then, but the majority had a full day holiday.

Had two eggs for breakfast so together with my porridge plus milk and sugar did rather well. Dinner on the nose and tea not as good as usual, looks like the comforts are working out.

We are going to put 10 cents each man into a fund to buy Christmas Cheer for the women and children in Changi Concentration Camp, some 100 women and 60-odd children. Also some of the boys are making presents such as toys etc. The money collected in this way should bring the A.I.F alone amount to about \$1,000 which should purchase quite a quantity of good things (if there is anything left to purchase). Everybody is more or less resigned to the fact that we will still be P.O.W.s at Christmas, we can't see anything ahead of us to give us any hope. Still we all have a little hope tucked away inside us. I know I have. We get news now and then but everything seems to be going so slow to us. I suppose it seems so slow as things came and went so quick with us.

Good food showing its effects on general conversation, sex is beginning to take a prominent part, food has practically been dropped.

Friday 16th October '42

Public Holiday but still no boots. Muster Parade this morning. We were all counted and handed over to new Jap camp guards, these guards look much older than our previous ones. Seems they are substituting over-age troops for the Military age troops. Have not had any contact with them as yet so cannot say anything regarding their dispositions only that I have noticed they seem more ----- to the old Chinks passing the entrance.

Moon at its first quarter and nights beginning to show the beauty which seems to come with the moon.

When trains pass the camp, it makes one feel the lack of freedom more acutely, and brings about a great desire to jump onto the train and just keep going, even the sound of a train affects me that way, but strange as it may seem a car going past has no effect.

Did a great amount of mending and sewing, also up at six and did my washing before the crowd started doing theirs. It's very hard to find a place to hang it on the day off and first in have the pick of the barbed wire which does duty as a clothes line. In fact, it has more purpose in that than what it was erected for.

Dermatitis broken out on my chest, neck and face, also a little on the body, but no signs of fever. This particular type of dermatitis comes in a night, generally lasts about four to five days, and is usually accompanied by a fever which last two or three days.

Saturday 17th October '42

Still on the lavatory digging, it is very uncomfortable and hot as we are now down about 7 ft and its like a Turkish bath in the hole.

Can't get away from food today, for the first time as a P.O.W. I missed a meal from not being hungry, also I found myself separating the weevils and grubs from the rice.

All Tommie troops have received 24 hours notice to be ready to go north. I believe as yet the A.I.F. stay on the Island and it ignited one rumour that our camp shifts to Number 2 Camp, now a Tommy camp, in ten days time. The camp is situated in Adam's Road not far from Neecoon and is guarded by Sikhs and Koreans and I believe they are pretty hot stuff, but someday, as one of our Lieutenant Colonel's said, the season on Sikhs will be declared open. God have mercy on their souls. Reading a very good book entitled "And So Victoria" by Vaughan Wilkins.

Informed today that our camp has finished with the hill and have now taken over the jobs the Tommies were on, another monument and roads. This Island when they are finished with it will be nothing but.

Concert on tonight, crowd gathered for good seats a few hours before time of starting. The Housie-Housie mob hopped in with their game and did a roaring business before the concert started up.

New Jap guards have not started to worry us yet.

Sunday 18th October '42

Poured rain this morning, all working parties had to standby at a minute's notice, this did not come until after lunch, the rain having stopped and the sun out with a vengeance. As I am still a no-booter I did not go. Lorries called at the camp and picked up the working parties and took them to their respective jobs, some of the boys were lucky as their job took them on a Cook's tour around Singapore, which I believe still show signs of the terrific bombing and shelling received.

Had a very embarrassing experience this morning. Was doing my best in the latrines which are enclosed by hessian about 3' high. I happened to look around and there was an old Chinese woman standing watching me. As soon as she was aware I had seen her she made signs that she wanted muchén (food), she made no attempt to go away, which was very uncomfortable and just stood watching and making signs. Fortunately we had just finished dinner so I went and filled a couple of tins with rice. Whilst I was away she still kept her position, much to the annoyance of a few of the boys who had to await her pleasure; when she saw me coming with the rice she rushed at me like a starved dog, grabbed the tins from my hands and clamped them to her chest and with much bowing backed out through the wire. I'm sure she must have been on the verge of starvation, she could hardly walk.

The new guards have not worried us, they don't interfere and leave us to ourselves, in fact, we would not know they were there until we pass their guard house. I believe their new officer goes around all the jobs everyday and is very amiable.

My bed neighbour arrived home with a sugar bag of yams today, looks like we will have chip potatoes to go with our porridge, providing we can procure some fat. When we have them I usually get up about six (it is dark until 7.30am) and do the cooking, it takes quite a time as our pan (a bottom of a tin) only holds about two chips at a time. The yams were growing on top of a quarry they visited for a load of metal.

Received a great check, had a good look at myself in a mirror today, no wonder they call me Pop. I'm sure I've aged at least 20 years. I look much older than my cobbler "The Champ". I'm afraid Julian will not believe that I'm his father, not his grandfather. As for Mae, I can hear people say "She married him for his money". Ahem. Meals starting to go off, one plain rice meal per day now, afraid the good things won't last much longer.

Just received a wonderful thrill, for the first time since my days of freedom I heard the Air Raid sirens going. When they started up my heart jumped for joy. Afraid its only a practice, but still it was damn fine to hear. The 'All Clear' has not gone yet. The moon is nearly half full and it's a beautiful night for a raid; sincerely hope the next time the warning is sounded it will be for the real thing.

Monday 19th October '42

Received a new pair of boots, an issue sent to P.O.W.s. They are a very nice pair but catch me on the instep. I suppose they will stretch, anyhow I will be off to work in them tomorrow.

The old lady arrived again for rice, and brought half Singapore with her. She contacted the camp by the same manner, only it happened to be another chap who had his embarrassing moment, in fact he had quite an audience. We gave them what rice there was and finished up having to hunt them away. I'm afraid they have killed the goose as it means trouble to both us and them if the Jap guard finds out, which they can't help doing if the crowd of them comes again. No doubt they are hungry but also extremely greedy and fight with one another like Kilkenny Cats.

As thought, the Air raid warning was just a rehearsal.

Dermatitis not too good. Have good measure this time. Still feel a little feverish with violent headache, eyeache and boneache. Also break out in cold sweats frequently.

For the first time during the existence of this camp there are no cases of dysentery, no doubt due to the food. As a matter of fact the sick parades have dropped considerably.

Tuesday 20th October '42

Work in my new African boots, woke up feeling good, headache and all gone, still have this dermatitis but that is also on the improve. Imagine I will be rid of it in a few days, it goes as fast as it comes.

Lorries picked us up at the camp and we travelled about ten miles through places I knew in action, still showing the scars on the land, trees and houses and everywhere are the communal Japanese graves. Had more leisure to notice the magnificent homes, some still showing the battle scars and others recently repaired. Most of these homes house Japanese Officers and troops, they are kept well, especially the gardens which are beautiful, the Flame of the Forest being very prominent in its beauty. We also passed through parts of the Island I had not seen before. The route taken today was a different one to the previous day I am told so I conclude the Jap guards (the most pleasant as yet) are just as anxious for these jaunts as we are, hope they find another way tomorrow.

The work was very hard, digging up water mains in sticky clay ground. The portion we worked on today had been made up since the mains were originally laid and in some places we had to go down over 20 foot and never less than 6 foot, the sides were continually sliding in and some narrow ----- from ----- was experienced. The new Jap guards were very pleasant and did not hurry or harass us at any time, as long as we played fair they were content I felt, so with that I jumped in and worked most of the day and felt better for it.

Our personal guard (that is my platoon) is only a young chap, 22, he was in the army during the invasion and came right down the mainland. I mentioned Gemas, he like the others got very excited, started to explain it, all amongst many boom booms, made signs Australian come forward, Japanese go back (this was a fact but we did not know it until later the Japs retired 7 miles and we lost contact, even if we had have [had] knowledge it would not have made any difference we would still have had to go back on account of the Muar Campaign). He was wounded in the arm, the buttock, he showed me his wound in the arm. He rejoined his Company on the Island the day before Capitulation, things were pretty hot where he was and he was extremely glad when it was over. He does not want to fight

again. The Jap Officer-in-Charge speaks fluent English and all the slang that goes with it. It helps a lot to be able to talk and be understood.

Frog races still going strong being just as popular as ever. The "Narrow-minded News" put out a special sports edition.

Near where we are lifting the water main is a large Kampong and a Chinaman who guards the railway line which runs past told me he was made to do this job by the Japanese who informed him that if anything happens in his area he and the occupants of the Kampong will be executed.

Wednesday 21st October '42

I spoke too kindly of my boots yesterday, today they gave me merry hell, skinned both heels and instep.

Took another new route to and from work, no doubt about some of the beautiful homes. The white master shore (*sic*) did themselves well. The work still hard but the Cooks tours and congenial guards more than make up for the hard work. One of our guards we christened Larry the Pig (we all call him Larry and he revels in it) not from reason of his character but his looks. When he laughs, which is mostly all the time, his eyes completely close. His English consists of three words, to wit, "Good Morning", "Thank you", and "Pop". He uses them at every opportunity. I saw this fellow do today something I have never seen one do before. The usual run of them hunt the Chows and get very annoyed if we give them food, at this place there are a few hanging around for the rice. He saw an old woman, called her over and gave her half his dinner and then told us by signs to give them any rice we had over, then told them no more today, come tomorrow. At least that's what we took him to mean.

More Tommies moved by train northwards.

Black outs start from tomorrow night, our globe misunderstood and blew out tonight, so finishing this in the dark, I mean by the moonlight!

Thursday 22nd October '42

Thank God tomorrow is a holiday. My boots were unbearable, they did everything to me bar cut my throat. The uppers are nearly high enough to do that.

And still another new route: this morning went practically into Singapore proper and passed many places I knew, got a real thrill when we went down Orchard Road and I passed the orchid nursery where I had my gun. Also passed our last position before we capitulated.

The Japanese are not bothering much about the bomb wrecked houses, some have been pulled down but the skeletons of others remain, it cannot be an indication that they expect to lose the Island if that thought was in their mind. I'm sure they would not be going to all the trouble of building the numerous monuments they have and are building neither would they be going to so much trouble to beautify them and the surrounding country. I must give them all credit for the manner in which they

carry out their beautification scheme. The many artistic buildings and bridges which they have already erected will certainly be appreciated for the beauty.

Larry's day off today, we sure missed his cheery "Good Morning" and the accompanying smile. The young guard "Gemmas" told me that he was an N.C.O. but got drunk and had his face smacked very efficiently and lost his stripes. He does not think too kindly of his officer, but we had found him very agreeable.

Came across a Japanese gun position. There were still a few shells lying around, also charge detonators. On examining one of these I found the markings, read Number 154 and the maker's brand, I.C.I Australia. We are sure obliged to the International Chemical Industries Australia Ltd., this type of gun was very effective.

Friday 23rd October '42

Must be big things going on in Syonen judging by the people and soldiers making that way in flag bedecked buses and vehicles. The red dot on the white background being displayed on every prominent position. There is some kind of festival or feast on. One of our boys can vouch for the eats as he pinched some of their cakes yesterday.

Foot pretty swollen if it does not improve by the morning will have to visit the Medical Officer.

Rained like blazes this morning, which it has done for the last three or four, starts later every day, lasts for about 1 ½ hours to 2 hours then the sun comes out and just burns it up. Peculiar thing about this place, the rain water left radiates a terrific heat from the sun.

Humorous edition of the "Narrow-minded News" came out today, will try and get a copy of it.

Still have a few yams left. I usually get up about 5.45am and cook them. It is always dark and I have received numerous complaints re my language. Should have been pay day today but up till now there has been no sign of the Jap paymaster. Probably enjoying his holiday in the true Yankee spirit.

Spent most of the morning going through my haversack, reading over the only letter I have, one from Mae whilst she was in hospital with Julian. I like to read what a wonderful cove I am, it certainly makes me blush. I then look through my photos and read the notes on the back. I do this at least once per week and sometimes more, know every hair on Julian's head.

The Blackout has now been altered to a brown out, but it does not make much difference to our hut as we have no globe.

Our shifting to another camp must be still in the air, have not heard it mentioned lately although the Tommies are still moving north, a load last night and another tonight. Can't be many left.

Saturday 24th October '42

Rained until 9.30am and we did not go to work until 10am. New job. I suppose we would be classified as Stone Masons labourers on the new job which we started, we shift the stones to and from

the labourers who prepare them for the masons and then from the labourers to the masons. It's not a bad job and we seem to have plenty of time to ourselves. The place where these granite blocks are prepared is situated in a very beautiful spot on the edge of the jungle reserve between the Golf Links and the Reservoir, it is practically on the edge of the water. About 50 masons work there and the sounds produced by them reminded me very much, only on an exaggerated scale, of the bell birds. On the whole it is quite a pleasant place and quite a few things of interest. Some of the boys went for a swim in their lunch period. Quite a number of monkeys come down to the edge of the jungle and wonder what it is all about and keep up a pretty consistent chatter. The Nippon army was doing their maneuvers on the Golf Course and we had a bird's eye view. During action very fierce fighting occurred at his spot and the Japanese were driven back three times with terrific losses. We eventually had to abandon the position due to our forces being outflanked from the Indian's position and that is when the water supply was cut.

More Tommies moved north per train today. Rumour has it they are on their way to Bankor [Bankok?] and another one to the effect that the A.I.F. are being shifted to East Africa, a real furry I should imagine.

Jap guards still very amiable towards us.

Sunday 25th October '42

Not as many men as usual required to work, was one of the lucky ones to stay in camp, did my feet much good, they are repairing rapidly.

Chinese women still come for the rice embarrassment worn off eventually and no one takes any notice of them and just go on with the job in hand. The women, if they look, just grin and ask for food, but won't shift from their position.

One of the worst thunder storms I have ever heard this afternoon. When the thunder clapped there was a lot of jumpy men about, lasted for about 1 hour. I, unfortunately, had my washing out and it was soaked through in a second. Prospects of pay arriving tonight. Have had at least three air raid practice alarms per day, hope they cry wolf.

News not so good on the Stalingrad front but other places slow but improving.

About twenty ambulances full of Jap wounded went past this morning and two bus loads of Jap nurses (they always give us a wave and a smile), hospital ship evidently arrived.

My partner and I won our heat in the Bridge tournament, first prize is worth \$1 each, waiting to play another heat.

Monday 26th October 42

Where have all these congenial Nips been all my P.O.W. life? Another new job today, new lot of Nips, they did not worry us just joked and laughed, we had a good day on road building at the Racecourse. Smokes were plenty, we finished for lunch at 12 and they then took us to a marvellous home where there is a beautiful tiled swimming bath, we all went in for a swim in the raw, including

the Nips. We did not start work again until 2.15pm. During the afternoon one of the Jap N.C.O.s came up in a truck where six others and myself were, he told us to jump in. We collected some tools and took them to another job, we got back into the truck and he drove us to another shrine, showed us around and then drove us around the surrounding district, arrived back in time to go home, altogether it was a great day.

If they ever want to rid the Islands of Jap atmosphere they will have to dig up the whole damn Island if they keep on as they are going.

Moon starting to wane, perhaps next time.

Tuesday 27th October '42

Spent the day at Japanese Headquarters with a cleaning-up party. Quite a good job and no incidents. The Jap in charge was very obliging and friendly, he was eager to know my age, whether married, age of my wife, no. of children and age, whether my wife was beautiful, which I assured him she was. Did I like wars, and if I would like to be home. He then told me he was 23, not married, no sweetheart, two brothers, and one sister, he was an Engineer and did not like wars and was very anxious to go back to Japan. His English was very patchy but he was able to write and read English pretty well. This was taught him at school. Japanese hygiene is very bad and they are very careless regarding it, and it is a wonder that disease is not rife amongst them.

One cannot be too careful with his remarks. I received a shock this morning. We were waiting for the Japanese Orderly Sergeant to produce transport for us to return to camp. He seemed to have disappeared so I decided to try and find him. I approached a few Nip soldiers who were standing about and asked them if they had seen him. The Nips appeared dumb and I could not make them understand so walked away remarking 'stupid b_____ apes' and was very surprised when a Nip who was standing near me, I think he was a cook, asked me in perfect English, the time and who I wanted. I explained and he said "Just hang around here for a shake"; he evidently did not learn his English from a book or at school; he did not comment on my remarks, obviously agreed with me as Army Cooks usually have that opinion of everyone.

Received a brown pork pie hat and a singlet, also another tin of milk, the last of the comforts.

Some of the boys went to Changi on a job and met some of the P.O.Ws from Java; Javanese, Dutch, Yanks (one Artillery Battery who only fired six rounds before being overrun and captured); also amongst them were some of the 7th Division. They were taken in Java after only two days fighting, one whole Company being wiped out. They were asked about organisation in the Near East and they replied that in Syria (they also lost a Company there but were in much longer) it was just or nearly as bad as here and that the whole British Army lacks sadly in organisation. We are of the same opinion.

Convoys of ambulances filled with wounded pass our camp frequently. There must be a war on somewhere, unless they contained only sick and not wounded which I very much doubt.

The news from Changi also states that 1100 P.O.W.s sailed from Singapore to an unknown destination. They had all been medically examined by Jap doctors before leaving, under the circumstance it appears as if they are bound for Japan. The Tommies that have been going North by train leave at the rate of 600 per day.

Foot very swollen tonight, saw the doctor who told me to keep my boots off for a few days and stay in camp. Partner and I were cleaned up tonight in the second round of the bridge tournament.

Wednesday 28th October '42

Very lazy day, it rained all the morning so had a good excuse for myself for not doing my washing. Foot still sore but swelling has gone down a little.

Another train load of Tommies just went through, rumour has it they are going to Bangkok to build a railway. The Nips must feel pretty confident to start building railroads.

The practice air raid siren goes frequently during the day and the Japs are pretty strict regarding the taking of air raid precautions, especially as regards transport. They have cars patrolling the roads to see that all vehicles stop during the warning period; sincerely hope they are expecting.

Sickness in our camp in the lowest it has been, no doubt due to the food. I believe there are numerous cases in Changi but a high percentage of the cases are amongst the troops from Java. I believe the A.I.F. cemetery has about 400 graves. When I left there were about 23. I believe the English and Indian are even more.

Salt is very scarce and it is believed that within a few days it will be unattainable in Singapore. Talking to the Chinaman in the Canteen and these are some of the prices asked in Singapore. Petrol \$35 = 5 Pounds Gallon (if procurable). Tooth brush (English or American) = \$10 = 1 Pound. Lipstick (E. Arden) = \$100 = 10 Pounds. Matches 40 cents a box. Whisky \$70 = 10 Pounds.

Thursday 29th October '42

Still unable to work due to sore foot, did some debugging and washing, spent fairly busy morning and lazy afternoon.

We were talking last night on the merits of different nationalities (those in Malaya) as regards work. One of the boys told us of a statement made by a Jap N.C.O. that day which went something like this – Malayan very lazy; Tamil no good, not strong; Chinese very good. English soldier not very good. Australian all smoko, no work. Which reminded me of a Jap on the hill who once told me: English soldier chunkle, chunkle, chunkle, lean. Australian no chunkle, all lean. It is a fact that the A.I.F. have definitely spoilt the eastern labour. When we first arrived there was no such thing as smoko and the carrying baskets were always one per man. Now the Chinks, Tamils, Malayans, Japs and sundry have their smoko and two men or women to one basket. The place will never be the same again as regards labour. The rubber, tin, etc. companies will be sorry we ever came to this country.

Talking to an old Chinaman today and he said that the Japs straight after the Capitulation, herded all the rich Chinese business men and Chinese boy students from the high school, stripped them, then

gave them Coolie clothes, took them to Changi and shot them as looters and they were the hundred we buried at Changi. He said that Chinese were treated that way, a European also told me that some time back.

Serious accident occurred today, a party from the camp went out to collect wood, one of the chaps Corporal Egan of the 2/30 Battalion was killed and another, Private Rogan also of the 2/30, was badly injured when a tree fell on them. They were both taken to a Japanese hospital and Corporal Egan's body was later taken to Changi.

It appears that Egan was not collecting wood for the camp but with a working party clearing jungle for a new road. When this particular tree was to be cut down our chaps wanted to clear the undergrowth and vines before felling. The Jap did not agree but wanted the tree down speedo, and the accident occurred through thick vines diverting the fall and causing it to swing around onto the two chaps.

Friday 30th October '42

Rained most of the morning. Japanese day off but as a certain portion of the road at the Reservoir had to be tarred some of the lads had to go to work. During the lunch period two of the boys rigged up a couple of fishing lines and tried their luck in the dam but were rudely interrupted by a Sikh guard with rifle and bayonet who arrested them, tied their hands behind their back and marched them to the nearest Jap quarters. There were about a dozen Japs fishing just a small distance away. The A.I.F. Officer-in-Charge straight away went after the Sikh and told him off good and proper, the boys arrived back with the Nip officer who told them not to go fishing again unless a Jap is with them. Previous some of the lads have caught some fine fish in this Reservoir during their lunch period.

Received news from Changi that one of the chaps knocked about by the Japs when caught pinching petrol some time ago died in Changi hospital from injuries received.

News from the Pacific very gloomy wish the Solomons were further away from Australia.

Bad attack of the blues the last few days, very cranky and depressed. Will be pleased to get back to work. Can't even make my mind think, just refuse to function. Its hard to even write the few things in this book and as regards the spelling I just can't remember how.

One very lucky man in the camp by the name of Vic Jelliman, a South African by birth, is at present envied by all and I think more or less made us gloomy with jealousy. Yesterday he received a letter from his home in South Africa, over 200 words and not one censored. It was written in June, they came from all over the camp just to see it for themselves; wishing does not seem to get me anywhere as I keep wishing and wishing and no doubt will still keep wishing and wishing.

Saturday 31st October '42

What a glorious sunset, surpasses any I have yet seen, just at present the whole place is being bathed alternative in a glow of beautiful colours, one minute with rose, cerise, then mauve, and at this moment a deep rich violet that you soon feel. Everything is still as death, not a movement on the

road, its the most soothing feeling I have ever felt. I think it is the herald to a black storm. It is times like this that I feel the lack of the ability to paint the picture in words, a poet must get real thrilling satisfaction out of a sunset such as this when words can rise naturally to him where as myself I can feel it deeply but unable to express the feeling and beauty.

Japanese guards having rare sport tonight, catching the boys who do not pay them the compliment as they pass the guard house. Have already stood ten or twelve to attention with their hand up to the salute, for at least 10 minutes, they get that way at times. Other times they take no notice.

Train load of Malayan Volunteers (all English and Australian) passed the camp going north today. I wonder how soon it will be before we follow.

Cigarette issue (Red Cross) today, one packet (10) will be gone by the morning.

Foot gradually improving, should be back at work in a few days, will not be sorry.

Sunday 1st November '42

And so starts another month for what it might bring, surely there must be something just around the corner. By the news, if it can be believed, points to a break in our favour, although it has been so conflicting lately that nothing can surprise. We grasp at any scrap of news that meets with our approval and close our ears to anything we do not appreciate. I'm afraid the ostrich complex is common to us all.

A few weeks previous the number of planes in the sky was colossal, today and for the last week it is an uncommon sight to see even one. Maybe it is a good sign, possibly needed badly at other places, but I felt that whilst they were kept here there was a chance that they would be needed here for defensive purposes. The whole attitude of this place is so consistently baffling, local movements and signs can be taken either for the better or worse. The old Chinaman is full of optimism, it is always with him very soon now, but the patience of old John Chinaman is inexhaustible and very soon to him could be an age to us, they have used those words since the beginning and still use them with the utmost confidence. Still they are Asiatics and they have not my wife and son to go home to, although they are Chinese this is still their home, it is not mine and I sincerely hope, never will be.

From today all water in Singapore has to be boiled before using for any purpose the necessary chemicals used for purifying the supply being unsustainable. How this will affect the local inhabitants is left to be seen. We are taking all necessary precautions and have done so ever since the Capitulation. During action I'm afraid I drank water definitely unfit for human consumption but everything was just a risk then.

The catchment area of the Reservoir was the battleground and very severe fighting and thousands lost their lives in this area, not forgetting the thousands of Chinese who were slaughtered around there, heaps of bleached skeletons and bone can still be found near the banks as sure evidence of an ----- water supply and others told me that it was hardly possible to walk into the jungle surrounding the Reservoir without seeing [bones?] scattered in heaps everywhere .

Our boys from the camp are nearly all on loading gravel at the Quarries and carting to the new roads . They pass the camp frequently, not without passing some loud remarks at the top of the voice. I blush to think that anyone else on the road can understand English.

Only a matter of a few days and we will be back onto the Jap rations of plain rice and very few vegetables, even these rations have been cut since we received the Red Cross issue and there is no guarantee that it will go back to normal. The Jap told the boys that they were giving us a bottle of beer each for Christmas but if any of us got drunk there would be no issue next Christmas: they have some sense of humour, I hope.

Received instructions from Jap HQ that all A.I.F. P.O.W.s were to take care of what warm clothing they possessed as we may need it, a kit inspection has to be made and inventory taken: does not sound too hot to me.

Monday 2nd November '42

Still on the loafing box, expect to go to work any day now, foot practically healed.

Japanese rations arrived today, getting less every time, the food problem is going to be very serious shortly, etc. Only the Red Cross stuff we are living on now and it is due to run out within a few days. Maybe there is another shipment on its way, if so they can substitute my comforts for a letter. The starvation for news from home is mentally worse than the lack of food and the mental aspect has a definite influence on your physical health. Uneventful day, the only thing of interest being the camp concert which was very good. The jazz band together with drums (all home made) excellent.

In the last week three Japanese guards have disappeared into the blue, a search party of Nip soldiers were searching the rubber in front of our camp during the early hours of yesterday morning, someone enquired during the day what it was all about and that is how we came to hear of the guards disappearance. The wily Chinaman at work evidently.

Just heard there are two Chinese with their hands tied behind their backs and a weight of some description somehow tied to their mouth and hanging therefrom, one I believe is standing very erect and the other had collapsed at the post he is tied to. There is a notice displayed over their heads.

Tuesday 3rd November '42

Everything off today, holiday to celebrate the birthday of the Japanese prince, also on this auspicious occasion the Japs issued us with three bananas and 1 bantam egg per man. Just lazed about, played a few games of chess, won two and was well beaten in the third. I'm a very poor player, haven't the patience.

The camp is at fever heat making toys for the children at Changi, boats and ships of all sizes and descriptions, engines, houses, furniture and various other things. I'm giving one of the boys a hand to make a three mast schooner to scale, it is a great piece of work (all his) with every detail.

The two Chinamen are still tied up at the Ford Works, both are now only kept up by their bonds, the weight has been taken from their mouths and instead a large piece of heavy wire is hung around their necks. It rained all night last night and was terribly hot during the day and they are out in it all. If they don't die they are certain to go mad.

Brown Out and air raid practice are still in progress. Singapore was first bombed during one of our practices, the Nip planes came over and were taken to be ours and, of course, only during [dummy?] a.a. fire was used and not until they had unloaded their bombs was it realised that they were enemy planes. It was then too late to bring our defenses into action; they know their onions as also proved in Thailand, Pearl Harbour etc., their craftyness [sic] cannot be under-estimated and I sincerely hope the lesson has been learnt and advantage taken in other seats of war where they are likely to operate.

Wednesday 4th November '42

Still on No Duties, did my washing and spent the rest of the day with my pocketknife making a round ruler and a paper knife from pieces of wood, scrounged from the memorial on the hill. The wood is supposed to be a special kind of Japanese sacred wood. I made the ruler from a piece of the monument erected to the Japanese soldiers and the paper cutting knife from the cross erected to our dead. A Japanese soldier gave one of our chaps a beautiful worked miniature cross exquisitely carved with Japanese characters and also English; the Jap asked the chap to take it back to Australia and give it to the mother of Corporal Egan who was killed by a tree a few days previous. These Nips are very hard to understand, bringing about of [a?] death is nothing to them, but once dead their attitude seems to somersault completely.

Tobacco very light, no signs of pay as yet and it is already two days over due.

Few planes today made their appearance, have been very scarce around here lately.

The two Chinese prisoners at the Ford Works, had gone this morning, most likely died, will try and find out their crime.

Plain rice for breakfast, plain rice with a spoonful of cocoa powder for dinner and vegetable water and rice for tea, back to the cactus. It will be hard to again get used to rice and more rice.

Malaria very bad in the camp, averaging about 6 to 7 cases per day, our camp hospitals are full and overflowing.

Thursday 5th November '42

Twenty two with sore feet sent back to Changi. Rumour to the effect that we are all being shifted North. The reason for shifting the P.O.W.s North is to build a railway from Bangkok to Shanghai. I believe this was attempted once before by the British with the Chinese coolie labour but had to be abandoned on account of the numerous deaths of the coolies; sounds very nice.

Rained most of the afternoon, sat and watched the lorries going by with the P.O.W.s looking like drowned rats; all our boys came home wet to the skin.

Read a very good book this morning "Disenchantment" by C.E. Montague. It is composed mostly of impressions he received last war and he certainly knew his men, Officers, ----- Military doctors, Regular Army men, Old Regular Officers, Staff and Base Officers, and numerous others and he spared nobody.

Four buses of Japanese nurses just passed, look like newcomers to the Island.

Our officers got the wind up as regard our news source and we have been forced to abandon it.

Friday 6th November '42

Japanese day of rest and therefore ours, usual scrubbing out of huts, general debugging, the bugs are not near as numerous now but I don't think we will ever be totally free of them.

The Japanese seem to be very hard up for all kinds of constructional materials, if they want certain pipes for a job and there are none in stock they just dig them up from some other place. They get most of their material by demolishing and collecting from all kinds of places; either they cannot spare the carriage or they are unable to move transport freely or they are unable to produce the article.

Still rumour of the move north and that only the fit are going.

Starting to again feel the pangs of hunger; pay has not yet arrived and we cannot buy yams to add to our meals until it does. Yams have been a great standby to us and many a time helped us to fill the empty spaces. I make a kind of bush gravy if I can get a little fat, I mix ground rice and then burn it, put water in and boil, it makes the difference to the rice not tasting all rice.

Practice air warning sirens going most of last night, they still give me a thrill.

Saturday 7th November 42

Still enjoying a rest with my sore foot although today will possibly be my last.

For the first time in my life I am trying to construct something. I have taken on with my pocket knife and a hatchet the job of building a two mast ketch. After two unsuccessful attempts I have at last made a rough outline, the wood I am using is very faulty and cross-grained with the result if you happen to get careless a big lump falls out, which has already happened twice and all my work gone for naught, but like the spider I tried again and feel very pleased with myself. If I ever succeed I will try to take it home to Julian as the first attempt of his dad's. I received a great shock last night. I was looking at one of the chap's photos. I came across one of his one, I asked him the child's age, when he said 16 months I was dumbfounded to imagine that Julian would be the same size as the child on the photo. My imagination had only made Julian still a baby crawling around and getting into all kinds of mischief instead of a child walking about and appreciating things. God how I wish I could be home for the coming Christmas to receive the thrill through Julian of his first Christmas that he understands.

Still no pay. Everything indicates that things are going to be very drastic as regards food etc., very shortly, even the Nips are beginning to feel it.

A wheel came off a lorry filled with coconuts in front of the camp. The Old Chink threw up quite a number which were thankfully received and dispatched.

Twenty ambulances loaded with what appeared to be recently wounded Japs passed the camp this morning, apparently arrived here by hospital ship.

Sunday 8th November 42

Pay today but short weight. N.C.O.s. receiving one third of what they were entitled, but was able to give the Gunners their full amount; there will be yams for tea tomorrow.

See quite a number of Nips walking about in our Red Cross Issue boots. They must have taken a good percentage for themselves. I suppose a good lot of the other Red Cross issue have suffered the same fate.

Progress on the boat building going very slowly, hands badly blistered from using the knife to hack out the original block of wood. Had numerous setbacks but still sticking to it, one thing about it time does not hang so badly.

Foot not healed right up, maybe a few more days will see it better.

I think the train load of men going north today were A.I.F. Having the wet season, it's likely to rain without warning any tick of the clock.

Monday 9th November 42

After three days of hard work, nerve strain and blistered hands, the knife slipped and the model is no more and did I curse. The trouble now is to find a suitable piece of wood to try again.

A car completely turned around run off the road turned three times over and landed in the drain opposite the camp. The passengers, two Nips and two Japanese girls were knocked about, the girls and one Nip not seriously, they were attended to by our R.A.P., the other Nip looked pretty bad and was taken straight to the hospital.

The Chinese women are again coming into the camp in search of food, regardless of the consequences. It is nothing to be standing under the shower and look out to see a Chinese woman standing there making signs to you for something to eat, or sitting down doing your business and one will tap you on the shoulder from behind with the same inquiries, etc. Something we now just take as natural and go on with the job.

Air activity starting to become prominent again.

What little news we are getting is much greater than expectations and we are all beginning to make hopes again, it's a real tonic.

Meals back to pre comfort days and not even as good as then. Thank God for yams.

Tuesday 10th November 42

Blistered hands very sore, unable to start on another model. Washed and boiled everything I owned that was washable. Paragraph in the "Syonan Times" to the effect that if the British and Americans do not treat their P.O.W.s better than they are at present treating them the Nippon army will retaliate by talking off their kid gloves with which they have been handling us and give us a taste of the British and American methods. This is only an excuse and we take it that they can see the writing on the wall and in their old cultured way are going to take it out on us. We don't mind as long as they are getting something for their corner on the battle front and we expect them to start any time now. They have already started as regards rations etc. They are also decrying the methods used by the allies in West Africa and are painting in their paper a very unhuman [sic] picture of our methods but everybody can see through it and the old chinks are going about with broad grins on their faces and looking very knowingly. We have always been under the impression that our treatment will act as a barometer of their success or otherwise. It's very typical of the Nips, even on the job we are doing.

Just noticed a lorry go past. I wonder if it is a Jap method of humiliation (we don't mind, we haven't any social distinction, unless it is Japs) packed into it were A.I.F., Tamils, Chinese labourers and the sterile Chinese women workers going to some place of work; hope the Tamils don't object. On these jobs there is no sex distinction and the conveniences are crude and used by all, the women included, was a bit embarrassing at first now no one takes any notice.

Wednesday 11th November 42

Armistice Day. We observed the two minutes silence at Retreat, "Lights Out" was played and all stood attention for two minutes. Reveille was then sounded.

Very uneventful day, did some darning to a pair of old sox I found, took me most of the afternoon as the feet were just a mass of holes but still I needed them and they will now answer the purpose.

Rains most of the nights and portion of the mornings then the heat becomes terrific until about 6.30pm. It's very pleasant listening to the rain during the night. Feel I am starting to have a bit of flesh again, must weigh myself again.

Tamils are starting to get very hungry and to complain; this new era is not what they thought it would be and they are now sadly disillusioned.

The Japanese guards now have the beat around our camp illuminated, no doubt brought about by the mysterious disappearance of the three guards some days ago.

Thursday 12th November 42

And still one of the idle class and spent the day reading a book entitled "Juan In America" by Linklater, very interesting book.

Re the sox, I spent all yesterday darning under the impression that the previous owner had discarded them. I was wrong he hadn't discarded them and is now wearing a very much darned pair of sox. I will say this about him, he was grateful for my labour and generosity.

We are running a belated Melbourne Cup Sweeps, five cents a ticket, there will be twenty horses of fictitious names. The three horses will be drawn at the concert on Saturday night and a race broadcast will be made from the stage; the names of the twenty horses and owners will be given and then the description of the race bringing the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd horses into their respective places at the finish of the race. I imagine it will be both novel and exciting, hope I draw a horse.

The rumour alleged to have come from one of the Nippon "Another Red Cross Comfort ship expected shortly". Here's hoping.

Friday 13th November 42

Felt very energetic today, washed the hut out and disinfected it, had a good hunt around for my consistent bedmates the bugs, found only a few.

The boys whilst working at the reservoir saw some crocks swimming in it. They were only about 8 to 10 feet long but big enough. There will be no more swimming by the boys in that reservoir. Those crocks must have had a great banquet during and after action as the Japs tried coming across there in boats, machine guns were posted to cover the area and great slaughter was done by them and it was estimated that some 500 odd Japanese were killed on the water during the attempt. I never did drink any more water than was necessary, my imagination controlled my taste.

Two more skeletons were buried yesterday but [by?] the boys, both A.I.F. Artillery tank coves, one a Lieutenant and the other a Gunner. The Lieutenant was named Henry and came from Victoria, the gunner unidentified.

On the north east corner where the main Jap forces landed there must be hundreds of unburied, not many of our chaps in this area got through and as I have mentioned before, identification will be practically impossible and the majority will be just posted missing.

Blackout on last night and again tonight.

New moon in its first quarter, still waiting for the full moon that I have pinned my faith in.

Killed an outsize scorpion in the back yard, it measured 5 ½" from tail to head and claws as large as a crayfish. I think it came in with some wood the boys brought home, quite a nice passenger.

Saturday 14th November 42

Woke up this morning with violent head and my foot throbbing like a jellyfish, when I looked my heel was festered considerably, most peculiar as when I went to bed it was better and I had visions of going to work today, but typical of this country it happened without any rhyme or reason. Tried playing chess but head and neck ached too much for me to take any interest. All told I had a hell of a day.

Cigarette issue the last, so that was all our comforts. The lack of good food is becoming noticeable, the usual topic of sex has again gone to ground and is a good indication of bodily health.

Don't feel much like going to our usual Saturday night concert but as the Melbourne Cup Sweep is being drawn I'll go just in case the God of Chance might be on my side.

The news we are receiving is nothing less than marvellous, we are all scared we might wake up and find it is just one of our many dreams. Modern wars are impossible to win without air and sea support, it has been proved so frequently during the present war and the allies have paid dearly trying to do so without the support. Modern wars cannot be won by just bluff, manpower, the will to win and no-one appreciates the fact more than we do here, especially when one looks back and analyses the whole show here.

Our troop had the honour of doing the rear guard and covering the withdrawal all the way down the mainland and at the same time acting as decoys to the bombers during the day, we must have decoyed them very efficiently, never one day did they miss us.

Will stroll down to the concert with a silent prayer.

Sunday 15th November '42

Nine months of captivity and it is Sunday the 15th day of the month. Both the day and the date usually have a dead[en]ing effect on our Regiment but up to now nothing has occurred and it has been a most uneventful day.

Well the Melbourne Cup has been run and I did not have the luck to draw a horse but one of our Regiment, Arthur McGum, a Newcastle boy, won the sweep with a Newcastle horse, Rogilla, Waterline and Pamdus. The Broadcast was a great success, very exciting and interesting, it seemed to lift us free for the time. The concert was arranged on the Tivoli or Vaudeville line and was I think the best show to date, everyone excelled themselves and for the few hours we forgot we were P.O.W.s.

My foot has turned into an ulcer and I think will take some time to right. I am sorry about it as I was anxious to go back to work where there is much more interesting things happen than around the camp. There is much, too much, time for thinking and brooding when you have nothing to do manually.

The shipment by train, of P.O.W.s to the north has ceased and up to date there has been no more talk of our camp following those already gone.

Monday 16th November '42

The water taps were turned on in Heaven with a vengeance and the deluge did not ease from early morning to late afternoon, every drain and water course overflowed and everywhere raging torrents rushed along. During this storm our newly dug twelve holer collapsed but as it was much too wet for occupation at the time there were no casualties. It will mean the digging of another which I am sure the boys are not looking forward to with much eagerness.

Rain stopped work so everybody got a lazy day, the beds being favourite.

Quite a considerable amount of fish arrived and I can assure it will be more than appreciated and will do a lot to satisfy the continual gnawing inside for tonight at least.

For the last few days frequent noises of gun fire have been heard, no doubt it is the Nippon registering targets or doing calibration, the report sounds very much like our 25 pounders which they more than likely are, still its nice to know that there are some guns around us that we know something about. One cannot tell how useful they may become at some later date.

I have been thinking a lot lately “what happened”, “which might have happened” and “what might happen” (and I certainly find myself tied up in some fantastic knots at times), even the “what has happened” when analysed sounds mighty unreal and miraculous at times.

Here comes tea, and there’s fish, not as much as I hoped, but still.

Tuesday 17th November 42

Very pleasant day with a nice cool sea breeze blowing. Last night was the first night for a considerable time that it did not rain, not that we mind the rain as it is greatly appreciated for its lulling effect and cooling effect.

Started off with the pocketknife again, at present I am making a boomerang with a Kangaroo and Emu and maps of Australia carved on it. This boomerang will be a present for Larry (one of the Japanese guards) in token of our appreciation. He has endeared himself to us all and I am sure if the tables are ever reversed and Larry was a prisoner in our hands there is not one man amongst us who would not put himself out to befriend him. He is one of those lovable comedians.

There is talk of our being paid tonight and I’ll say we need it. It is also rumoured that everyone receives a 15 cent per day raise, what for, or why, nobody knows, just another incident of the inconsistent Mr. Nip. What we did expect was trouble, anyhow we have not received it yet.

Amongst the rice scroungers I noticed a Chinese woman holding two children by the hand, carrying one in the usual fashion of a sling on the back, another in her arms, and one very definitely somewhere else. I managed to get her a little and I supposed I have let myself into a permanent job. It is a pretty risky business but it was more than I could stand. We have no shortage of rice in fact more than we can eat but it does not, as far as we are concerned, appease.

My partner and I were put out of our heat of the bridge tournament by no lesser light than the Commanding Officer. Not that it influenced us to run dead, they were just a bit too good on the night. News that good that it is greedily gobbled up even by the defeatists, and a wave of wagery is going on as regards the dates and times we will be free.

Wednesday 18th November ’42

Spent most of the day reading and playing chess. Rumour very strong that all P.O.W.s now on Singapore Island are to be shifted to an adjoining island.

Sometimes this P.O.W. business is a great joke, i.e. as regards the severity of our actually being guarded. Last week the guard at the gate was going to his beat, it was raining and he came away from his place just forgetting his hat so he handed rifle and bayonet to one of the boys to hold for him until

he came back. Frequently out on the job the Nips, usually two of them, when everything has started, go to the nearest shack and sleep, they leave their belts and bayonets hanging anywhere at all, the bayonet is the only weapon they carry on the jobs. If the Nol (?) as they call him (the Officer) comes we wake them up and they pretend to be very busy. Of course this only happens with some, others are usually the opposite. The fact remains even if there was a chance to escape there is no place to go, so what the hell!

Pay last night and once the rumour became a fact we received a raise of 15 cents per day. Ate well today, yams bananas and goulash, feel like a poisoned pup, also bought some peanut lollies to satisfy my craving for sweetness. Presume a very nightmarish night will be on the cards.

Thursday 19th November 42

Rumour regarding our shifting very strong, the day being tomorrow, Friday.

Some of the boys came home in great spirits, it appears that after a working party one of our officers had occasion to march past a Sikh guard. The officer gave the usual salute to the guard, but the Sikh was not satisfied, so made them about turn, march back and then come past him again, this was done. But still he was not satisfied and made them go through the whole procedure again. Unbeknownst to the Sikh a Japanese Officer was watching and as the Sikh was about to make them come past him a third time the Jap Officer stepped out, called the Sikh guard to attention, halted the working party, called the A.I.F. Officer over and instructed him to slap the Sikh's face. The Officer was not reticent, and when the working party left the Sikh guard was still on the ground, out, and the Jap officer standing over him grinning. Everyone envies the officer. Evidently the Japanese appreciate the worth of the Sikhs.

Friday 20th November 42

The rumour regarding our shifting camp is no more rumour, it is a fact. We break camp here in the morning and march to another camp in River Valley Road and from the reports it is not a very good one. I believe the River Valley Road camp was built by the Singapore authorities to house the evacuated natives from the mainland. There are no conveniences such as lights, latrines (we will build our own) and showers and from reports received all A.I.F. and English camps are to [be] shifted to this place and that where previously 500 natives lived a 1,000 of us have to occupy. Everybody is more or less in the dark at present as regards the arrangements. The guards are alleged to be Koreans.

Will see what tomorrow brings.

Saturday 21st November 42

River Valley Road it certainly sounds nice, but believe me it does not conform with the name. As I have said before it was erected for the evacuees from the mainland. Poor souls the authorities only concern seems to be that of herding them together and that they must live in the rather well ---- huts, i.e. what remains standing is constructed with atap, admittedly there is plenty of fresh air and incidentally there will be plenty of fresh rain water, the sky being the most prominent view obtained from inside our hut. Luckily it has not rained as yet but I'm afraid there is going to be a lot of fair

dinkum Aussie language broadcasted when it does. The camp is about 8 miles from our previous camp and was a fair march for the boys. I was lucky and procured a ride. At present the camp has about 5,000 personnel which includes Australians, English (very few) Dutch and Javanese. One Dutch trooper -----very pastures green, battle green uniforms.

Ray Finney and Les Shearer are in this camp and came over to see me. They seem to be doing OK and have had very good jobs on working parties; their jobs mostly dealing with the railways.

The hygiene arrangements are much better than anticipated and there are showers and electric lights. I believe the Korean guards are very strict and it is necessary to salute them whenever you pass one or he passes you, if this is not done they do not hesitate to do a little bashing.

Sunday 22nd November '42

And so far the Gods have been good, no rain, so have made a few repairs which might keep a little out and of course things today did not look as bad as yesterday.

Across the road is another camp called the "Havelock Road Camp", it also was built for refugees. A few from our Regiment are there including Cyril Pitchford, one of my gun crew, he came over today (a pass is necessary) and I was very pleased to see him, also some of the boys from K Lumpur, at one time given up as lost, at the Muar.

One of the Dutchmen gave me a small loaf of bran bread, was a few days old, but I didn't mind that, it tasted good. Its a long time since I tasted bread, must be at least 5 months or more.

Met a doctor from 2/29th Battalion; he was in the Muar show, and I was there when he and a handful of men came out at Yong Peng. In fact I gave them all a feed and skinned my gun crew out, it was no trouble for us to scrounge some more. This doctor asked me if I was related to a Cecil Croft a Sergeant late of the 2/29th, he came from Victoria. I told him I did not think so: he was very high with praise for this Sergeant Croft and told me a story which one of their officers, the officer concerned in the story, tells: During the hottest part of the Muar show this officer and another were both wounded in the legs, they managed to get into a truck but as they did a mortar bomb hit the truck destroying it and wounding them again. They knew that they could not get away so they decided to fight it out, eventually they were taken and together with thirty others including this Sergeant Croft, were lined up against some jungle to be shot. The two officers could not stand and were dragged into the bush by the Japs and bayoneted, one being killed and the other left for dead with fifteen bayonet holes in him. The rest were lined up and machine gun turned on them. They were then soaked in petrol and set alight. This Sergeant Croft did not receive a fatal wound but lay still and when they set the petrol alight he crawled into the bush, he was lucky to be on the end and the flames had not yet reached him although covered in petrol. When the Japs moved off he searched around and came to this officer who was still alive and picking him up carried him for two days, eventually leaving him at a Malay's house until he was able to find assistance. That was the last ever heard of this Sergeant Croft who presumably ran across a Jap patrol. The Malays as soon as he left got frightened and took the officer into the bush and left him. He stayed there for four days before he was again picked up by the Japs.

This time they were not a fighting unit and he being an officer probably possessing information they took him back to their clearing station from there he was taken to K.L. and placed into hospital where he recovered and was returned to Changi. The doctor explained that after going through all that at Changi he received a small scratch on the hand and they had a job to save him from dying of blood poisoning and he is still in Changi hospital getting over the effects.

The boys were working on the wharves today loading scrap iron and some unloading stinking fish. I'm still on the crack list.

Plenty of check parades in the camp, maybe it is just for the start, I sincerely hope so, they get a bloody nuisance.

It is impossible to tell the average Jap how something should be done, they have a one track mind and if you try to show them they are wrong they become very annoyed. A case in point happened yesterday on the wharf when a Nip and three Malays were trying to clear the barrel of a 15mm gun which had a shell jammed in it. A couple of the boys tried to advise them but met with the usual result, so they retreated to a safe distance and watched. After a few unsuccessful attempts the Nip got impatient and picked up a crowbar, went to the muzzle and rammed the shell with a crowbar. There was a terrific explosion and the Nippon army is less another man and gun, also the Malayan community is less two Malays and one Malay is less one arm. The remaining Nip on the wharf did a bunk and would not go anywhere near the bodies or the wrecked gun and our chaps had to remove what was left of the bodies and render first aid to the hurt. A similar case happened some time back, the score being fifteen soldiers of Nippon.

Monday 23rd November 42

Still no rain and if our efforts keep it out when it does come the hut will be nice and comfortable. Most of the working parties are working in Jodowns (Bulk stores) crammed with all kinds of foods etc. They are searched any old time and numerous traps are set, such as open cases and odd tins scattered about. I believe this kind of work is somewhat of a torture as for the last ten meals we have had nothing but just plain rice. I believe the previous working parties systematically looted the places and the Nips are not taking any risks with us: still I imagine our coves will find some way if we are kept on the job.

The Dutchies are very friendly with us and come in for a yarn (most of them speak English). There is an undercurrent of bitterness running between the Tommies and the Dutch and neither seem to like each other. If a man was naturally a linguist, this place has certainly an abundance of opportunities, there is Malaya, Tamil, Chinese, Japanese, all types of Indians, and now Dutch and the opportunity to learn all. I could not even learn English correctly and as for Malayan I have been in the country fifteen months and cannot speak that many words. Very good canteen here but like all other canteens they are no good to you unless you have the money to buy with: naturally I'm flat broke and hungry, spent my money on tobacco at the other camp. There is one consolation. Things are that dear it would be only possible to spend my pay on enough for one feed. Still unable to wear boots, but foot starting to improve again.

Tuesday 24th November 42

Vegetables arrived, gave the fatigue a hand to peel them and after cutting the rotten portions out I think we would get about a quarter of the original issue fit to cook. They appeared to have been in cold storage for a considerable time, then taken out and kept until most of them had gone bad, at the best they will only make a very weak vegetable water. The canteen is a very complicated affair. At 6.30pm a convoy of Chinese arrive with bicycles loaded, they despoil their goods with the canteen committee, fix their price and they are then left to the committee who sell them to us for the price asked. One Chinaman who appears to be in control represents the others and transacts all the business with the committee and then leaves. Evidently today's figures etc. are checked by him tomorrow sort of thing.

A working party of 100 worked on the wharf last night, they commenced at 5.30pm and arrived back at 8.00am this morning, 14½ hours, and the generous Jap authorities gave them four army biscuits and a cup of tea. They were ravenous when they arrived back at camp but all there was to offer was plain rice. They were at least given the day off today, but the rest of the camp left at 8am for other jobs and some have not yet returned, it is now 7.30pm. Had a yarn with one of the boys from K. Lumpur, our treatment has been marvellous compared to theirs and some of the atrocities they were forced to witness are unbelievable. One instance being: they were marched from their cells (they were placed in the K.L. jail) lined up in one of the exercise yards, thirty Chinese were brought in, their hands tied by the wrists to one another. The method of untying each Chinese was very simple – an N.C.O. walked down the line with his orders to cut their right hands off at the wrist. Then to show they were great experts with their swords, a party of Nips moved over and placing the point of the sword beneath the Chows eye with a flick of the wrist tossed out their eyeballs, most of our chaps were violently ill. The poor victims were alleged looters which covers a multitude of sins. From lack of food, medical attention, and supplies a large number of P.O.W.s died in this prison.

Just heard that some (not many) very small, high smelling fish had arrived in camp, hopefully they are not too far gone by the morning. I expect they will be unfit even for our consumption.

Wednesday 25th November 42

A grand day to try out the rain resisting abilities of our huts and so far our efforts have been successful. Although it rained that heavy I am sure the Heavenly bladders must have all burst at once very little penetrated inside, admittedly the rain just dropped straight down and maybe when it mixes with the wind there might be a different story.

Foot practically better and have no doubt I will be back in the traces doing my small bit towards the India East Asia Co-prosperity plan within a couple of days.

It was a very strong rumour that the water we had disguised as stew for tea contained meat, but as there was no definite evidence to the fact as far as we are concerned it was just a rumour. There was one point about it, if there was meat in the stew we have been getting meat for the last thirteen meals when we thought it was only water and rice because the taste was exactly similar.

Pay day is overdue and patiently awaited for, and I intend spending mine on bananas which are procurable at the canteen.

One of the lads arrived home from work with both sleeves of his shirt tied at the cuffs, one filled with sugar and the other filled with cocoa. Our first attempt at outwitting the Nips.

Thursday 26th November 42

Very busy day; once again we shifted our quarters and, of course, just when everything was more or less comfortable, and if I know anything about army (both ours and the Japs) this shifting from hut to hut will be a frequent practice until even they get fed up. I will say this, our new hut is much more comfortable and now all the 2/15th Regiment, both Havelock Road and River Valley Road, are now all together, some 200 men. Quite an amount of bashing doled out by the Nips yesterday. Thirty men were lined up; their offense being buying bananas from the Chinks. Each man received cuts across the face with a leather belt. Another chap was forced to hold two quart bottles by his thumb and forefinger with arms extended to the front, he was on the verge of collapsing when they were taken from him, he was then slapped in the face several times and released. His efforts at his work did not please his guard. Cannot guarantee the news we are receiving but what we are receiving if true, is marvellous.

Had fish for tea, mine was as big as Bobbie's goldfish but not as fresh.

Friday 27th November 42

Still off duty but found plenty to do in the camp areas.

Our new position is adjacent to the Canteen and believe me its tantalizing. There are plenty of nice things to buy and someone always seems to be buying, God knows where they get the necessary.

One of the Dutch officers gave a lecture on the Macaulay ----- battle and also the Battle of Java; it was very interesting but like us here air support was nil and the task impossible. He seems to have great respect for the A.I.F. and Navy, but naturally disappointed with the air support available. Their own air force was lost in the first few days and what was left of the British left for destinations unknown.

Received instructions (written) from the Jap authorities which we all think very humorous. It read something like this: If enemy planes (they mean ours) fly over camp; all men must remain in huts, if bombs hit huts, men will leave huts, form up in lines on parade ground. They're telling us there will be no doubt about the leaving of huts, but I would not vouch for the forming up.

Saturday 28th November 42

It's hard enough to get on No Work but it seems to me to be harder to get back on to work. I asked the Medical Officer to put me back as fit for work and he only said, 'Give it another couple of days'. I'm sick to death of hanging around doing nothing and being hungry. I would rather be hungry and doing something. The time passes much quicker but I suppose when I start working the hours a day

and marching up to 5 miles to work and the same distance back on practically plain rice I will be wishing I had stopped on No Work.

Good soccer match between the A.I.F. and Dutch yesterday evening, The A.I.F. won by 1 goal, the scores being 3 to 2, we scored in the last minutes of play. Where the energy to play is derived from God only knows. The evening before the Dutchmen beat the Tommies by one goal, the scores being 2 to 1. I suppose the A.I.F. will play the Tommies next.

The Chinese convoy bringing stuff to the Canteen is just arriving. When I see all the stuff I marvel where the money comes from that buys it all. I believe during action on the Island non-combatants took thousands of dollars from the homes shops etc. when they were evacuated. Our poor old unit and the Infantry were kept too damn busy even to give it a thought, although I understand most of our Headquarters and staff mob did pretty well for themselves and I know some of them have some very valuable things, including jewellery. The gunners lot is a poor one. Told in strict confidence that tonight's tea holds a special treat, to wit, a sake made from rice meal and sugar and boy can I wait for tea and that sake; my mouth waters as I write about it. Made a new bed and it was worth all the trouble, can now dream of home in comfort.

Sunday 29th November 42

Tomorrow I work. Did a few small jobs around the camp and at the Japanese guard's house today. Did not know there were so many marvellous homes around the camp area until I went out today: The Nips know how to do themselves well as regards accommodation, only the best for them. I was lucky to strike an agreeable Nip on the job who kept me well supplied with smokes.

Meat arrived in camp today but very little of it. Hope we have some for tea. Most of the boys arrived home early, some were lucky the Japs gave them their dinner.

Monday 30th November 42

Left camp at 8.30am for trucks and conveyed to the sorting depot about 5 miles away. There we were split into working parties of the desired number. I was in charge of 14 men and together with a Nip guard we were marched to our job, which was on the wharf about 2 to 3 miles away. At the wharf we were handed over to the Nip in charge of the Godown who motioned us to sit down which we did not hesitate to do, and believe me it is one of the things we can do properly. We sat there until about 11.30am congratulating ourselves on the luck of our draw. At 11.30 am the Nip called me over, told me to form the men up in two ranks inside the Godown which I did. He then made them right dress and gave them a little drill, speaking Nippon Go. All this time the boys more or less understood what he wanted and I think he was that surprised and pleased with himself he decided to put the boys through their paces at P.I. After much manoeuvring he finally got them in the required positions and very seriously began his instructions and still in Nippon Go. One of the boys decided it was very funny and burst into laughter, the Nip was grossly insulted (probably the first time he ever tried his hand to commanding men), he flew into a black rage, rushed over to the chap and slapped him across the face four times. I called out to him and he turned with a snarl and I thought it was on, anyhow he controlled himself and gave us P.I. for an hour, and we then had our plain rice for lunch. After lunch

he regained his face, he set us to work and believe me it was work, no wharf laborer or Coolie ever worked harder. We carried and lifted 250lb bags of phosphate for three solid hours without a spell. Altogether we stacked 500-odd bags, we were then marched back to camp about 78 [7-8?] miles. The Nip guard riding a bike. I don't think there is a square inch of skin left on my heels. Plain rice for tea did not help matters. And so ends my first day of working parties at this camp. I'm not looking forward to tomorrow.

Most of the jobs are not assessed by the boys by the amount of work, but by the amount of food that can be scrounged for their lunch. No matter how hard they work, if there is a tin of something going about for their lunch it is considered a good job.

My little section appears to be lucky in one way. The Nips just arrived and asked for the balance of the working parties' tea, they are going to take it out to where they are working, looking like an all night job but at least we received some compensation.

Tuesday 1st December 42

Another hard days work clearing a Godown on the wharf, of merchandise left by the British, and there is some, and transferring it to another Godown about 7 miles away. Again there was no presents, as the Nips call it when they give us anything, unless biffs, slaps, bangs can be classed in that category. They handed plenty of those out, mostly to chaps caught helping themselves. There was a funny incident. A Sergeant Donker and another helped themselves to a new pair of trousers each, throwing their old ones away. They were not caught in the act, but the Nip guard noticed them whilst marching back to camp. Luckily not far from the gate. They both received a few slaps in the face and were made to take off the trousers and as neither had shirts there they were all dressed up in boots and hats and that is how they marched to and into the camp, much to everybody's amusement, including the locals.

The boys that worked late last night did not arrive home until 4am this morning, they got the day off but had to go to work at 7pm tonight. The Nips fed them well during the night so they did not mind going again. Seeing quite a lot of Singapore and its life, so far don't mind being on the working parties.

Still the inconsistent Nips. The night working party dressed and formed up and ready to go and were then told to break off as they were not needed, would not surprise me if they were dragged out of bed later tonight.

Wednesday 2nd December 42

Well the day arrived bleak and wet boding an evil day or so it seemed to me, only three men were required from each section to go to work and I happened to be one of them. We started the day off by marching to the job, a matter of about 7 miles, my feet gave me sweet hell. The job was one the wharf and I no sooner arrived than a Nip called me over, pointed to a tub containing washing ---- washes. I was on the point of refusing but thought better and went to the tub. Much to my surprise the Nip said 'presents' and gave me three packets of 20 cigarettes. The washing turned out to be three

brand new crispy sheets, obviously stolen goods, all I had to do was wring them out and put them out to dry which I did and pocketed the soap. From then on I just sat on my tail and ate. There was nothing to do and as the Godown was full of food, some of which the boys relieved them of. The fare consisted of bully beef and beans, tomato and rice, mangoes, pineapples, biscuits and plenty of sugar. Of course the old old story about the pitcher that went too often to the well, one of the boys was caught in the act and received a minor belting with no ill effects. I don't think the Nip guards minded so much as long as they did not see us. Naturally we were searched before we left the docks but had prepared ourselves first and nothing was found. Actually it was a very half-hearted search and we marched back to camp everybody happy and the job assessed a good one. Afraid I will have to go to the Medical Officer with my feet again. Big concert on tonight, should be a good one with over 5,000 men to produce the artists.

Thursday 3rd December 42

Back with the non-working class. Foot very sore and looks like the sores turning to ulcers.

The camp was graced by the presence of a Japanese General this morning and we were instructed, or I should say informed, of the correct procedures necessary for when the gentleman passed us. Did not see him, but the blaring of trumpets etc. indicated that he was somewhere in the vicinity.

Called on a working party last night to go to the docks. The jobs was loading bombs (against all International Laws for P.O.W.s). One of the Nips informed the boys that the bombs' destination was Australia, but one of the boys indicated that their destination was more likely the bottom of the ocean which annoyed the Nip and put him in a bad humour for the rest of the night. The Japanese do not recognise International Law. There is some talk of being paid, it is now much overdue and urgently required.

Friday 4th December 42

Quiet day without incident. Did my washing and repairing and then did my Malayan P.I. and can now look forward to a sleepless night.

There has been quite a large number of bashings going on the last few days with the result that a fair percentage of the boys are unfit for work, most of the beatings were brought about by the boys helping themselves to anything that can be sold or eaten. Food still very bad although tonight we had fish with our rice, but most of the fish were only about three inches long and practically impossible to eat owing to the numerous small bones. The ration is one fish per man. Pay has not yet arrived, and my mouth waters every time I look at the canteen.

One of the working parties just arrived home. They had a pretty torrid time. It appears that one of them was caught pinching a packet of cigarettes, the Nips lined them all up (40 of them) and slapped their faces with a strap then belted them with a cane rod. They then took the chap they caught with the goods, placed a bolt between his fingers then twitched his fingers, no doubt would have broken them only the officer stepped in. Their wrath was then turned onto the officer and he was beaten around the knees causing them to ----- . The incident was reported to the Jap Headquarters by our

officer and one of their Majors inquired into the cause, the outcome being, so we are told, that the Nip guards will be punished. I have no doubts that working us in these Godowns and warehouses is a Japanese form of humour. They know the men are half starved and the Japs must appreciate the great temptations that are fronting us in the form of food etc., the cases etc. being left open displaying their contents, of course temptation is too great. Some of course get away with it, but it is inevitable that someone gets caught and their method seems now to be if one is caught all receive the punishment.

Saturday 5th December 42

Very dull and cold day with light rain falling at intervals; spent the day indoors mostly reading.

Just witnessed a sample of Japanese temper. The canteen convoy arrived at the canteen, one of the Nip guards noticed a bulge in one of the young Chinese pockets, he made him turn them out and the bulge only proved to be a crumpled newspaper. The Nip, disappointed at not finding something illegal, slapped the Chink across the face then made him salute and bow, then handed out another slap and then the procedure was gone through again. This happened three or four times and the other Nip guards were attracted and came over. It is a peculiar thing and I have repeatedly noticed that when one starts bashing the others cannot contain themselves and they start, usually with some ferocity. This happened today and the little Chink finished up with the four giving him a real thrashing. I felt pretty bloodthirsty. I'm sure the other chaps in the camp felt the same way. I hope for our own sakes they take us away from them when and if we get on top. I shudder to even think what will happen and feel sorry for the very small percent of good ones. I think our chaps will be just as vindictive as the Chinese and I cannot see either being controlled.

The Dutchmen received their first pay since being a P.O.W. (8 months) today, the amount being \$1 which works out about 12 cents per month. 12 cents equals about 4^d of our money. Generous Nippon. We have not received ours yet.

Boys just arrived home, very wet and uncomfortable. I was able to cheer them a little with the information that there is meat stew for tea. Some of the boys saw two very pleasing sights today, one being a Jap Oil Tanker anchored in the stream blow up and catch alight. They say she was badly knocked about and a bomb had hit her. Luckily for the crew and troops the bomb went through the deck and out the side above the water line. She had landing barges on her so apparently she had intended sending troops somewhere else than Singapore.

Yesterday when the working party came past Jap Headquarters near the City jail two Chinamen were tied to a tree. They were still there tonight when they passed, both seemed unconscious.

Sunday 6 December 42

The coldest day I have experienced in Malaya. It rained all last night and all day. It was pitiful to see the men going to work this morning, some in clothes wet from yesterday, some without shirts and all looking forlorn and miserable. It was pouring with rain when they marched out and most of them had a 5 to 6 mile march in front of them. They are not back yet and I imagine when they do return they would need more than plain rice which, worse luck, is all that is waiting for them.

Air raid siren going consistently during the day, no doubt it was practice, although we had not been informed, which we generally are. The "New World" a former place of entertainment, very popular with the troops before the war, is situated only about half a mile from this camp. It was reopened last night and the music etc. was very audible; served to agitate the feeling of being a P.O.W. Perhaps it is just a coincidence but I think not, around this 'New World' the number of white kiddies around the ages of 12 and 18 months playing around the native houses are surprisingly numerous and, of course, caused quite an amount of comment from the boys as they march past, as I said, before the area as very popular with the troops.

Have not heard any outside news for a considerable. Expect the furies will start as they usually do when requests of news is available ... *(rest of page unreadable)* ...

Monday 7th December 42

Getting the rainy season with a vengeance, has not stopped raining for three days and nights. This camp is like a quagmire and is practically impossible to walk outside the huts. The chaps again looked a sorry picture this morning, 12 hours per day, soaking wet all the time and practically nothing to eat but rice and what they can scrounge, which is now very little. The Nips have tightened up the last few days. I can't see how they can keep it up, their systems are not sound enough to keep it up much longer. I don't know whether the Nips are beginning to appreciate the fact, but for some unknown reason meat arrived in today which is unbelievable – meat twice in three days.

It is twelve months today, or I should say late tonight, that we left Tampin, all excited and ready with our mortars for anything, but never expecting or imagined in our wildest moments that the anything would eventually mean this; P.O.W.s in the place we came to defend. Eighteen months of solid training to fight for not five weeks. Still Dud Munro did the same for one hour's fight and quite a number longer or less, but the difference is that we still have our life and body and are still capable of carrying on, only fate and the Air Force and the Malayan Campaign were against us and with the help of the Japanese here we are. Foot improving very slowly, lucky to miss the uncomfortable working conditions the boys are now suffering.

Tuesday 8th December 42

Overcast day with intermittent rain and sunshine. I have tried to dry some of the chap's clothes which has kept me busy all day between bringing them in when it rained and putting them out again when the rain stopped.

Twelve months today since the Japs declared war and twelve months since we took mortars at Hospital Hill, overlooking the Kulang [Kluang?] Aerodrome. Luckily we moved from that position after a few days to another but not before 5th Columnists had reported our being there. When we experienced our first air raid some few days after leaving Hospital Hill (the move was brought about by our receiving 25 pounders Trailer Guns) the position we had previously occupied was severely bombed and a direct hit was scored on my late mortar position and ammunition dump. I slept by myself alongside the dump to save extra sentry duties. This raid also brought about our first A.I.F. casualties and also our Regiment. Another raid followed a few days after the first but in this raid the

aerodrome received most attention whereas the first raid Hospital Hill was their target, although a few bombs were dropped on the drome. Three Jap planes were brought down by a. aircraft guns during the second raid it was very exciting and I had a grandstand seat. We more or less looked forward to the raids then but later on when we had to put up with them at length, twice a day and sometimes three, with casualties becoming more frequent, we dreaded them and their nerve wracking effects.

I understand that the camp's interpreter (an Englishman) went to Jap Headquarters today and complained and protested against our treatment as regards food, severity of work, and the ill treatment meted out by the guards. Results unknown. Yesterday at one Godown the Nips made the working party burn two bags of slightly damaged cigarettes, no one was allowed to take cigarettes. They were burnt. The working party were searched. This has also happened with food stuffs, most of it being quite good for consumption. Just another method of torture in a slight form. Sometimes the boys can outwit them, but they pay for it if caught.

Wednesday 9th December 42

Started raining in earnest again last night and has not let up. The whole place is damp and uncomfortable with a very prominent smell of wet clothes and boots everywhere, and I can assure you in a hut with approximately 200 men packed into it the odour is anything but pleasant, especially due to the fact that the water to the showers has been cut off for some unknown reason the last two days.

Nips swooped down on the camp last night and made a thorough search of a row of huts. What they expected to find we do not know. I don't think they found anything of consequence. I'm inclined to think it was one definite object, or maybe it was just to scare us from bringing anything into the camp.

Meat again today, it may be possible that we are to receive it every second day. I sincerely hope, actually the amount per man is very little nevertheless it is a great help. Our Interpreter's efforts might have borne fruit.

I suppose Rose, Mum, Mrs. Champ and all the families are beginning to worry over the Christmas shopping. I wonder what I would have brought Mae and Julian if I had have been home. Never mind, this time next year I hope to be doing my bit of worry. Christmas shopping always had me beaten.

I'm positive if I read back all the things I have written and see for myself how they are written I would destroy them, but as I have written them for Mae and the family and as they already know what a dunce I am at spelling English and Composition, they possibly can bear it. Most of it is just rambling probably without rhyme or reason but that is how I feel most of the time.

Still no pay, cigarettes needed badly. Candidly I don't know what I would do if we were unable to smoke, since that is the only thing we are allowed to enjoy.

Thursday 10th December 42

Rain with the impression that it will never stop; the only thing it does not effect is the work. The working parties still have to go. It will be a miracle if the majority of them don't get pneumonia or

something just as bad. Boys just arrived back looking very washed out. During the day some of them found a few sacks which they split open to put around their shoulders. This did not please the Nip in charge so he lined out the men on the job, some thirty-odd, and with a belt slapped all their faces a few times. They had a good feed, unknown to the Nips, so they did not mind very much. Just as well they did as there is only plain rice for tea.

Friday 11th December 42

Glorious sunshine and a beautiful day. Clothes and boots drying everywhere. Jap guards just arrived to collect the working parties' tea, after working all day they have now to work all night. At least their clothes would have dried on them today. I'm sure the boys will not fancy their tea of rice and vegetable water, and I mean water. I believe they are loading rubber at the Docks.

The Dutchmen have all been examined by a Jap doctor, and it looks as if they are due to move to some unknown destination. They are great coves and we are all sorry that they are leaving the camp.

Still no pay, but I believe there are prospects: here's hoping anyhow. Have started a River Valley Road P.O.W. Masonic Club, already there are fifty members; Lieutenant Colonels, Majors, Captains, Lieutenants, N.C.O.s and just plain soldiers. The W.M., who also controls the club, is drawn from the hat, his term lasts two meetings. Of course I had to be the one drawn and I took over last night; thought I might muddle the show, but notwithstanding the quality of the members surprised myself by putting on a fair show and receiving quite a few congratulations. I made the longest speech and a spontaneous one I have ever made. I sure gave myself a shock.

Weighed today, not putting much on. Turned there at 10 stone 11 pounds and if I feel as hungry as I do now for long I can see 9 stone looking me in the face.

Foot not quite better yet anxious to get out again, there is a chance of getting a 'feed' now and then when working. No smokes. I'm getting cranky and irritable.

Saturday 12th December 42

Rained like blazes all day and once more the place is a quagmire. Working party did not arrive back at camp until 10am, 26 hours of hard work, and all they received for refreshments was a cup of tea and all they received for breakfast when they returned was plain rice. No wonder everybody is irritable, especially being bashed and b_____ around by the Japs and then come back to be b_____ around by some of the officers who sit on their tails all day and then break out in the real regimental style. It's pretty disgusting and does not lessen the burden the chaps have to carry, especially the working parties. Most of these officers were not heard during action and are just trying to bluff away the contempt that the men have for them.

Pay at last arrived. I received \$1.60, could not buy any tobacco so bought some cheroots. Not bad smokes and clear smoking. Was presented with a Craven A cigarette today. I did enjoy it.

Dutchmen leaving tomorrow, gave them a farewell concert tonight. They have certainly taken to us. I suppose it is because we don't bar the coloured ones colour. They can all swear in the good Australian manner now and delight in doing so.

Sunday 13th December 42

Nice sunny day but raining tonight. Some of the boys in the working party got amongst the food today, mostly chocolates, sweet biscuits etc., quite a few belly aches around the camp. Native population have entered a protest against the using of P.O.W. labour at the docks and elsewhere. They claim our use is depriving them of any chance of living, which is quite true. We won't be sorry if something is done about it. They can have our job with pleasure. Expected a visit from a Jap General, cleaned the place up, spick and span but the visit did not eventuate.

Dutchmen have not left yet. They were given no reason although they were ready to move. Just heard that conscription has been declared in Australia. I don't feel like making any comments, but I'm sure it must be necessary when a Labour Government will sanction it. Lousy tea, makes me sick to even think of it, even the tea to drink was awful.

One of the other working parties just arrived back, some of them badly knocked about. The Nips having a new method of dealing it out. They bashed them over the head first and then kicked them in the shins; the officer with this party also participated in the dishup. No-one seems to know why the blitz was put on, they were working in a warehouse packed with personal gear such as linen, silver, ornaments, clothes etc. belonging to evacuees from Malaya, apparently they were unable to load the stuff on the ships. I believe there was some marvellous stuff and the Nips had just broken open the cases and strewn the stuff all over the place. Quite a number of the late owners names (those going to Australia) were noted and some of the boys intend contacting the people after the show just to let them know what happened and the owners may be able to submit claims.

Monday 14 December 42

One of those exceedingly pleasant days, much like a beautiful Australian summer day. The kind of day that brings back memories. I can see the Champ roving around doing something just to be doing. Mae up to her eyes in a good book. Mrs Champ and myself down the back looking at the garden, verbally con----- the old flash (???) run, knowing well that talking about it would be all that would materialise, still thoroughly enjoying ourselves. Anyhow if it did materialise it would spoil the pleasure of going there and visualizing. Our dreams would be then shattered by the voice of the Champ, only two words "Could you ?" and we always could. I can taste them now. Oh for those days to come again with the added thrill of Julian's presence. I wonder how the roses are at home. Dear old Mum probably looking at them and think all sorts of things and worrying herself grey.

Talking today to a young chap of the 2/19th. He is 15 and his 16th birthday falls two days before Christmas Day. He was an eye witness of the Alexander Hospital massacre, being in the Hospital with a bullet in the knee at the time. It appears the Indians were driven back in the area and thoughtlessly mounted a machine gun in front of the Hospital buildings, after firing some rounds they dispersed and ran through the Hospital. The Japs rushed in with bayonets and bayoneted all the men

out of bed, doctors, orderlies, and patients, also numerous bed cases and a doctor, orderlies and a patient on the operating table. The doctors and orderlies were performing an operation at the time. A Japanese officer at last got control, stopped the bayoneting but all the patients left were examined and those thought to be fit were killed. They prodded this young chap's bandages with a rifle to see if he was genuine. The Indians had a bad habit of running to hospitals. They mounted an Anti Aircraft gun near the Cathay which was used as a Hospital. The Japs ranged onto the place with their guns and twenty eight patients and some nurses were killed. Actually the Japs could not be blamed for these incidents under the circumstances and they apologised for the "Cathay" affair.

Dutchmen still here, they have taken to the Australian game Two-Up like ducks to water.

Working party that arrived back just now look a funny sight. They have been working in a flour store, carrying out bags of flour presumably to be shipped away. They were covered in caked flour due to their sweating.

Tuesday 15th December 42

Rained all last night and all day today, place again impossible to walk on. Paid a visit to the dentist and had a tooth temporarily filled. I was not sure the tooth had a hole in it, the dentist thought it might have. The upshot is it has a rather large one now and I'm not sure that he did not do a little boring for boring's sake. It was not giving me any trouble and I only went to him for a check up.

One of the working parties worked until 9.30pm last night loading bags of coffee. 250lb bags. They had to be carried on the shoulder for about 20 yards and then stacked 16 bags high. I have not seen men so tired and worn out. They marched to work and again marched home, a matter of about 6 to 7 miles each way; it is impossible to keep this rate up on the nourishment we are getting, the sick list is increasing daily.

Meat stew for tea. The meat consisted mostly of fat that floated on the top in lumps. It was a bit rich for our stomachs and quite a number of us could not hold it for long. Food not better yet, will take a few more days yet.

Wednesday 16th December 42

Most uneventful day, only small working parties called for and they turned out easy jobs. It may be a forerunner to the abolition of P.O.W. labour. I'm afraid if this happens we will be shifted to a concentration camp away from Singapore.

Marvellous stew tonight, meat, liver, heart and tripe. It was very rich and tasty and satisfying. Feet nearly healed, the doctor wants me to try to get a job in the camp, he seems to think my feet will not stand up to hard usage, the skin being too tender. I might prefer to go out if possible, it's at least interesting, provided there is no bashing. I don't snitch anything as the stuff is not worth the possible results and risk of disablement.

Thursday 17th December 42

Japanese General made an inspection of the camp and the men (those unable to wear boots excluded and confined to their huts, suited me). The inspection took a couple of hours and, of course, during that time the men had to stand on the Parade Ground. Several collapsed, it was extremely hot and quite a number on the parade were sick men just getting over fever attacks.

Started to write as much as can remember of my experience in action. I will take it day by day, most everything still stands vividly in my mind, it's something to do, I probably won't finish it, like everything else I start to do, but if I happen to it might interest Mae and the families. The kids might get a thrill out of it.

Up to the present the Japs have turned down our application for a holiday on Christmas Day, but they may change their minds, anyhow I don't imagine they will hand out any Christmas presents.

After the Lord Mayor's Carriage come the _____, that applies to tonight's tea, b_____ horrible, the rice was even sour and the dishwater impossible.

Friday 18th December 42

Appears yesterday's parade was only a rehearsal and the Jap officer the Commanding Officer of this camp. Today the big parade was on. The men were lined up at 9.15am, on the Parade Ground, counted, checked, relined, inspected and generally b_____ about. At 12.30pm amidst much blowing of trumpets the General (Jap) in Charge of P.O.W.s Malaya put in his appearance followed by his many staff officers and body guards. He came onto the platform especially erected for the purpose, asked the number on parade and working, returned the salutes and went home. 2 minutes in all but 3½ hours for the poor P.O.W.s. Huts and surroundings had been fine tooth combed but he did not condescend to so much as glance in their direction.

Attended the Masonic Club again last night, my last night as W.M. The Club has grown to 75 members last night including a couple of doctors. Managed the job and was again complimented. My successor is an English Captain by the name of Pickersgell and a very decent chap.

Saw some soap come into the Quartermaster's Store. Hope it is for issue as it is badly required. Heard that some meat also arrived, it's always welcome. Also liver which will be very acceptable. Beri Beri starting to take hold again, twelve new cases in the Regiment this morning. The Red Cross Comforts practically cleared it up before but there does not seem much prospect of us receiving any more. I have given up all hopes of receiving any word from home, don't expect even a card.

Just been informed that tomorrow will be the last day that P.O.W. working parties will be used and the whole camp will be going back to Changi at the rate of 1,000 per day. I expect to be one of the party leaving on Saturday.

Saturday 19th December 42

Saw what I was just going through very humorous, actually it was degrading, but I still had to smile, and so did some of the participants which only made matters worse for them. The usual Chinese convoy with goods for the canteen arrived and the usual crowd of P.O.W.s waiting at the canteen for

their arrival. With the Chinks arrived the Korean guard, no one took any notice of him and no salutes were thrown his way, it seemed to offend his dignity somehow so to regain face he hit a Dutchman over the head with the butt of his rifle. Still no salutes although he was making enough signals to show what respect was due to him. This had an irritating effect on him so he decided on a regimental and mass salute. By the [this?] time a few hundred had vanished but he managed to collect some twenty odd, lined them up in threes, pulled out the end man and signed to him to salute. He did not keep his hand up and did not cut the salute in a soldier like manner, so the Korea[n] slammed him one across the face and instructed (another Dutchman) to go along the line and slap the faces of the men lined up. The vim once again was lacking so he showed the Dutchman how it should be done using the Dutchie's face for demonstrative purposes. He called out another chap, instructed him what to do, his efforts were also a very poor show so another called out with the same results. This went on for or five times and at last the Korean gave it up as a bad job and did it himself. Although naturally the chaps concerned spoke of the Korean in other than endearing language, they could not help seeing the funny side and all had a good laugh after the show.

Picked up a cold and doing quite an amount of coughing. It is a peculiar thing, the consistent cough I had back home left me after being in this country a while. I've often wondered why. As we are leaving this camp shortly we have decided to have our Christmas dinner tomorrow. It will be composed of some of the Red Cross stuff saved for the occasion and as there is no telling how our organization will be affected with the move, we think it a good idea to have it while we are all together.

Sunday 20th December 42

Dutchmen moved out, presumably to embark on a ship for an unknown destination. It is rumoured that 1,000 Englishmen from Changi go with them. As far as I know up to the present we move out on Tuesday. Pay day, but impossible to get near the canteen, there was a crowd there at 3pm and it does not open till 5pm.

Christmas (in advance) Dinner a great success. In fact, dined well all day as per menu.

Breakfast	porridge, rice with sugar and milk
Lunch	Meat and vegetable pastie with rice. Cocoa and sugar to mix with rice for Sweets.
Dinner	Rice, bully beef rissole, baked sweet potato and tomato sauce. Date pie with sauce.

We made the best of it as it will be a long time before we will be able to repeat it.

Monday 21st December 42

Move out to Changi tomorrow, leaving at 9am. Transport will be supplied for 7 miles, the balance, about 12, will be marched. Transport for our gear to Changi has been arranged and personnel like myself who are unable to march will go with the luggage. There is a Tommy soldier in the camp who can be seen every day at 7pm standing in the grounds watching and waving to a woman who also stands on a vacant piece of ground at the same time. She is his wife, no doubt Eurasian. They cannot

talk to one another, only look and wave from a distance of 300 yards. I'm glad my wife and baby are in Australia.

A few nights ago two notorious low heel thieves belonging to the 2/29th were caught stealing the food from their Battalion's kitchen. The men beat them up, then threw them into a slimy muddy creek which runs on the boundary of the camp. They did not benefit by the experience and last night they were caught in a Jap Godown near the camp. One had a bayonet stuck through him and died this morning. The other was taken away by the Japs. They paid dear for their greed.

Tuesday 22nd December 42

Back at Changi and of course it must rain like blazes just as we set out. I got soaking wet, so did all the gear etc., so it was a pretty uncomfortable shift. The place has not altered and it is hard to realize that [it] is about nine months since we left and I hope it is not another nine months before we are able to leave the place. The trip out I enjoyed, notwithstanding the rain. We came by a route I had not travelled before. It took in the waterfront where most of the wealthy Chinese, Malayans and Indians live. There are some gorgeous homes with their quaint figures and gargoyles and also the picturesque tiles that they seem to have all around the fronts and walls. Received a great thrill, and if anyone had told me that I would be as thrilled as I was over the incident I would have called them a liar. I was riding on top of one of the baggage trucks, a lorry passed and sitting in the back was the first white (real white) woman I had seen since K. Lumpur, over twelve months, she smiled, saluted and threw me a kiss. I saluted and threw her one back, and felt thrilled to the teeth. I assume she came from Changi and was evidently allowed out to buy for the people there, something for their Christmas, at least that is what I assumed. She was blonde and very English looking.

Our quarters are not very comfortable and my imagination has run riot and I can feel the bugs crawling on me already.

Wednesday 23rd December 42

Spent the day walking around the area. There is no doubt it is a beautiful place made doubly so by the exotic perfumes from the numerous flowering shrubs and trees. Received [Reviewed?] an exhibition of paintings and black and whites by the Official War Artist, Mr Murray Griffen. They are excellent, some being superb, they were put on canvas ... (*unreadable*) ... say them and some of the paintings are exceedingly gruesome but true. One thing about Changi now which struck me, the number of limbless soldiers and crippled ones. Of course when I was last here they were still in Hospital, but now they are starting to get around. I suppose it will be a few days before we have settled down here properly and there is always the possibility of being moved around.

Thursday 24th December 42 (Christmas Eve)

Here I am thousands of miles from home when I should be a loving and proud father and husband receiving the thrill of [being?] a Father Christmas. I know that the job I am unable to do will be done by loving and capable hands of all those I love at home and that makes it much easier. I wonder what Daddy Christmas will bring Julian and how he will appreciate his first understandable Christmas? I'm too hungry to torment myself by visualizing what will be on for dinner and all I can do is wish

Mae, Julian, Mum, Dad, the Champ, Mrs Champ, Eileen, Lottie, Jim, Verge, Rod, Lex, John, Robin, Bobbie and all my relations and friends a 'Happy Christmas'. Wonder where Pack is? Hope he, Margory and the boys pay their usual Christmas visit.

At one time I had great hopes of being home for this Christmas; perhaps next Christmas. From now on I hope to never grumble about my lot again. After visiting the Convalescent Depot today, seeing the poor b_____, some with one leg some with half and some with none and the same applying to arms and to find there the happiest coves of the P.O.W. camp, it makes one realise just how lucky chaps like me are and what little we have to complain of and I felt ashamed; what they have had to suffer and what they have yet to suffer and my lot being just a temporary inconvenience, there is no doubt they are the ones with that A.I.F. spirit so spoken of.

Friday 25th December 42

Christmas Day at Changi P.O.W. camp and I pray the last Christmas Day I will spend here. Today was declared a holiday and sports of all descriptions were arranged which made a nice day of it, but I'm afraid did not erase the thoughts of home which were persistent and continually in my mind.

Now for the days menu:

Breakfast	rice (not much) and spoonful of sugar
Dinner:	half dish rice and tablespoonful of white -----
Tea:	Rice, bully beef hash (not much bully) spoonful of cocoa and sugar

It was not much but went down alright. We had no grumble as we had already had our Christmas meals a few days previous. I believe a good concert has been arranged for tonight.

Saturday 26th December 42

Boxing Day and a real Boxing Day programme of sport. I was one of the lucky ones not on duty so was able to attend two extra good games of football one our camp and combined English and 7th Division A.I.F. Rugby League. The comb. team winning by 35 Nil. Our camp put up a great show but conditions beat them. The second match was between England and Scotland, soccer, it was a wonderful game although the Englishmen outclassed the Scotties by beating them 6 to Nil. The Scotties missed scoring to bad luck three certain trys. The pipers and drums were there and led the Scotties on to the field and the English came on to the sounds of trumpets and bugles. I did not see the finish of the match and had to leave early or miss the Mess Parade which although only plain rice on the menu food is that scarce rice is even popular. Our three meals today consisted of plain rice and not much of that. Have seen quite a few people I know since arriving back. Freddy Elliott has gone overseas with what they called "B" Force. It is rumoured they went to Burma, but no one seems to be definite on the point.

Last night's Sacred Concert was beautiful. I thought our little shows at Bukit Tamih [Timah?] would take some beating but there is no comparison between the two, of course, this party here are the original A.I.F. concert party and all are artists. The music was superb, as good an orchestra as I have heard.

Sunday 27th December 42

Lazy day: rained all the morning, did some repair work to shirts and trousers only one decent shirt and one pair of trousers left. Foot nearly better and looks like work tomorrow.

A.I.F. play the Americans baseball this afternoon, resulting in a win for the A.I.F. and I believe we have beaten them 4 out of 5 games. Barrett the Aussie cricketer played. He is a very versatile sportsman: very good cricketer, excellent Australian Rules footballer, good baseballer and over the average boxer.

The whole of the working parties have now returned to Changi, the last lot marching in today, which means, worst luck, more moving about as the quarters will have to be rearranged, that is, unless the army has found a different method of doing things, which I very much doubt. Changi rumours have started again, but I have sworn to ignore them. How they start or where they start is a mystery.

Monday 28th December 42

Did my first duties for some time. Was in charge of Ration Party, a very easy job consisting of collecting the rations for the Regiment. I had twelve men but only needed about 6 to carry the rations, 12 lbs rice, 8 lbs sugar, 6 lbs tea, 5 lbs whitebait for 800-odd men. Very uneventful day.

Tuesday 29th December 42

Just had a marvellous bracing shower, the rain water straight from the roof. In fact I have not missed catching a shower the same way every day since arriving. It has only rained for short periods but when it rained it rained.

Was shown an actual drawing of the square when occupied by all the Changi P.O.W.s during the blitz by Japs regarding the signing of the undertaking. It was terrific and unbelievable. 16,800 men herded into a space of 8¼ acres, including Cook House and lavatories. Hygiene was a big problem and dysentery was just getting a hold when they were released. The Java (Dutch) men were dying at a rate of 10 per day their percentage being very high. I was talking to Aub Jones who was there at the time and suffering badly from dysentery, he carried a kerosene tin around with him as it was impossible for those with dysentery to wait hours in a queue. The sleeping was done in shifts as it was impossible to all lie down at the one time. They say (medical people) that a week more would have killed off everybody. Men slept in the hot sun on the asphalt ground without any protection.

I believe there is a plastic surgeon doing marvellous work at the hospital. He has built new faces, hands, and one lucky cove who was in the hospital and had been born with a hair lip and no roof to his mouth was given a new lip, a new roof to his mouth and they say he does nothing else all day but admire himself in the mirror and would now commit murder for the surgeon. And tea, must not forget tea. Rice and fish rissole (not much fish but it could be tasted) and a small biscuit made from some kind of meal.

Wednesday 30th December 42

Nothing of interest to write about. Spent most of the day working out fatigues for my section, mending, reading. Have joined the camp library but it is hard to get an interesting book, those that

have them seem to change with others who have interesting ones and they therefore circulate slowly. Went over to the Convalescent Depot this afternoon and watched the Hoppies (the limbless soldiers) play cricket. The Other Ranks played the Officers. It is wonderful how these poor chaps have adapted themselves; batting with one arm, and one with one leg also fielding and bowling. The rain stopped play so I left for my usual rainwater shower.

Thursday 31st December 42

New Year's Eve and the end of the year, which I hope and trust will never again be repeated and I sincerely hope that the New Year will bring back sanity to the world and happiness to my family and friends and if by any good chance I am allowed to see action again it will be with a victorious army and I pray that my wife, baby and family never have to go through the worrying times that this last year caused them.

Today we received a great surprise from Nippon, double rations and, last but not least, wine, a bottle between 10 men, but very acceptable and enough to allow us to drink to the health and happiness of those we love. Trust Nippon did not present us with it to drink their health.

Very quiet day and nothing of interest. Last night I attended the A.I.F. concert where "Cinderella" was produced and for a P.O.W. camp it was exceptional, including even the costumes and scenery which were produced here and something to boast about.

I fear me another move to a different portion of the camp area is in the wind.

Wonderful tea: Rice and veg stew, spoonful of roasted peanuts and a very nice biscuit.

New Diary

Written on the inside cover of this diary.

IF

If you can keep your head and all about you
are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
yet make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired of waiting,
or being lied about, don't deal in lies;
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
and yet not look too good nor talk too wise;

If you can dream and not make dreams your master,
if you can think and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumphs and disasters
and treat these two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truths you have spoken,
twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools;
Or see the things you gave your life to, broken
and stoop to build them up with worn out tools;

If you can make a heap of all your winnings
and risk it on one turn of pitch and toss;
And lose and start again at your beginnings
and never breath a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinews
to serve your turn long after they have gone;
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
except the will that says to them "hold on";

If you can talk to crowds and keep your virtue,
or walk with Kings nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
if all men count with you but not too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute,
with sixty seconds worth of distance run –
Yours is the world and everything that's in it,
and – which is more – you'll be a man, my son!

KIPLING

"Art might obey nature, but not surpass it."

1. SHATOO
2. DOOAH
3. TEE-GAH
4. ERM-PAHT
5. LEE-MAH
6. NAHM
7. TOO-JOH
8. LAH-PANN
9. SERM-PEE-LAHM
10. SAH-POO-LAHN
- 11
- to LAHSS
- 19
20. DOOAH-POO-LOH

N.T.P. selling T.G etc

Bying to CHOW

Friday 1st January 43

New Year's Day. Spent the morning doing Malayan P.I. with a book. Watched two football games, both very good: our portion of the camp played the rest: we won the first game 18 to Nil and were beaten in the next game 8 to Nil. Meals are improving and today we ate well due no doubt to the extra rations, a New Year Gift from Nippon. Rumoured we move to another portion of the camp tomorrow.

Saturday 2nd January 43

Shifted to our new quarters and luckily it was not too far. The building the quarters are situated in was one used for married Sergeants and families, They are nice small compact flats of four rooms and conveniences. I said they are, I meant they were, until the Jap bombers came over and now only a portion of them are tenatable. Not withstanding I think we will be comfortable. Water is laid on but no lights. There was a lot of work to do on the shifting and kept us busy all day.

Sunday 3rd January 43

One of the best night's sleep last night since being a POW. Our quarters look down a gully which runs to the water and a beautiful cold breeze blows all night, also the mosquitoes and bugs aren't so much in evidence. Spent a very lazy day reading and sleeping. Food is much better due to our purchasing whitebait, coconuts, onions and a fowl and other items from the canteen. Last pay day we all put in and made this possible. I think I have put on a few pounds weight in the last few days.

News very scarce and what little does trickle through is very conflicting. The Japs arrived and made a thorough search of some of the quarters and men's gear today.

Monday 4th January 43

This life is getting too easy for me, seem to do nothing but read and sleep. At present reading a book written by a Japanese woman living in America "Etsa Inagaki Sugimoto". It is one of the most sweetest (being girlish but I can't describe it any other way) books I have read, the title being "A Daughter of the Samurai". I am thoroughly enjoying it and would like it very much for my library. It is rumoured that all the Indian troops that went over to Nippon some of which (most Sikhs) they have been using as guards, have now been placed back in the P.O.W. camp as prisoners today. Their leader who was an Indian Captain (King's Commission) was shot by the Japanese this morning. The rumour gives the reason for the change of front as a refusal of the Indians to leave Singapore and fight for the Nips in Burma. Also that one Indian Brigade had already been sent to Burma to fight against the allies but instead of fighting they deserted and cleared out. I don't know how much truth there is in the rumours but I do know that the Sikh guards patrolling this camp have gone.

It has been a beautiful day but a heavy storm is now brewing and looks like breaking any moment.

One of the boys lately back from hospital told me that a chap named Harry Craig attached to 2/10 Australian General Hospital was inquiring after me and stated he had tried to contact me but I was away in the working party. If I get a chance to go over I will look him up. I could not remember

before what unit he was with or I would have contacted him early in the piece. A special pass must be obtained to visit the hospital now.

Tuesday 5th January 43

Glorious day, spent the morning walking round the area and enjoying the glorious perfumes and sights of the numerous flowers. A few days ago the Japs took an A.I.F. officer and a Red Cross Rep away, later they came and took a Flight Lieutenant (Australian). Lots of rumours have been circulated and the latest is to the effect that the party's had arranged an escape per Jap plane and their plans had become known to the Japs. It is also rumoured that they have been placed in a Jap civil jail in Singapore proper. The rumour regarding the refusal of the Sikhs to go into action on behalf of the Japs and the execution of their officer in charge appears to have some truth in it. The Sikh guards have definitely been removed.

A Brigadier (A.I.F.) by the name of Blackburn and the Governor of Java arrived in Changi yesterday from Java.

Wednesday 6th January 43

Regimental Duty Sergeant for the day, kept me fairly busy. Have noticed for the last week or so the boys have been drifting back to the habit of undignified scratching and today I have started the same and I can see some painful days and sleepless nights before me if the complaint gets as bad as previous whilst at Bukit Temah. The cause is deficiency in our food rations. Just heard that someone ratted the canteen last night cleaning it out and taking somewhere in the vicinity of \$700. No doubt there are some despicable persons left alive.

Rice and fish rissoles on for tea. Very nice but very little. Still hungry.

Thursday 7th January 42

Another lazy day spent reading and sleeping. Attended a very interesting lecture by a Sergeant in R.A.A.F. He told of his experiences after having been shot down by a Jap fighter on the West Coast. He lived with the natives and was marvellously treated by the Chinese but was eventually caught by three Malays and handed over to the Japs. He arrived back in Singapore 54 days after the Capitulation. He then went on and explained the composition of the Malayan Air Force during the campaign, their impossible task with definitely inferior and outnumbered planes. The Force in the whole of the Malay consisted of only 180 planes, all these were obsolete for the type of work necessary. He stated that over (*unreadable*) percent of the flying staff (not ground staff) were killed and the loss of planes here was 100%. Only once were they able at any time to give the land force any support and that was one day when they bombed enemy motor transport near Tampin. Their growl should be even louder than ours.

Nasty accident here today. The Engineers were demolishing a wall which prematurely fell, seriously injuring two men, one not expected to live and the other with other injuries had one eye torn out.

Scalds have not played up too much as yet and seem no worse. Am careful with water when showering as water irritates and spreads the rash.

Friday 8th January 43

Tried hard work today, lavatories required renewing which meant more holes to be dug, so we started off by digging a twelve seater, each hole being 20 foot deep. The holes being bored by a borer worked by manpower. It's a hard job and I collected quite a number of blisters. Also played a game of basketball and, true to my form (played without boots), kicked the top off my big toe.

The chap seriously hurt yesterday was buried today. He died last night. Yesterday the P.O.W.s from Java (including A.I.F.) left for an unknown destination and later yesterday afternoon 2,000 new ones arrived. I believe 2/40th A.I.F. Infantry Battalion and 2/3 machine gunners were amongst them. I suppose we will hear all the news later.

Saturday 9th January 43

Toe very sore this morning, also feel very stiff and sore in the body. Need more exercise and when toe is better will definitely do some.

Possibility of the Art class starting up, hope so it will be a great boon to me. Have forgotten most of what I was taught and will have to start from scratch again. My mind does not seem able to hold anything these days, even forget what I am talking about half way through the conversation.

Included in the party who arrived from Java yesterday are a couple of our Regiment who deserted whilst on the Island. Everybody in the Regiment will be disappointed if they don't get all that is coming to them when our unit gets going or functions again. We feel they are a blot on the Regiment. One came over today large as life, no semblance of shame, typical of the type, full of talk and thick skinned. Bought some dried prawns today. They stink like hell. Will try and cook them. In Australia they are cooked before drying, here they are dried raw and look like bait left to dry on the floor of the boat. I will probably eat those when I get home. It will be no trouble for me to eat the bait when I go fishing, will save carrying food. Never again will I turn up my nose at my bait-smelly hands when eating my lunch whilst fishing. More than likely put some of the bait in the sandwich to make me feel more at home.

Russians seem to be doing very well according to the news we received.

Every night rain, hail or shine we have to form up in sixes and be counted by the Japs. That is about the only time we contact them.

Still have my marvellous dreams of home at night, wish I could just dream and keep dreaming and wake up one day home. Twelve months today we girded as armour ... (*unreadable*) ...

Sunday 10th January 43

The Regiment made a pilgrimage to the A.I.F. cemetery to pay their respects to our dead and place a wreath on the graves of our comrades. I was very disappointed being unable to attend, my sore toe making it impossible for me to wear my boots. The Regiment formed up and marched down making a very impressive show.

Cooked the prawns for dinner, scrounged some curry and made curried prawns. They tasted a bit off but went down OK.

There have been some despicable acts by some of the P.O.W.s, but I heard one last night that would take some beating. We knew before we left Changi for the working parties that there was trouble about hospital rations being eaten and taken by our Field Ambulance who were controlling the rations, but what occurred at the Hospital itself was even worse. When the Red Cross supplies arrived, milk and that type of stuff necessary for patients were mostly given to the Hospital and truck loads were sent there and unloaded by the Hospital Orderlies Australian General Hospital orderlies. It was soon apparent that all the food was not going to the Hospital patients and a search of the orderlies quarters was made and numerous stuff, milk, etc. found. The thieves were fined 5 Pounds and 90 days of hard work. Some heard of the search and I have it from good authority that in three cases it was known that the orderlies concerned rather than be found with the stuff tossed cases of milk, cocoa, malt and other things down the lavatories, the lavatories being deep holes 20 to 30 feet deep. God knows what type some men are. I also heard that the thieves who broke into the A.I.F. canteen (the profits are used for medical stuff) and stole \$700 and goods have been caught. They belonged to the Army Service Corps. They should hand them over to the men of the A.I.F. those that were drafted out to working parties who as always when there is any thing to be done are told ... *(page torn and unreadable)* ...

Monday 11th January 43

Dental inspections are being carried out on every P.O.W. being inspected is a good idea, no doubt the food we eat must have a disastrous effect on our teeth. Had mine inspected today need one to be filled and my teeth scraped.

Made myself a pair of sandals by cutting down what used to be a pair of old boots. Now able to go for walks with my sore feet.

The last batch of P.O.W.s to arrive came originally from Timor and a few from Java. They consist mostly of 5th Division A.I.F. and a heavy Battery which were stationed at Timor. Very little fighting was done in Timor. In the only clash they lost a Company of men, about 200, also a Company went back and are still in the hills. They are doing a good job harassing the occupation troops.

A few of the 29th Battalion who were trapped in the Muar, managed to get out and make Java. They contacted our troops there and offered their services. An officer belonging to the 7th Division gave them a lecture and told them that the 7th Division were seasoned fighting troops and were used to fighting to the death and explained to our fellows if they ... *(unreadable)* ... join them they would have to do likewise and not retire all ... *(unreadable)* ... but we had been doing (the ... *(unreadable)* ... for ferocious fighting, bravery against terrific odds has never before been equalled). Naturally our chaps were annoyed but went up with the ... *(unreadable)* ... They contacted the enemy and the first withdrawal was 200 miles ... *(unreadable)* ... They pointed this out to the officer concerned who was one of the first to leave. They saw he looked very sheepish and admitted he did not understand this kind of warfare. Action in Java only lasted four days, most of the A.I.F. seeing one day's action.

There also was an American Field Gun Battery there. They fired four rounds during the whole show. This was in Java. In Timor another American Battery was to function, they handed the guns etc. over with the grease still on them. They never fired a round.

Tuesday 12th January 1943

(Almost one side of the next back-to-back pages are torn and missing but I'll do my best!!)

Yesterday afternoon's check parade provided the first incident with Nippon guards. We arrived here after the check parade a Nip guard walked passed the lines evidently looking for his mate and he did not seem too pleased with the world in general. One of our boys ... *(unreadable)* ... contracted a peculiar disease which left him with a nervous twitching on his face, also at the same time, sounds like hic-cups issues from him, suffers also from slight shell shock. This Nip chanced to look up at him while passing and no doubt thought the show was put on for his benefit, he hit this chap in the stomach with his rifle and then proceeded to kick his shins. The lad fell down and the Nip looking like thunder moved off. The lad's shins were badly bruised and cut requiring medical attention.

Went to a lecture on Public Speaking in afternoon, was greatly impressed and found it very interesting. The chap giving the lecture had a marvellous voice (he was a YMCA man) and it was like listening to music to hear him speak.

There is a game where ... *(unreadable)* ... back racehorse on the ... *(unreadable)* ... played at one of the Infantry lines. It is very interesting. You back a horse and the odds are worked out tote style. Jim Callow had a 15 to 1, it paid and so today we ate, and when I say ate, I mean ate. I was the cook and here is what I cooked and how. First we brought ½ lb prawns (humdingers), bottle Soya bean sauce, ½ bottle chilli sauce, ½ lb yam flour, curry, onions. I soaked the prawns and then boiled, fried the onions and made curry onion gravy (very thick), mixed rice and prawns which I fried altogether, rolled the mess in balls after mixing some yam flour, then I fried the balls in coconut oil. They were delicious and we ate until we could not force any more. The ½ prawns when soaked produced about 2 lbs. I don't think I will ever ----- rissoles any more, well that's how I now feel about it.

Thursday 14th January 43

Regimental Duty Sergeant, busy most of the day.

Wish I had a few of the rissoles I had to force down yesterday. Will have to kid Jim Callow back to the game and see if he can produce the means of another good feed.

Overcast most of the day but will probably come with the ... *(unreadable)* ...

(Julian

New Book started. Pages are all loose so I am going to start typing and then, hopefully, cut and paste them into some semblance of order later. Wish me luck!!)

Written in Pencil on Front Cover of Book

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
yet make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired of waiting
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies;
Or being hated don't give way to hating
And yet not look too good nor talk too wise.

If you can dream and not make dreams your master
If you can think and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumphs and disasters
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you have spoken
----- by knaves to make a trap for fools;
Or see the things you gave your life to broken
And stoop to build them up with worn out tools.

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch and toss;
And lose and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn even after they have gone;
And so hold on when there's nothing in you
Except the will that says to them "hold on".

If you can talk to crowds and keep your virtue
Or walk with Kings nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you
If all men count with you but not too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds worth of distance run –
Yours is the world and everything that's in it
And – which is more – you'll be a man, my son.

KIPLING

“Art might obey nature, but not surpass it”

1. SAHTOO
2. DOOAH
3. TTEE-GAH
4. ERM-PAHT
5. LEE-MAH
6. NAHM
7. TOO-JOH
8. LAY-PANN
9. SERM-PEE-LAH
10. SAH-POO-LAHN
19. LAHSS
20. DOOAH-POO LOH

Saturday 23rd January 1943

Big Japanese inspection today by some big Japanese noise. We had strict orders to keep to our quarters between the hours of 9.30am to 1pm and under no circumstances was anyone to go out. Also all windows etc. to be shuttered and closed and no Peeping Toms allowed. I can't understand their reasoning, but ours is not to wonder why, just do as we are told. Anyhow no body was anxious to see this illustrious person.

Received another dysentery inoculation this afternoon, arm a little stiff.

Just heard that two dead Chinese are hanging on the wire around the camp, apparently shot and hung there by the Nips. Suppose the story will come out later with the reason for the warning. These Nips sure have grand ideas.

Meals from our new cookhouse very good. Cooked much better and served a lot better. Should be a big improvement if we put in a few cents each next pay day. Running a Troop Bridge Tournament, ---Knox and I are partners and have won one game.

Sunday 24th January 1943

Hell of a good tea, fish soup, fish (small but nice) vegetable mash and rice, feel as full as a pup.

Had a nice afternoon out on the salt water ... (*unreadable*) ... the tide was high and the water looked marvellous. Our officer told us that the Japs had forbidden any troops to go in for a swim ... (*unreadable*) ... I doubt) as the Tommies came close ... (*unreadable*) ... their salt water and went in the Jap guard ... (*unreadable*) ... own ends.

International cricket match and football match this afternoon. England playing Australia. The cricket match was won by Australia by two runs, the scores being Australia 154, England 152. Barnett, one of our test players played for Australia. Australia also won the football match the scores being Australia 21, England Nil. This football match being the last game of football allowed. I was disappointed at not being able to go, but salt is life and salt water is the only means of salting our food.

Very large attendance at the Church Parade tonight; the reason being it was made compulsory. It was a very short service although I think it would have been a long one only for the rain. The Padre was a sport, he was just preaching a sermon in which he used the word foundation, it then started to rain and he said 'Well I suppose we better leave the foundation until next Sunday' and dismissed the Parade. I think his action would gain a few converts. He is the same Padre who pinched the petrol.

Monday 25th January 43

Very easy day, played bridge, was beaten in the tournament, ate well and all told had a very pleasing day. English classes are going to be held and I have decided to avail myself of the time and opportunity at my disposal to join the class and try and learn a subject I always hated at school, therefore ... (*unreadable*) ... much to my sorrow in latter years. Feet are not too good again, signs of

my ulcers returning and it would appear that when I do as much walking in boots like I did yesterday the ulcers become irritated and ... (*unreadable*) ...

Tuesday 26th January 43

Another Art lesson, the subject being St. Andrews Church of England Chapel. Trying to make a good job of it and if it turns out anything like the subject will try and keep it. Meals past comprehension, admittedly most of our amenities have been used up, but we have certainly enjoyed doing it, if pay day does not soon arrive I'm afraid we will be on starvation rations again.

2nd Brigade put on a parade for Anniversary Day, it was extremely well carried out and most impressive, don't know what the Nips thought if they saw it. I should imagine it would be contrary to all of P.O.W. Camps and was very military.

Have decided to start a Reading Class, its function being the reading by each individual of something educational and of a beneficial nature. Constructive criticism will be allowed and a dictionary will be on hand for any checking of pronunciation. After the reading class there will be a general discussion on the subject read. The whole thing should be interesting and no doubt beneficial.

Wednesday 27th January 43

Very little to do so decided to improve my sketching and did a little more on the Chapel. Saw Lieutenant Colonel Bill Jeater, was not talking to him. Also saw a Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher, he called out to me and we passed a few words. Must try and sketch our quarters, they are a most interesting subject and are known as "Bomb Happy Villas" due to the amount of knocking about they received from the Nip's bombs. By the amount of dried blood stains on the walls of the building not only the quarters suffered from the bombs.

Turned down most of my dinner today, speaks volumes for the way we are at present eating. Was in a fit state to appreciate tea when the time arrived.

Another Public Speaking lecture on this afternoon, was very interesting and educational. Water supply failed today and as the storage tanks hold very little, showers etc. have to be taken from the drain running through the camp. It's fairly clean water but at times smells a little.

A very interesting lecture was given tonight by an Officer of the Indian Army on the North West Frontier, included in the lecture were some very humorous incidents.

Japs failed to put in an appearance at the usual evening Check Parade. Sincerely hope an accident did not befall them. Sez you.

Thursday 28th January 43

Spent most of the day drilling more holes, evidently someone expects a very bad epidemic of dysentery. They are too deep to be used as slit trenches, but if we go on drilling them at the present rate will probably supply one per man.

The forbidding of swimming was apparently another one of our Command's bogey men (they blame the Nips for everything that puts a nasty taste in the ranks' mouths, but worst luck the ranks are awake). Today the Nip guard at the place where the salt water is procured indicated to the men to go in for a swim, the men replied that it was against orders and that the officer in charge would not allow it. The Nip guard went to the Officer and said 'all men swim' and made him understand that it was an order. The men swam. Has rained all afternoon, and is still belting down.

My bed collapsed last night. I think my weight 10.11 and my millions of bed mates, the bugs, were too much for it. Will have to sleep on the floor tonight or until I can knock up another, the shortage of wood being the problem. Pay day today. Most of our pay now goes to the kitchen as amenities and the food etc. purchased from the Canteen.

Friday 29th January 43

Sergeant of the Guard, guarding the entrance to the camp. Our own guards being responsible for the prisoners coming in and going out, just another character ----- of our hosts. As I have said before this P.O.W. business is sometimes laughable.

Seventy-eight lorry loads of Javanese troops arrived last night. I would estimate the number as somewhere in the vicinity of 2,500. This morning a batch of earlier arrivals left for unknown destination. Apparently they are using Singapore as a changing station. They stay a week or two then off somewhere else.

Did a turn at guard myself during the early hours of the morning, when no one was about. What appeared to be much gun fire, large and small, seemed to be coming from the direction of the ocean, it sounded far away and was continuous during my two hours and the following 4 hours. Thought there may have been a possibility of a naval engagement but everything seemed normal the next morning.

I thoroughly enjoyed my trick at guard at that hour. The perfume of the tropical flowers hung heavy, the croaking of the numerous frogs and crickets and the noise of the night birds mingled with the sighs of the coconut palms makes the night very entrancing. Sometimes I hate this country, but at dusk when I go for my daily stroll, I cannot help feeling that under different circumstances life here would be exceedingly pleasant. There is always a beautiful sunset and with it a pleasant breeze bringing with it all the rich tropical smells and flavours that can only be found in the tropics. The sighs of the different palms is music, soft and caressing. It is then my hunger for my wife and baby becomes unbearable, the feelings by contact and thought are too akin.

Saturday 30th January 43

Another needle for dysentery today. Arm much sorer than previously. Spent most of the day spine bashing (sleeping) as we call it.

Believe this week five A.I.F. died, no idea of the cause, but understand we are to receive a lecture from the Medical Officer on how we should go about looking after ourselves. I think it is said that sleep plays a very important part on our health.

There is some method of broadcasting our names and messages from us back to Australia. I have not heard how or much regarding it as yet. I believe a start was made yesterday and the Nips claim that all the A.I.F. P.O.W.s will have the privilege of sending a message home. I happened to be on Guard when the scheme was promulgated and so far know very little regarding it.

Sunday 31st January '43

The heavens turned on all its artillery and produced one of the greatest storms I have heard or seen. All Parades were abandoned, including Church Parade, to allow us to show ourselves off to the R.A.A. Commander. I hope he is not too disappointed. I can assure him his troops are not.

My eyes have been giving me a little trouble, had to cut out reading and all my good intentions of attending any classes I thought might be beneficial. All our complaints now are mostly caused by diet deficiency and I understand that this cause is being looked on by our Medical Authorities as a very serious one. Last year was a drastic one, but from information we have received from the Medical Officers who have gone thoroughly into the matter, this year is going to be even worse, unless we receive outside assistance as regards proper food and medical supplies. They paint a very depressing picture.

Still pouring with rain and seems as if it will never stop. Have not been able to make a new bed, am getting used to the hard floor again.

Monday 1st February 43

Regimental Duty Sergeant kept me busy running around all day, did not feel much like it, fear a little fever is about to recur. Quite some time since my last dose.

Last Saturday night I spent a very pleasant few hours listening to a programme of recorded classical music. This music seems to fit into our moods and for my part makes me terribly homesick. I think after this is all over I will be a lover of beautiful music. It appears to have more appeal to me now, in fact all beauty has, birds, flowers, trees, everything, and they all affect me very deeply. I think this life is also prone to make one very sentimental, perhaps it is because we have been transferred from the horrors of Singapore and its guardians to the beauty and tranquillity of our present camp, where the Japanese exist only as a name and a short period of about 5 minutes each afternoon.

Speaking of feelings, today was a great example of my at present uncontrollable feelings, a most ridiculous but nevertheless true one. Last night I dreamt that Mae and I had some very bitter words. I woke up in a sweat and all day I have been cranky, unhappy and very depressed, the dream persistent in my mind.

Tuesday 2nd February 43

Still not feeling the best, was too sick to go to art class today but feel a little better tonight.

Very little of interest. Stuck to Malayan P.I. most of the day although I did a little necessary washing this morning. Jim Callow rebuilt my bed as it is ... (*unreadable*) ... whilst free for the present of bugs and more comfortable I am thankful for it.

Wednesday 3rd February 43

Feel pretty tired. Orderly Sergeant for the day and kept very busy running around different Parades and Inspections.

Told to make out messages of twenty words including as many names as possible of the boys away on other parties today. These messages, it is alleged, will be transmitted home to our people by the Japanese. Candidly I don't put too much faith in their promises and there is always a big doubt in my mind that our previous message and casualty list ever reached their destination. I think it is quite possible that the result of no news would have a very drastic effect on the morale of our people back home and the Japanese appreciate this and would take advantage of this inhuman action. I sincerely pray it is not so but the feeling in me persists and gives me some very unhappy periods when I let my mind dwell on the possibilities. My feelings are very inconsistent, they soar and lower like a barometer, no doubt influenced by the state of health.

In the messages we were asked to mention our lack of food etc. but I cannot see any good in the outcome and definitely think my people and everybody's people have more than their share of worry now without piling on the agony.

Thursday 4th February 43

Spent the day lying down, managed to get a couple of quinine tablets and feel much better, eyes improved but still not the best.

Believe a marvellous concert was arranged last night, the artists were mostly English and some very well known celebrities gave items. One very brilliant violinist who plays in the London Philharmonic Orchestra receiving a tremendous ovation. I think his name is Denis East.

Food problem is very acute and I think will have drastic results if something is not soon done. The Hospital [staff?] are repeatedly making complaints to the Japanese Authorities but so far have received no sympathy. Practically all we get now other than the very little we can buy with the small amount at our disposal, 3^d per day and rice, and not very much of that. Even I am getting thinner 10.5 tonight, soon be down to 10 stone. I have lost 4 stone since arriving in Malaya.

I have got myself down to about an ounce of tobacco for 10 days, usually it would last me a little over a day. It is vile stuff and costs 35 cents, ounce = 10½, what would I give for some good Virginia.

Friday 5th February 43

Another day on my back and feel the benefit, although tongue and mouth ulcerated and very sore, eyes not the best.

Attended the Masonic Club meeting last night.

I believe Bob Skine gave a good lecture on International Polo which was very interesting. He has a lot of faith in the Yanks and believes they will go through the Nips like a storm. He also told a little scandal regarding Claudette Goddard. It was very spicy.

Food gradually getting worse, for health reasons we now have what is known as grass soup made from a certain type of grass. Our eyes seem to be the first things affected by this lack of vitamins etc., in some cases with very drastic results, a number of people having already gone blind.

Saturday 6th February 43

Fever gone but eyes and mouth still bad, must get treatment for the eyes, not much can be done about the mouth. Received a TAB injection this morning, will have to receive two more before effective.

Rissole made of Soya beans and rice for tea, went down pretty well but could have eaten a dozen or so more. Feeling consistently hungry these days although the fever knocked my appetite about a bit.

Weather becoming much hotter and the nice cool breeze of the night seems to have left.

Sunday 7th February 43

Big Church Parade with a March Past [by?] the CRAA after the service. A threat was held over our heads [that?] if the March Past was not up to satisfaction it would be found necessary to utilize any spare time we had by giving us squad drill etc. I have not heard the CRAA's verdict as yet. I don't know what the March Past was put on for, maybe just to appease someone's vanity or perhaps some deeper motive, whatever it was we were not told. ... (*unreadable*) ... few Nip guards witnessed the act, ... (*unreadable*) ... know what they think about it.

Eyes no better, practically impossible to see enough to read and even difficult to write.

Church service very good and the sermon well put over and a good subject. Our Padre is still the same one who used to pinch the petrol at Bukit Temah [Timah?].

Heard rumours of a large scale naval battle being fought down south, very anxious to hear results, have already heard the Nips claims and believe me they are some, and if correct, God help Australia as there will be nothing left to stop Nippon's millions. Naturally we have taken their claims with a pinch of salt, although I must admit it produces a large amount of anxiety and doubt, just what they want us to feel. Faith does recede occasionally when things here are not the best, but it is only just shaken and returns usually much stronger.

Monday 8th February 43

Today is the Anniversary of the Japanese landing on Singapore Island and incidentally the anniversary of the death of many. When I think of the terrificness of the bombardment it is beyond comprehension how many of us are still alive and whole. Old soldiers of the last war have remarked that the intenseness of their barrages outdid any they had experienced and officers who computed the number of rounds which landed in the different areas would if told deem it impossible. I don't know the casualties of our troops that night but they were very high. All I know is the killed during the campaign reached the vicinity of 3,000, more than one in six of the whole troops including non-combatants who would amount to over two thirds of the total troops. The Nips were estimated to lose over 7,000 men from the time of leaving their forming up place and their actual landing on the Island, still manpower to them is no worry.

Eyes a little better and able to do some much needed darning and mending which kept me busy most of the morning. Still no news of the alleged Naval battle.

Tuesday 9th February 43

Eyes not so good, taking rice polishings and grass soup.

Went to the art class and was caught in a very heavy storm, spoilt my sketch and ruined my paper. Has not stopped raining and looks as if it never will. Check Parade postponed. Saw Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher and had a yarn for a few minutes.

Wednesday 10th February 43

Late last night we were informed that a muster parade of all P.O.W.s was to be held on the Padang near A.I.H. at 8.15am Nippon time. This meant Reveille at 6.30am Nippon which means 5am Greenwich. It was pitch dark and raining like mad, we formed up at 7.30am and were then informed that the Nips had cancelled the Parade. No one seems to know why the Muster Parade was called by the Nips. We are now on 20 minutes notice to fall in.

Went on the salt water party this morning, received a good soaking and have no more dry clothes.

A strange incident happened last night, one of the chaps of the 2/10th Field Company left his quarters to go to the latrines. Since then he has not been seen or heard of. All his belongings and personal gear are intact and there is no indication that he has made a break. This is the second disappearance in the last six days, the other chap is supposed to be of unsound mind, no trace of him has been found.

An Indian N.C.O told one of our boys that the Nips machine gunned 300 Indians at Johore recently for refusing to take up arms. He also stated that the Indians had sabotaged the a.a. ammunition on the Island. I don't know just how much truth are in these statements, but I'm sure the Indians were forced to go over and are with us in their hearts and maybe later they will have an opportunity of showing their loyalty.

Thursday 11th February 43

Rain still falling heavily, accompanied by a miniature cyclone. Impossible to go outside without receiving a good soaking.

Nev Merrifield taken to hospital with bad attack of Malaria; also Jim Kalbifell was attacked by a bad case of diarrhoea and cramp followed by severe vomiting. This complaint is becoming very prevalent and is believed to be caused by the lack of correct foods. I was only thinking last night I can count the number of times on my fingers that I have not gone to bed feeling hungry during the past twelve months.

It is rumoured that the reason for the muster parade called by the Nips and cancelled yesterday and which will be held tomorrow (if the weather clears) is to allow them to shoot scenes for their motion picture of the campaign. Already the Chooms have been utilised to enact scenes pertaining to the fighting during action. This rumour is quite a possibility.

Friday 12th February 43

Up before daybreak again, marched to the forming up place on the A.G.H. Padang, waited a couple of hours and was then informed that the parade had been cancelled and that we were to standby until further notice, we were then marched back to our lines and dismissed. It rained all night and was overcast during the morning. The Padang had about 4 inches of water covering it and I expect there will be a number of recurrent malaria cases resulting from our wait. Rain started again in the afternoon and the latest is we parade again in the morning. At least I will know where I stand for the next two days being N.C.O of the Guard, hope it is all over before my guard duties finish.

Feel so-so myself tonight, running a temperature and suffering from a very bad head, also eyes still not the best. Too wet for my art lessons, it was just as well as I did not feel up to going.

Just heard some disconcerting news. Authorities very concerned regarding dysentery and are afraid of a severe breakout; eighteen cases yesterday and twenty-three today, does not say much for the injections we have had.

Saturday 13th February 43

Spent the day on guard which is usually a great bludge, today exception to the rule. We were kept busy falling out to Japanese High Officials who attended the Muster Parade of all P.O.W.s for the purpose of shooting motion pictures for their picture entitled 'The Fall of Singapore'. Incidentally, we of the Guard were also included in their collection, so I imagine my face will be seen by millions of Japanese as the pictures taken of us were more or less close up; would feel much happier if they were shown in Australia by Australians to Australian people including my own, at least they would be assured I was alive, but no doubt changed. The boys had a pretty hard day of it standing in water up to their ankles for three hours and more, most of the time it rained and all were soaked and looked like drowned rats, possibly just what the Nips required.

Eyes very bad, nearly impossible to write, I am very worried about them as nothing can be done regarding their improvement owing to the lack of medical and food required. It will not be long before all P.O.W.s are suffering with the same defects, the Medical Authorities say its only a matter of time and that they are afraid the effects will be permanent as the tissues are gradually wasting. The whole things does not bear thinking about.

Sunday 14th February 43

Nice day and able to do my washing which was plenty. Clothes need repairs but eyes too bad to even attempt sewing or darning.

A young chap named Williams died from injuries received whilst felling trees for firewood. Twelve months ago we were ready to kill and be killed, perhaps it would have been much better for some of us if we had continued to the last.

Last night thousands of Javanese troops arrived prior to their being shipped to their final destination, they usually stay here for a few days before continuing.

Only a miracle can now save the greatest majority of us from permanent disabilities, but I'm afraid the days of miracles have passed.

Monday 15th February 43

A great day for the Japanese but the anniversary of a very humiliating one for we P.O.Ws. I suppose really some of us should be thankful that at least we are still alive. I am certain the greatest majority, in fact I will say all of us, would be much happier if at the present time we were taking our chances in action again, rather than the possible security this life offers. I sincerely hope that as guests of our generous hosts (the rations received in the last 8 days by our Battery were 13 ozs rice per man per day, ½ oz stinking fish (destroyed) per man for the period and 64 lbs vegetables amongst 350 men for the eight days) we do not see another anniversary of this day.

Had special eye examination by specialist, arrived at the Clinic at 10am, left there at 7.30pm, nevertheless had a thorough search and test which was worth waiting for. The verdict is I am suffering with "Retrolbulbar Neuritis" (there were 145 new cases of defective eyesight today). I have to give up reading, writing, drawing, smoking, any eye concentration. I can't go out in the sun glare and under no circumstances to work. Rice polishings, home made yeast, is all that is available as medicine etc. I go up for review in a week's time and if no improvement, I will have to become a patient in the hospital.

Tuesday 16th February 43

Have to go to receive eye treatment every day to the R.A.P. Our Regimental Medical Officer gave us a lecture on dish deficiency [Vitamin D?] and lack of vitamins. He told us that the situation in the camp was at present very serious and all prospects of becoming worse. He also stated if there was no drastic improvement by the end of the year a disease "dementia", which is actually madness, will start to take its toll. The picture painted was not a nice one and left a very unpleasant taste.

Over twenty four hours since I have had a smoke. If I was able to read I would not notice it so much but at the present it is not the easiest job to carry out.

Wednesday 17th February 43

Two deaths from dysentery occurred today, the first for some time, they were two 19th Battalion chaps.

Pay day and very acceptable. The 3^d or 10c per day is the only thing that keeps us alive for without it we would live solely on rice and very little of that. This life I have to lead: no reading, no smoking, no writing, no sun or glare, no working will just about drive me crazy and it won't take another twelve months to give me "Dementia" if I have to keep this up.

Receive treatment (all that is available which is very little) each day, but I cannot say that my eyes are any better, in fact, if anything they are becoming worse.

Thursday 18th February 43

Owing to the definite menace of dysentery we had to submit this afternoon to a very thorough but uncomfortable and humiliating examination by our doctors, under the supervision of the Japanese. The examination being carried out per medium of a glass rod. Naturally the occasion called for much laughter and ribald comment from the waiting crowds in the lines. The day was otherwise uneventful with the exception of active craving for a smoke.

Three of the Engineers A.I.F. have been caught outside the wire by the Japs. Nothing has since been heard of them and it is now over three days since they were caught.

Friday 19th February 43

An excellent A.I.F. concert last night. Thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it, the music was exceptional, naturally, all the artists are becoming well trained and finished.

For some time we or quite a few of us have been using the Malayan Native toothbrush, to wit, a piece of hibiscus stick, it is very effective and makes the teeth very clean. This Hibiscus shrub has another use now, the leaves contain a certain amount of vitamin "C", we eat as many as we can raw everyday. I don't know whether we are receiving any benefit from them, at least we are not doing any harm.

Rumour that 4,000 of us are to be moved away from the Island very shortly, no doubt this rumour sprang up from our receiving 'The Order of the Rod', usually a sure sign of a trip.

Saturday 20th February 43

Found out the benefit alleged to be obtained from eating Hibiscus leaves. Another defect we are all liable to, that of becoming sterile, and believe me the Hibiscus trees are going to shed some leaves as everybody is eating their share just in case.

The young chap Williams, who was supposed to be killed a few days ago, is still alive but unconscious. Someone must have anticipated. Eyes seem no better, this no smoking business is just plain unadulterated hell.

Another batch received the 'Order of the Rod' today. I believe all the tests are made by the Japanese doctors and looks like a sure move to some Japanese populated area. Received a few vegetables today, the first for about twelve days and then only enough for one small meal. A few snakes have been caught around the area lately and have been cooked and eaten with relish. Also yarns that a few stray dogs have gone the same way. I personally have not felt that hungry as yet.

Sunday 21st February 43

Attended a very interesting and humorous lecture on the Cambridge and Oxford boat race given by an English Padre by the name of Duckworth, he kept us laughing all through. He is a born comedian with the Ronald Franklin touch.

Attended Church Parade and again did our March Past to appease someone's extreme vanity. The sermon dealt with why God allowed war which included the slaughter and mangling of human beings including women and children. The Padre gave several reasons (possible took more than one to convince him but I'm afraid his several reasons did not ring sound enough to convince me. I would

very much like to hear the real reason, if any.) It is a subject, if I was a Padre, I would leave well alone unless pushed for the answer.

I never wanted to read or sketch more than I do now that I am unable. Time dragged slowly before, now it is becoming unbearable. There is talk of us being allowed to send another card which would be greatly appreciated by us, but I'm sure if they would allow us to receive word from our loved ones life would be much more tolerable.

Monday 22nd February 43

Issued with a postcard and allowed to send a message of twenty four words, but whether they ever reach their destination is doubtful. I have no faith in our hosts and doubt very much if any of our previous messages reached home. I sincerely hope I have misjudged them. If these messages are really going, then transport will be necessary and the possibility of another exchange of civilian internees real. If this is so, it is also possible that we may receive another lot of Red Cross comforts which at this period would be a God send and the means of saving many lives and no doubt thousands of what will later be human wrecks physically and mentally. Everyone of us in our messages home state we are well and in good health but I'm sure 90% are far from being so. What else can one say? God knows, the worry and suffering we have already caused our loved ones has been cruel and inhumane agony of mind is much harder to bear than physical agony.

Eyes not showing any improvement. I receive attention to them every day, but as I have said before very little can be done for them.

Tuesday 23rd February 43

Heard the story behind the imprisonment of the Red Cross Rep (ours), the Major and the Air Force Flight Lieutenant. It appears they were dealing in our Red Cross comforts, selling them to outside connections for their own personal benefit, presumably to raise enough cash to make a break. Somehow the Nips, or maybe our own people, found out. The Japs picked them up and sentenced them to five years imprisonment, solitary confinement. It is very doubtful whether they will live to be released. I personally think it was very lousy way of raising the wind and have very little sympathy for them as I think their thoughts and efforts were purely personal and with no thoughts of others.

Another examination by the eye specialist today. He seems to think my eyes are becoming sympathetic to the treatment and I sincerely hope he is right. Personally I've found very little difference and thought if anything they were becoming worse, but during the tests I was convinced that there was a slight improvement.

Some time back I did some sketches on our whitewash walls. Quite a number of people came to look at them and are very complimentary, so there must be some good in them (the sketches). Attended a lecture on the Middle East last night. The lecture was given by a Major Schneider, late of the 7th Division. It was very interesting and I came to the conclusion that we possibly (the 8th Division) did more fighting than they and had a much worse time of it. I might be wrong but that was the

impression he gave us after his lecture and answers to questions. He arrived here from the Middle East just before we arrived back on Singapore Island.

Wednesday 24th February 43

Had a trip out on the salt water party this afternoon. Had a feed of wild passionfruit. It was a nice outing although we were caught in a shower and got wet through and I finished the trip disastrously by tripping over a gutter (due to my defective sight) and spilt a five gallon drum of water which we were unable to replenish. The glare did not do my eyes much good and I have developed a bad headache.

Heard another good lecture last night on the "Battle for Britain". There is a lecture on practically every night now and they are most entertaining and appreciated.

Some of the boys on a working party outside the wire saw the women and children from Changi Jail (English) going for a swim. They were still guarded but the boys were able to pass a few words. They say they are not badly treated although they have not been able to get meat. Otherwise they live fairly well having plenty of money to buy with, some of their number being allowed into Singapore under escort for the purpose of purchasing comforts.

Thursday 25th February 43

Had very restless night, bugs attacked in force and I had a bad headache. Spent the day indoors out of the sun, headache practically better but eyes very blurry and weary. Find it nearly impossible to see what I am writing. Attended lecture on "Inside Europe" given by a chap that travelled around Europe during the years 1937 to 1939 just before war was declared. It was very interesting and the lecture had a great flow of language.

Japs have cut down on our fire wood allowance from 3 lbs per man per day to 2 lbs, evidently they have decided, as we have less food to cook, naturally we need less wood. Out of the 300 odd at present compromising our Regiment, a little over 200 are suffering with some kind of ailment, the balance are worked that much by our own Command (quite a number of jobs that are superfluous) that it won't be long before everybody perhaps with the exception of the officers, has contracted something or other.

It is laughable at the high assessment some of the very young officers have assessed themselves at. We had an incident in our Regiment with the issue of the post cards we are sending home. Our average age is around 29 or 30 and one of our very young officers refused to issue the cards to his troops until they had submitted a copy of their message drafted out as they intended filling the card in for his consideration and approval. I suppose 90% of the men involved were matured men who had filled in thousands of cards etc. during their lives and most of them, men of responsible positions and property, owners and business men in civil life. Some of the men just refused to send the cards under the circumstances which naturally I think very foolish as they are not the ones that will suffer but their families. The same type of officers revel in the use of the military term "bodies" and use it persistently with pleasure. Whilst on the subject of these young officers it brings to my mind an

incident that happened to one of our very young la-de-dah and pretty officers on one of the working parties. The Jap guards always seemed attracted by him and many a rude and sometimes disgusting displays were levelled at him. When one particular group of guards were leaving the Island one of them came to say goodbye to this officer and during the saying of the same this passionate Nip kissed the officer on the mouth. It was certainly filthy and disgusting (although this officer's bearing etc. no doubt was responsible) but we had to laugh at the response and words of scorn from the officer, which were "Go away and good riddance you disgusting sexo brute you". At the same time vigorously rubbing his mouth and spitting like a child who had eaten a chili. Well, I ask you.

Friday 26th February 43

Listened to the most interesting lecture up to date entitled "The Drug Traffic in Singapore". It was given by one of the Malayan Volunteers (English) who in civil life was in charge of the vice squad in Singapore. Most of the lecture was on opium and later on he intends touching on other vices.

For the first time as a P.O.W. I put one of the gunners under arrest last night, would much sooner preferred to have given him a hiding or maybe received one. No one had any sympathy for him as the same chap is thought very little of by even the worse type. Incidentally he is the first man I have directly been responsible for putting in during my army career, all other cases in which I have been concerned had been an order from an officer.

Saturday 27th February 43

Attended an Orderly Room for the trial of the man I put under arrest. He went before the Battery Commander who remanded him to the Commanding Officer. The Commanding Officer tried him in the afternoon and he was sentenced to 14 days detention and fined 10 days of pay. I think the sentence was drastic under P.O.W. conditions, under ordinary circumstances it would have been what he deserved.

Masonic Club met last night and a Padre Barrett gave an excellent address on Masonry as it deals with religion.

Had a very nice tea, whitebait and vegetables made up into a hash, usual complaint, "not enough".

Sunday 28th February 43

After Church Parade we put on another vanity appeasing march for the benefit of the Acting CRAA who again was not satisfied and is considering the advisability of at least one hours squad drill per day, irrespective of the inability of us receiving new boots or having our boots repaired when worn which even now they are showing signs of being. He also does not appreciate the fact that all our men who are any way fit were not on the parade as they are absorbed on working parties in the gardens and building roadways etc. The personnel comprising Church Parade are made up of men suffering from Tinea Crutch, foot Tinea, convalescent after-fevers, eye troubles and all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. Still that is the way of our Army or I should say our self opinionated ego and vain leaders. Always after these parades my head and eyes ache miserably, due to the sun glare, etc.

A small amount of Marmite has been made available and forms part of my treatment together with home made yeast and rice polishings.

Our cooks tried their hand at making bread rolls out of rice flour, they are very coarse and hard but very acceptable, wish they could make a little butter and jam to go with it.

Monday 1st March 1943

Bugs gave me a torrid time last night, will have to go a-hunting. Rumoured that the personal belongings, clothes and money of the Major and the Flight Lieutenant, whom I have previously mentioned as regards the Japanese taking them away, have been returned to the camp. This points to either one of two things, they have either been shot or have died, I think the former most likely.

One of the chaps in the Regiment bought some chickens (day old) when we were at Bukit Timah. He was able to rear eight of them and with considerable trouble transport them to River Valley Camp and here. They had grown quite large and were very near the laying stage. Last night someone decided on poultry for their meal and when the owner arrived at his fowl run all he found was feathers and their heads. I'm sure it was no one from our unit as they were more or less pets as far as we were concerned, and the owner was very much attached to them. I just can't understand people doing such lousy things, but no doubt they would not look at it in the same light and to them they were something to eat and the owner a fool for not having eaten them.

A lorry load of sailors (mercantile) arrived here yesterday. They were taken off a German Raider in Singapore. This German Raider had torpedoed their ship also ten other British ships mostly in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean at one time she was only 300 miles from the Australian coast. The Germans treated them very well, given them plenty of food, clothes, medical attention and kindnesses.

Red Letter day today, my turn for a backup, to wit, a rice rissole with onion tops chopped up mixed in it then fried in peanut oil, very nice and very acceptable as otherwise the meal was very light on.

Tuesday 2nd March 43

Attended the eye specialist again today, was informed my eyes would be bad for a long time. Over 9,000 cases of eye trouble has gone through the clinic in the last three months, which is a very big percentage of P.O.W.s, in fact the Specialist said it is colossal.

Very heavy rain storm accompanied with terrific thunder and lightening, the Heavens around this place can put on a great show when it has a mind to.

Play a little bridge to keep myself from going tropical, but I have to also limit that on account of my eyes. Very large ship went down the straits this afternoon, we don't see very many these days, which is very heartening. Rice with burnt rice gravy for tea, would be very nice if we had some salt to flavour it with. Also fried rice with some peanuts in it, very nice.

News seems to be good on the European and African fronts, but does not seem to be anything going on around the Pacific area.

Wednesday 3rd March 43

Nippon Air Force put on a great show of aerial acrobating this morning. I fancy the Island is used for assembling lanes and training of their pilots. Most of the Pilots seem very good, of course, there are no allied pilots or planes here for us to make a comparison, worst luck.

Found a very large mango tree with fruit just coming to the ripe. I don't suppose I am the only one that knows where it is and I imagine the fruit will never properly ripen. The mango tree is a beautiful tree with thick rich leaves not unlike the magnolia tree, it also grows to a great height and spread. Coconut tree blown down in yesterday's storm., There was a rush for the new fronds or heart which is excellent eating, and tastes much like nice young cabbage heart. The Officers Mess was there first. I suppose this heart would weigh six or seven pounds.

Heard there were a few more deaths from dysentery at the hospital last week. So far our unit has been fairly free. We take all precautions possible.

Meals very light on and have felt hungry all day and am just looking forward to breakfast. We have plenty of tea which enables us to have morning, afternoon teas, no sugar or milk or anything to go with it.

Thursday 4th March 43

Good concert on last night at the 27th Bdge Area. Played a few hands of bridge, otherwise day uneventful.

I certainly miss my art classes, my eye trouble could not have come at a worse time, just when I was getting the grasp of things, also I had just started an English and a Malay class, only able to attend one lesson. I doubt very much if I would ever succeed learning Malay, even badly, and I'm sure I would never perfect my English, so why worry.

There are over 3,000 men, Tommies and A.I.F. working the garden which is 150 acres in extent. It has not started to produce as yet, but should make an appreciable difference when it does, i.e. provided the Nips give us the produce. Of course the hospitals will come first and should be a great boon to them. The men working in the garden get an extra 7 oz of rice per man per day, also ½ oz fish per man per day, so they are not doing too bad, also they receive more pay. Their conditions are not so bad, one day and two half days off per week, and they start work at 9am and finish at 5pm.

Friday 5th March 43

Very good lecture on the Air Force in Malaya last night. It was given by a Flight Sergeant who in civil life was a journalist and he painted a very good picture in a very dramatic way.

The Japanese Check Parade was cancelled last night owing to a bad storm and by the looks of the one brewing now it will be cancelled again.

Debugged and killed millions, I could not see them so one of the boys was my killer. All very happy tonight, extra good news from the Pacific Area. We heard that our Air Force completely wiped out a big Japanese convoy and shot down some 50 Jap planes.

Tea has not arrived yet, hope it is a good omen and late due to the quantity the cooks had to cook, but I don't suppose there is that much luck.

Storm just arrived and it is not necessary to go out to see, hear or feel it. I think it is a cross between a Tornado and a Hurricane. Even if I had more to write it would be impossible in the darkness caused by the storm.

The storm has gone it was short but furious.

The tea was worth waiting for, the best we have had for some time. Burnt rice gravy with Soya beans: two rice rissoles and last but not least, a rice cake with banana flavouring. I would like to have it all over again.

Very strong rumour that there is some mail for the A.I.F. at Changi Jail. I am not banking on it too much as I have been bitterly disappointed before, but I'm saying a few silent prayers, that is, if I knew any I would certainly do so.

Saturday 6th March 43

Slept very badly, I think even the mention of possible letters had some unconscious effect on the brain, although I had made up my mind not to place any credit whatsoever in the rumour. This is not a rumour, 2,500 A.I.F. are to be ready by the 10th Gnot [?] to stand by for a party going North, destination unknown. No one who had previously had Malaria or who have had dysentery in the last two months are to go. I suppose our Regiment alone comprised of over 35% malaria personnel so out of the 8,000 A.I.F. on the Island which includes sick and wounded the 2,500 might take some scraping up. I don't know whether this precaution is due to the party going to a Malaria Area or whether it is clean and Malaria carriers are not wanted there.

Another big storm this afternoon, wonder whether the Nips will turn up tonight for Check Parade.

Feast yesterday, famine today.

Sunday 7th March 43

The letter rumour is no more a rumour, it is a concrete fact. They are being sorted and we expect to receive them in the course of a few days. A jubilant atmosphere is all around the camp, everybody happy, and no one seems to be worrying about the standby party, all have the fatalistic view about going. I believe the Regiment can only supply about 40% fit men at present.

Owing to the effects of the glare on my eyes I am excused from attending Church Parade and the Vanity Appeasement Parade. Soxs require repairs but I can't see to darn so looks like they will just end up as one big hole.

Another big storm. They come a little later every night, no Jap Check Parade last night owing to the rain, big possibility of none tonight. Nevertheless although the Japs cancelled the Parade we are made to turn out by our own people, throw around a few salutes, and then dismiss.

Just heard the letters are over eight months old and have been to Japan before coming here. No matter they will be still very much appreciated. The time between now and when we receive them will sure seem long.

Monday 8th March 43

Tried to do some darning but made a very dismal job of it, had to rely on my sense of touch. Still plenty of mucking about over the party to go away, there is a lot of chopping and changing and no one seems to know how they stand. We were discussing what most of us would do on return to civil life (if still of a workable age) when one of the very very young officers joined us. My cobbler Rusty West turned to him and said, "I suppose you will go back to school Mr. ____" and he giggled in his school girlish way and said "Oh! Now then Sergeant". Westy is 6' 3" in his socks and every half inch a man and a half. He was at one time 15 stone odd, today he tips the scales somewhere around 12 stone.

Talk of the Nips here threatening to censor our letters. If they do well God knows when we will receive them, possibly never. I believe our people have made all kinds of representation against the threat, but up to the present it is in the air.

Rumoured that the going away party has been put off, don't know how true it is or why.

Did a little private enquiry from one of the chaps sorting the mail at the jail. He assures me that there are at least two letters for me. I trust he's right or I'll be terribly disappointed if there is only one, typical of Changi greed.

Attended a lecture on the Battle for Singapore Island by Colonel Chaffey this afternoon. I can fully appreciate now the impossible task it was and the lack of cooperation, preparation, men and material etc., in fact, someone, as Colonel Chaffey said, will have a lot to answer for. Another interesting point brought out from our point of view was: - The amount of ammunition available for each gun when we capitulated was less than 80 rounds, 10 minutes firing. No doubt that is our answer as to why we were not allowed to fire when we asked permission. I am pleased I attended the lecture and I now feel the 8th Division can hold up their heads with anyone. Mistakes were made, lots of them, by our Command, but not to the effect of losing the battle, those mistakes can be placed at the door of the British people, the people mean the Government, and the Government means money etc., and most of the blame lies with the lack of that commodity and equipment, manpower. Another big factor was the troops that were here comprised too many non fighting units and the percent of actual trained fighting men was inadequate.

Tuesday 9th March 43

Just had a good look at myself in the mirror. I look a very cranky old man and the worst of it is I am cranky, no doubt due to the utterly uninteresting existence I am now forced to adopt. I will have to try very hard to curb myself before it definitely controls me. Very good A.I.F. concert on last night. I would say these concerts are as good if not better than most first class shows I have paid money to see.

Rumour regarding the party not going away has no foundation and arrangements are still being continued.

Wednesday 10th March 43

It is Dad's birthday, and the first letters to arrive in the camp came today. I'm sure Dad would consider it a marvellous birthday present to know that even some of us have received them. I am one of the unlucky ones, but I'm not worrying as mine will arrive in due course. The Nips are carrying out their threat to censor them and naturally delay can be expected. Attended a continuation of the lecture on the Battle for Singapore by Col. Chaffey. He certainly is caustic in his criticism of the people he thought deserved it, no matter what their rank. Too late a lot of lessons have been learnt.

The few chaps who have received letters are walking around with them as if they were V.Cs.

Heard a very interesting lecture last night given by a Malay Colonel on their experience as forced actors in the Japanese motion picture entitled "The Fall of Singapore". He also told us some harrowing tales of the tortures they saw some unlucky Chinese going through whilst quartered in K.L., Seremban and Malacca jails. During the shooting of one of the scenes the Nips blew up what was supposed to be a British Headquarters. After the explosion it was noticed that a few dead bodies were moved from the wreckage. The British Officer in Charge made enquiries (he knew it was not any of his men) and was told that it was unfortunate that three Tamils and a Malay had failed to vacate the building and the informed smilingly remarked "The fortunes of war". The lecturer felt sure it was not an accident or if it was a very careless one. He also mentioned that every kind of work and method of living had stopped on the mainland and the people gave the impression of being stunned and just waiting around for something to happen. (I know just how they felt. I've been waiting for ages for the same thing.)

Making myself a blanket out of woollen scarves. I do a little bit at a time and hope someday to complete it. Like the darning and writing I am more or less doing it by touch.

Still rains heavily every evening, sometimes cancelling the Jap Check Parade and sometimes not. The rain has no effect on the Regimental Parade.

Thursday 11th March 43

No letters today. The Nips had a holiday yesterday and did not censor any. They took 300 with them and at that rate if they censor 300 per day it will take 200 days. I bet their ears are burning like mad and some day they will pay dearly.

Rained most of the day and I feel too disgusted to even think let alone write. The _____. Well, I know what I am thinking and it won't bear writing.

Friday 12th March 43

Rained all the night and all day. Had my washing in to soak and looks like I will be short of clothes if the rain does not cease. Have tried a new way of washing without soap. First quarter fill the bucket with ashes, then fill bucket with water, leave stand all night then pour water off. This water is very

greasy to feel. The clothes are then soaked in the water all day, rinsed with clean water, and hung to dry. This method will remove all dirt and grease and leaves the clothes very clean and fresh. (I sound like an old washer woman.) I don't know where the idea originated but it does the job well. Our present Battery Captain, Captain Anderson, went to the hospital yesterday with a bad attack of Ptomaine poison from eating tinned stuff. Where he got it from he only knows but previous to becoming Battery Captain he was the Regimental Quartermaster Captain and his Batman has a kit bag which is always locked and guarded by him. This bag has caused quite a lot of speculation by the lads as to its contents, but it looks now as if its secrets have been revealed. Arrangements are still going ahead for the dispatch of the overland force, known as Force D. The advance party leave on Sunday morning and the balance on Monday. The Command is trying to make arrangements with Nippon to allow Force D's mail to go with them and be censored by the Jap Authorities wherever the force settles. The least they can do is grant them this concession.

Attended the last lecture on the Battle for Singapore by Colonel Chaffey. He finished by going ... (*unreadable*) ... All through the poor Old Indians seemed to be the weakness together with the High Command and political trends. He made the statement that from Company Commander down to the men no faults could be found and they can hold up their heads with the world, also the two A.I.F. Brigades had fought (actual fighting at this time) longer and harder than any other Brigade in the present or last A.I.F. Colonel Gallagher spoke a few words and said the lectures were given as lessons to show mostly the mistakes which were made in this Campaign just as mistakes are made in all campaigns, even at Waterloo.

Saturday 13th March 43

It is the 13th but a lucky one for me. I received a letter from my wife, dated the 24th July 42, obviously not the first written by her since I have been a P.O.W. I am unable to express my feelings only never again will I laugh when the expression "Cried with Joy" is used, because that is just how I felt and I'm afraid a couple of tears did leak over. I took myself to a secluded spot and devoured the letter and photo. I had some trouble reading the letter and could not distinguish Julian's face too well. I have since borrowed a magnifying glass and studied it. He is a bonny boy and I'm very very proud to be his father and the husband of his Mother. I can see a distinct resemblance to Mrs Champion in him and he seems to have the Croft bulk. Home does not seem near so far away now and I can wait with much more patience than I have waited previously. Even now when I think of the happy moments I am missing as a father watching his son growing and the pleasure on everybody's face I become very disappointed with my lot, but I am saving up all my love for the day which we can all live once again as human beings. Nev Merrifield's 21st birthday today, he also received a letter and I'm sure he could not have wished himself a nicer present. We all rushed around showing our photos, some chaps for the first time receiving their son or daughter's. I think the single chaps are a bit fed up of us.

I have smelt some exceedingly bad odours in my time, including the long time dead, but the fish they put on for our dinner today made all the other smells comparable with attar of Roses. I was very hungry but not that hungry.

The overland party D Force are running around being inoculated, vaccinated and tested for dysentery, also blood test for malaria. They must want them fit which smells like hard work in a hard country. Maybe I'm lucky. Back to the fish. Some of the chaps have already eaten snails, frogs and snakes but they could not tackle the fish, i.e. impossible to eat and wear respirators, they had to pass them over.

Heard a very fine lecture last night on the "Guards". It was given by a later Guardsman who is now an Officer of the Suffolk Regiment. He also was a great humorist and kept us laughing through most of the lecture. He stood 6' 5" in his socks.

Sunday 14th March 43

"D" Force advance party left this morning and two of my original gun crew, Cyril Pitchford and Frank Reardon (who was my driver on the Island). There are only two of us left here now, Nev Merrifield (just returned from hospital from a bout of malaria) and myself. The balance of the force are thought to be leaving on Tuesday. Most of the advance party received at least one letter, some did not and looked horribly down in the mouth, hope the rest of "D" Force's mail arrives before they leave on Tuesday.

Noticed two Infantry Battalions marching this afternoon, they were carrying wreaths and it looks very much like a funeral. I don't think it was a visit to the cemetery as for quite some time the Japs would not give their permission unless it was for burial purposes, which is very disturbing to the brothers, relations and friends of the chaps buried there, especially those going away with not much prospect of their ever coming back to Singapore.

Monday 15th March 43

Tried out some more ash washing, turned out a great success, it's a case of let the ashes do your washing.

"D" Force busy getting their things together, also some of everybody's if they don't sit over them. There is much exchanging of addresses going on and if all who said they would look me up after the show do, I will be kept busy entertaining for the rest of my life. Some of them no doubt I will see again, some possibly never.

Eyes were fairly good yesterday, but today they are worse than ever, can't make them out. Food at present very plain and scarce, sincerely hope the force going away do better than we are doing, which I think is more than probable.

Most of the mail for "D" Force has been handed out to the men and they feel much happier. Some poor souls did not receive any, whether they were destroyed by the censors or lost is not known.

Tuesday 16th March 43

A Celebrity show was put on last night and when they called it Celebrity they were not even doing the artists justice. It was an English show and I have never heard or seen or likely to hear or see a better show. It was past all comprehension to even realise that each artist could be ordinary soldiers and

P.O.W.s. Every one was a noted artist and the audience was spellbound, never have I heard such enthusiastic applause. My own feelings once again way beyond me to describe and the nearest I can get to my feelings was they were heavenly. If it was possible to just spend the rest of our prison life being able to enjoy as we did last night the music and singing, time would be no object and it would be all just one beautiful dream.

All through my army career I have been fated to make a Pal and then something comes along and we are separated. This has happened once more when today my Pal Rus West left with "D" Force. The force left, i.e. our section of it, at 8.45am accompanied by only one of our Regimental Officers, Peter Whitecomb [Whitycombe], a very capable one and very popular. We supplied 184 men and one officer, they all seemed happy to be going and I envy them what must be an interesting trip into new country (I believe their destination to be Bangkok) with a four day at least train trip through Malaya. The train trip itself should be full of interest provided they are not locked up like cattle and are allowed to keep the doors of the trucks open, it would be practically impossible for them to live otherwise. Now that "D" Force has gone I anticipate more than our share of shifting about from one quarter of the camp to another, only an excuse is ever needed for this to happen.

Have not received any more letters yet, looks like as if it will be a considerable time before I do as our unit has received more than their share due to rushing our "D" Force letters past the censor. Had a visit from Grant Gobel, he said Aub Jones was on the "D" Force but owing to his only having one eye there is a possibility of him having to come off.

Visited the eye specialist again today, eyes seemed to have improved although I can't notice any difference. Eileen's birthday, happy birthday and good luck.

Wednesday 17th March 43

Did our first shift today, we moved to quarters about 300 yards from our previous ones. These quarters had been occupied by 2/4th Anti Tank Officers. The place was lousy with bugs, they were crawling up the walls and over the floor. We tucked in and gave the place a thorough cleaning and I hope got rid of most of them. The conveniences are marvellous, shower, basin and lavatory adjoining the quarters, it's too good to be true and we expect after we have settled down and cleaned the place up another move.

We are still going to continue a Sergeant's Mess, what with God and the Nips only know. I believe it will be a composite Mess 2/15, 8/10 and 4th Anti Tank, about 40 Sergeants in all.

Thursday 18th March 43

Starvation rations today, seemed to be some kind of mix up caused by the reorganisation and our three meals did not pan out any more than a tablespoon full of rice per meal. Rubber trees starting to flower and once more that faint beautiful perfume infiltrates everywhere. I think it is the most marvellous perfume of all flowers.

Whilst we were on the working party at Bukit Timah four chaps made a break, previous to them two others tried and were captured and shot at Changi. Nothing was heard of the four until today when

one arrived from Singapore jail and was admitted to Changi Hospital. It appears they were caught as they were about to leave the Island and the Japs sentenced them to 10 years solitary confinement. The chap at the Hospital has not seen the other three since captured.

Another chap arrived at the Hospital, he has been out with Guerrilla bands near the Mollas District since before Capitulation. There were sixteen in the band, three of these (two being brothers, have died with Malaria.) This chap gave himself up and has been in Singapore jail. These chaps belonged to the 29th Battalion.

Friday 19th March '43

Food still very light and the Sergeants are doing a real starve, no doubt things will improve when everything settles down.

Truck loads of Dutch troops pulled out toady, presumably going North. It is rumoured that all the fit Tommies have had their marching orders and there is talk of another force from the A.I.F. to go. I suppose they will gradually clear the Island of every P.O.W. fit enough to be moved. A news bulletin composed of news items of interest received in letters is compiled by Headquarters (on receipt of the news from the persons receiving the letters). Some very interesting stuff has already been promulgated and I expect when all the letters have been received quite an amount of interesting material will be available.

Saturday 20th March 43

Helped hang a couple of doors in the Officers' Mess, had some trouble doing it as this building, like most others, is bomb happy and strained. But after a deal of shaving etc. we managed to swing them in a fashion. Eyes much improved, still have blind spots. I don't think that feature will ever leave them, otherwise pains, aches etc. have not bothered me for a few days, also vision is clearer, thank to Marmite. Incidentally, since taking this Marmite I have put on 6lbs. There is only a very limited supply of Marmite, worst luck, as I'm sure if everyone could have it most of our ailments would disappear. Still impatiently waiting for the balance of our mail.

Little improvement in our tea tonight, in the shape of two small rissoles made of rice and vegetables.

Sunday 21st March 43

Good A.I.F. concert last night, it is the Anniversary Concert and composed of the most favoured items during the year. It was worth a couple of hours of any P.O.W.'s time.

The more I see of the majority of this Division's Officers the easier it is to understand why we are here. They are undoubtedly the most egotistical, self-opinionated, grandstand players it has been my misfortune to ever come in contact with. This applies mostly to the younger set. What officers who were officers have paid the sacrifice for being officers and men, or have gone away with the Forces to be away from this type we are cursed with at Changi as they derive much more out of life being with their men and not preening themselves, gorging themselves (whilst the men starve for vitamins), lying on their backs trying to think of all the B_____ they can design to make the O.R.'s life hell. To some of these gentleman the Nips are saints. All I can say is God help some of them the moment they

receive their discharge and discard the clothes they are sheltering under and unworthably using to their own advantage. There are some very decent ones but much in the minority. If this war here had not ended so abruptly, most of these gentleman would have been sent back home or relieved of their Commands. They have a lot to be thankful to Nippon for. Nature has stocked this country with many crawling and disgusting life to make it uncomfortable for human beings and it was not necessary for the army to add further to this loathsome type.

Monday 22nd March 43

Feel very depressed and uneasy, think it must be the full moon, it always seems to affect me that way lately. The nights are beautiful and sleep is hard and my mind turns to all sorts of fantastic ideas regarding possibilities of escape etc.

Eyes giving me trouble today. They have started to ache and my vision has become badly blurred again.

Officially heard the story of the chap who tried to escape and is now in hospital. Three of them cleared from a work party last July, after being loose for about three weeks they were recaptured, tried by the Nips and sentenced to 9 years solitary confinement. The chap here was placed in a cell after being deprived of all his clothes and belongings (of the other two he has heard nothing) and issued with prison garb, $\frac{3}{4}$ trousers and shirt. In the cell was placed a bucket for hygiene purposes and that comprised all the fittings allowed, no bed, no blankets, no seat, just concrete floor and walls. He slept on the concrete floor and when he was brought here for an appendix operation it was found impossible to operate until such times as the ulcers and sores which cover him were cleaned and an attempt made to try and heal some of them. If I ever do make a break I certainly will not be captured.

Information has drifted down that the P.O.W. camp in Bangkok where the working parties have gone are quite good, also the food and conditions. There are nine camps in an area of about 20 square miles. The food consists of meat (Yak) fresh fish, fresh vegetables, eggs, of which there are plenty. The only drawback is Malaria and this is very prevalent but that seems to be all the troops are suffering with. This information is supposed to come from a Tommy who tried to make a break and was recaptured and brought to Singapore and is now in hospital.

Tuesday 23rd March 43

Paid another visit to the Eye Specialist. Trouble still there, have to go again in 2 weeks time. Marmite cut out and have now to take a course of Towga, a small pea like our dried peas, only smaller. They are placed on a wet cloth and when they shoot I have to eat them raw. These peas contain some of the vitamins that I lack.

Had a visit from Ray Tanning. He received a letter from Newcastle and he came down to tell me the news. Believe things are not going too well on the Russian front and that Churchill does not think the war will end this year or maybe next. God help us if some sort of food relief is not forthcoming if this news be true.

Hec Byrnes came out of hospital today, he had not received any letters to date. I passed on the information regarding his wife and baby for which he was thankful.

Wednesday 24th March 43

Feel a little disappointed, quite a few of the boys received letters today but I missed out. Still when I receive mine theirs will be old.

Les Shearer from Newcastle came to see me today, brought me a pair of glasses to try. I found I could see a little better with them but they make my eyes very weary and ache. He gave them to me but I don't think I will use them other than to write, which is very little as there is really nothing of interest left in this place to write about.

After a couple of blackouts one of the boys died suddenly this afternoon. His death was caused by Beri Beri and brain fever, I think his name was Cross.

Thursday 25th March 43

Funeral this morning of the chap who died yesterday. His name is Snowy Cross and he belonged originally to the 2/10th and was in our present composite Regiment when he died. His death was entirely due to diet deficiency.

Very heavy rain storm this afternoon, during which a plane was circling around our camp flying very low and obviously trying to pick up the drome. Visibility was very bad and I don't know how it fared.

It is nearly a fortnight ago since I received my letter and I am beginning to get a little anxious regarding my others. A large batch arrived today but did not contain any for me.

Two rice rissoles, a baked sweet spud and gravy, also a plum pudding minus the plums etc., made of rice flour and peanuts with sweet potato sauce, altogether a good tea.

Heard a very fine and educational lecture on the people and customs of Japan, given by an English Major who had spent the previous 18 years before the war there as a Shell Oil Rep. His name is Major Wilde. I had met him before at River Valley Road and found him an exceptional fine type of man.

Friday 26th March 43

Received Mae's first letter today and was extremely annoyed to find that Julian's photo was missing. Apparently it had been stuck onto the letter and the Censors fearing some vital information hidden underneath in removing it no doubt it was destroyed or mislaid.

It was a day of events. Pay day and the Geneva Red Cross flags were flown around the camp for the first time and I sincerely hope it means we are to enjoy all the privileges this flag represents.

Don't feel very well today, head and eyes aching and what I have been dreading for some time, my Happy Feet are coming back. This complaint is I would say the most painful and consistent of our complaints. All the bones of your feet ache worse than the worst toothache and no matter what you

do there is no relief. The complaint usually lasts for three to four months and I have seen 15 stone men reduced to skeletons and weighing no more than 8 stone, mainly due to the excess of pain and lack of sleep. I had it last year but only in a mild form. The Red Cross supplies arrived last year at this time and we were able to clear the complaint up.

Saturday 27th March 43

Great excitement around the camp. 500 A.I.F. and 500 Tommies required for Overseas Party to leave camp by 7.15am tomorrow morning. All the information available (if true) that the party is going somewhere overseas with a climate the same as Singapore, plenty of food but no guarantee of meat. I will not be going. Feet not too bad but still aching a little. Eyes feel a little better.

Attended Masonic Club meeting last night. Quite a number of the members left with "D" Force and the members left are all crocks with the exception of the Officers.

Old Lew Baggott of our Regiment had a blackout this morning and was taken to the Hospital with partial paralysis. The doctor said his complaint was another type of Beri Beri.

Sunday 28th March 43

Saw the boys off, they left before daylight and had quite a job doing up their gear in the dark. Spent a very boring day, it is just plain hell not being able to read, write or draw. Rumoured that another batch of mail has arrived at the Jail but I am inclined to think it is only a rumour.

Very few of the original 2/15th Regiment are now left in Changi and of those here the majority are officers. A Major belonging to one of the Infantry Battalions gave a wonderful lecture on his experiences as an officer of a Chinese Guerrilla Regiment during the Chinese-Jap war. He fought with the Chinese right up to the time of the outbreak of the European war. He then came back to Australia and enlisted as a private. Some of his experiences were beyond imagination. His name is Major Wood (???) and he lived in China for many years.

Monday 29th March 43

Rumoured that another overseas force of 500 A.I.F. is required. At present it is just a rumour but a distinct possibility. Looks as if the Japanese are going to split us up into small groups. They no doubt have their own reasons.

Quite a number of men are very badly off for clothes, some were wearing trousers and shorts unrecognisable as such. This to me is a great injustice as the A.I.F. tailor and his staff are at present engaged making swagger coats for all the officers. These swagger coats are made from two shirts which must be in good condition and matched. As a matter of fact the officers are blossoming out, dressed up like peacocks and strutting the same, which does not help them much in regaining the confidence and respect which they (a good majority of them) have lost as far as their men are concerned. Peter W. is one of the exceptions and when he left with the "D" Force his wardrobe was practically what he left in. I feel sure he was that disgusted he was anxious to be going. He is one of the few that everyone has a good word for.

Thought I might receive a letter from Mum and Dad but so far I have been out of luck. Quite a number of our chaps have already received about a dozen letters, there seems to be no limit to the number they can receive.

Eyes bad again but feet no worse. Weighed myself and found I am back to 10 stone 5 lbs.

Nippon excelled himself in his generosity today and received (to commemorate what occasion I don't know) as a gift **one** cigarette per man, not one of the common Virginian type, but pure Boong and even worse tobacco than we now buy which at its best is 99% coconut fibre.

It has just dawned on me whether I will ever know how to laugh and smile again, it is so long since I have done either. I am sure the facial effort will not function.

“Flame of the Forest” trees are again blooming in all their glory and is a very beautiful sight. They are one beauty of Malaya I shall never forget. Bill Jeater is now commander of our Brigade and our Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Wright, is now Commanding Officer of the Technical Regiment of the Brigade.

Tuesday 30th March 43

A Happy Day, received two letters, one from Mum and one from Dad, feel much more contented now that I have heard from Mae, Mum and Dad. Existence here would not be near so bad if I could received the same every week or even month but the period lapsed between the time of writing is so great that I cannot help still worrying.

No doubt Dad will receive from the Japanese some kind of Order of the Rising Sun or something for his remarks in his letter. I know he was referring to Julian but the Japs more than likely will take his praise unto themselves. We always refer to the Japs as Nips and they know it. The paragraph I am referring to is “The Nip is doing well and walking all over the place”. I had a good laugh and so did the boys when I read it to them. I bet it had the Nips puzzled who censored the letters and no doubt said to themselves “Ah, here at least is a Pro Nipponese”. They might even look me up and send me back home, with a suitable December oration for the Most Honorable Father. God if they only knew Dad's sentiments regarding them it was bad enough before the show and I can well imagine what they are now.

Good old Doug [Dud?ley] Munro, I knew he would do all in his power to lessen the load. I also appreciate Alan Welsh's worthy thoughts. All that remains at Changi of the original “Charlie” Troop are: Captain Makepiece (In Command); Jim Callow (Gunnery Sergeant); Nev Merrifield (Bd on my gun); Tom Irvine (Gunner); Frank Connelly (Signals); and Keith and Bill Bryant (Drivers) and myself, eight in all. The balance who came through whole or repaired have been split up on different forces. If anything does happen and we had a chance to go in again, it would not be as our original units but some sort of composite affair. Anyhow it does not seem very likely that the opportunity will ever come our way.

Wednesday 31st March 43

Suffered with very bad headache all day, very uncomfortable and depressing.

Three A.I.F. were caught outside the wires last night. They were fishing in a backwater near the camp. Have not heard how they fared. It was a bad time to be caught as yesterday three Dutch P.O.W.s had tried a break, were recaptured, a fourth is still at large. Rumour has it that the Dutchmen are to be shot. Japanese have cut the rice ration, 1oz per day per man, and substituted rice polishings of which we have much more than requirements for medicinal purposes and it is of no use at all as food. It is the most vile stuff to take and makes me nearly sick every day.

What I am about to write now is very hard to believe but nevertheless is a fact. P.O.W.s have been warned that serious action will be taken with anyone found selling clothes to natives or Japanese soldiers and that the I.J.A. take a very serious view of it. Yesterday two men were caught by one of the P.O.W. officers selling clothes to two Japanese soldiers. The men were arrested by the officer and he also complained to Jap Headquarters about the Jap soldiers. A Jap officer arrived, took the Jap soldiers' rifles from them put them in our detention barracks, gave them a good bashing, told the Officer (P.O.W.) in Charge that they were now under his control and were to be tried and punished by us as we think fit. They are still in our jail, result of the trial and sentence as yet unknown. There is no doubt about these people.

Thursday 1st April

Feel nearly 100% today, eyes much better, headache gone, Happy Feet hardly noticeable. Hope it is not just an April fool joke on nature's part. Debugged, washed out the quarters and did my washing.

Vegetables in galore from our hosts at least we will have a couple of decent meals.

Have not heard anything more regarding the chaps caught outside the wire or the Dutchman or the Jap guards. The Jap guard incident happened in the southern area and the Officer who caught them was a Tommy officer. These Tommy officers can run rings around the A.I.F. officers in every department, even to scrounging for the men and handling the Nips. Our fellows (most of them) don't give a damn for the men and a scared stiff of the Nips. Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher (Black Jack) is an exception as regards handling the Nips and there will be many a good tale told about his methods after.

Friday 2nd April 43

Still feel pretty good, but eyes not as good as yesterday. Quite an amount of air activity around today. Heard a very funny lecture given by the English Padre Duckworth on the Cambridge Boat Crew's tour of Europe in 1938. He is only a young cove and very witty, he takes or he apes Ronald Frank[land?] and has us in fits of laughter, does not mind what he says and uses words, obscene ones, that no self respecting parson would use, but still I don't think he has the ministry to heart and will probably go back and take the stage as a career.

Saturday 3rd April 43

I.J.A. have issued orders that if any more fishing parties are found outside the wire very serious action will be taken against the offenders and also extreme measures will be take against all A.I.F. in the

area. Very serious outbreaks of T.B. has occurred and cases are being admitted into the hospital at an alarming rate.

Salt pork was on sale at the canteen today at \$1 per lb, the only trouble is that no one has a dollar to buy any. Our own piggery run by the Tommies under Jap control started to produce the other day and some pigs were killed and the pork sent to the hospital: also produce from the gardens is being dispatched to the hospital 3 tons of Malayan spinach was pulled yesterday.

Season had changed and the north east Monsoons have finished and the weather has become very hot and humid. The nice cool breezes from these monsoons were very acceptable.

Sunday 4th April 43

Terrific explosion last night shook all the buildings and Nev Merrifield was struck by a piece of the ceiling and received a bad cut. I thought it was on and at last the Yanks had paid us a call. The explosion seemed to come from the Naval base, don't know the cause.

Eating quite a lot of Zegay shoots and find them very palatable, crisp, sweet and much nicer than lettuce. Still do my three mile walk every night amongst the exotic perfumes of the tropical shrubs and trees. We feasted on vegetables for a few days but I think the famine has set in again. It would seem that the vegetables come by boat from Java and we all have to wait for another shipment.

Tuesday 6th April 43

Attended the eye specialist this afternoon. They are at least not getting worse for which I am very thankful. My eyes are my only disability now, otherwise I feel well. Glorious sunset last night. These sunsets are always at their best when a storm is brewing from the West.

The birds have all built their nests and are busy raising families. I take it by this sign that it is nature's spring or early summer, not that the climate shows very much difference only that the monsoonal winds change from N.E. to S.E. and whichever wind you happen to get makes the climate cooler.

Quite a number of new mental cases the last few days, diet deficiency being directly responsible. The hospital has now a large number of these cases and I believe they are incurable after a certain stage.

Wednesday 7th April 43

Uneventful day other than it was pay day, but as that does not affect me as I do not receive any due to my being classed as not able to do duties. The peculiar thing about the system is we who require some of the very few things available at the canteen which would help our diet cannot buy as we get no pay and have to rely on charity from others. Of course this No Duty includes Hospital cases and convalescent cases, again where little extras are needed. At least they are looked after from a general fund subscribed by the people being paid, also the profits from the canteen go to them and they buy [?] defeats this Japanese method. The officers, whether in Hospital, the Convalescent Depot or otherwise are not affected and draw their full pay.

Once more Nippon has opened his generous heart. This time the present (as called by the Nips) was in the form of one army biscuit per man. No doubt this gesture on their part was brought about by the

weevil. They were very mouldy and weevily and no doubt not fit for Japanese consumption. The cooks put them in the oven, hardened them up, killed the weevils and we soon did the rest, hope the Nips is not disappointed for we enjoyed them and thank the weevil.

Thursday 8 April 43

Did a large amount of washing and gave my bed a thorough debugging, the [s]laughter was terrific.

Have not been able to sleep the last few nights and refought the battle for Malaya. I do not do this very often, but when I do it is not very pleasant as the most horrible of the sights are the most consistent, no doubt they are the things that are stamped the deepest in my memory.

Friday 9th April 43

It is alleged that the Japanese have made a statement to the effect that they now find it impossible to keep the food supply up to us and that it will be necessary in a few days to send way 3,500 A.I.F. and 4,000 English and Dutch. They said their destination would be where the food supply will be 100%. If this number of A.I.F. is moved the number left in Singapore will be around 1,000 and all that number would be cases unable to travel. There seems to be quite an amount of running around at Headquarters which more or less verifies this statement by the Japs. I am easy and will not worry which way the cat jumps as far as I am concerned as I firmly believe that in time all P.O.W.s capable of being moved will be taken from the Island. I am told that famine is rife all over the peninsular and Singapore population are in very sorry plight.

Saturday 10th April 43

The move has been officially announced on parade but the personnel have not yet been made known.

Hospitals are very short of medical supplies and numerous SOSs have been sent out by them but to present with no results. Singapore itself is denuded of any medical supplies and the natives will pay any price for drugs etc. Once again this filthy type of individual that we unluckily have our share of has come into prominence again. The very depleted stock at the hospital has been further depleted by thefts and so far two hospital orderlies have been caught selling some of our most needed drugs to the natives. I believe they were sentenced to 5 years by Court Martial and I think they were extremely lenient, their charge should have been attempted manslaughter or murder and suffered the maximum penalty.

When cleaning our my pack came across the model schooner I built for Julian "Julian C". When building it I visualized he and myself sailing it by now. I wonder if it will ever reach its destination. I hope so as it is the first thing I ever made for him and I'm afraid I could not have built it only for the advice and help I received from some of the other chaps, especially a fisherman Bill Bale from Port Macquarie. Also I had a look at my collection of seeds and found that nearly all had withered and crumbled to dust, afraid they will not keep and most of them will be impossible to replace.

Not sleeping very well and eyes and headaches are pretty bad again. No improvement in sight.

Sunday 11th April 43

Rained intermittently during the day when the sun came out it was extremely hot. Walked for 2½ hours before going to bed last night, made myself very tired but did not sleep much better. I just lay awake with my thoughts.

Moon in its first quarter, my hopes still rise and fall with the moon.

Food position very bad. Japanese are issuing us with practically nothing only very little rice we are boiling hibiscus leaves to keep us from starving. Thank God there is a fund in the camp which enables a little togay, and Soya beans to be bought, also stinking herring, they just keep starvation away.

Monday 12th April 43

Rained on and off again, very hot between storms. Went for a walk over to G.H.Q. had a look at my record sheet and found I was single with one child and no mention of wife as next of kin. Had the records altered without going through the usual channels or very unusual proceedings in the army. A hibiscus shrub is growing over there with four different coloured flowers, white, scarlet, pink and cream. The flowers are in profusion and is a glorious sight.

I believe the mail that arrived at Changi jail for sorting some days ago came from Geneva and only 25 letters were for the A.I.F., naturally we are all bitterly disappointed.

Latest furfy which I sincerely pray is not true. Our planes bombed one of the trains taking "D" force killing 60 and wounding 200. If this is a furfy and not true the person responsible should be flogged to death.

Tuesday 13 April 43

Hec Byrnes returned from the Convalescent Depot. Talking to an English Officer who assured me that the Death Sentence is still carried out in the English Army and that he personally attended the shooting of an English soldier sentenced to death for cowardice in France this war. He also stated that in the Guard House here are two Englishmen who have been sentenced to death for cowardice during this campaign, but the sentence cannot be carried out until we are relieved. The two chaps who received the sentence of five years for stealing and selling the drugs belong to a Tommy Unit. Two A.I.F. were also caught but have not yet been court martialled.

Nothing further regarding bombing of "D" Force, just died out and no doubt a rotten furfy. Twenty three truck loads of Dutchmen left the camp at 4.30am this morning. Quite an amount of vegetables arrived today, we need them.

Wednesday 14th April 43

Eyes still no better or no worse but I think so far too bad to allow me to go away with 'F' Force. Tommies and Dutchmen have started to leave and our chaps start Thursday week. Anything might happen between now and then and I might still have a chance of making the grade. I believe French Indo China is their destination. I would like very much to make the trip and when I go up for review to the Eye Specialist next Tuesday I will ask him about the chances.

Thursday 15th April 43

Very good A.I.F. show put on by the concert party last night. It was a three act comedy and went over extra well. I am paying the cost today with a splitting headache and eye ache. There is an epidemic of house planning going on at present, everywhere I look chaps are drawing designs and planning homes. I wonder just how many will eventuate?

'F' Force are leaving at the rate of three trains per day, about 1,000 men and it will be over a week before the last lot leave. News very good and our hopes have risen accordingly. Pay day, but I only receive 25 cents from the insurance fund.

Friday 16th April 43

Heard from 'E' Force. The Japanese Guards brought back a note from one of the chaps. They have landed in Borneo and are housed in a very nice camp. Wish I could have gone with that Force, there were only 500 of them and I think they will do alright. Talking to a young chap from the 2/20th Battalion, he showed me a Japanese sword scar – reaching from one shoulder across the back of his neck to the other shoulder. It is about 1½” wide and 1” deep, a terrible looking scar. He was out on a patrol on the Island and ran into a Japanese concentration and during the scrap a Jap officer sliced him with his sword, obviously tried to behead him. Later a Chinese woman was attracted to a drain by flies and found him where the Japs had evidently thrown him, thinking him dead. At great risk to themselves two Chinamen were able to get him back to the Battalion. He lingered between life and death for some months and the doctor thanks the maggots which had covered the wound for his recovery. He came out of the hospital a few days ago and a slightly stooped neck and this terrible scar his only disability. He amongst many thousands have cause to appreciate the Chinese.

'F' force are beginning to receive their numerous inoculations and the degrading glass rod prior to their shift.

Saturday 17th April 43

Teddy Hayes, the chap that the Bukit Monument, when in the shape of a log, pulled on his leg fracturing it in four places, came out of hospital. It is nearly 12 months since the accident happened. His leg is permanently disfigured and he will always have a bad limp.

Last night three Nip bashers made the tour of the camp, bashing up all and sundry who did not salute them, and the number was great. I think these Nips find it a very pleasant method of spending their night off.

Sunday 18th April 43

Once more I have shaved off my hair and joined the ranks of the baldies. Fate seems to be against my having a real cobbler as again my best friend Sergeant Jim Kalberfell has left with 'F' Force. They left early this morning, around 4am being the first batch of A.I.F. of the force to leave. Jim and I had become great friends and there was not a mean bone in his 6ft 5”. He is not an original and did not join us until we came off the mainland. He left Australia during December and belonged to the 2/15th,

5th Reinforcements. The move this morning came as a surprise from the Nips as it was not expected that this batch would leave until Wednesday or Thursday.

At different periods swarms of bees have been caught and placed in boxes and around our area there are now 8 hives. These hives were robbed today and as usual no honey was found. This is common to the country as the bee does not find it necessary to make honey and store it for the winter like they do in other countries. The flowers bloom all the year and there is no winter. All that they produce is the wax comb in which they lay their eggs. Many uses are found for the bees wax and that is why the hives are kept.

Monday 19th April 43

Consistent rain all day and a consistent headache to go with it. Plenty of rice and vegetables to eat yesterday and today, due to the Force leaving in such a hurry.

The two Tommies who tried to escape from Thailand and are now in hospital here with Beri Beri have been sentenced to 5 years solitary confinement. They said that the P.O.W.s who left here are working in Thailand building a railway. Food is plentiful and altogether they are in good health and physically fit. They receive 40 cents per day, 15 from the Thai Government and 25 from the Japanese and the canteens have plenty to sell.

Tuesday 20th April 43

Went to the Specialist for another review and received a bad shock. He informed me I was practically blind in my left eye and my eyes generally were worse than they were on my last visit. I don't feel too pleased about it.

My stomach always turns when herrings are produced and today I know why. I went into the kitchen whilst they were being prepared for lunch, their putrid stench nearly turned me over but even that was not as bad as the sight of them. They were being washed and were absolutely crawling with maggots. Grant Gobel and Les Shearer left this morning with 'F' Force. They called to say goodbye last night. The two A.I.F. chaps caught stealing the drugs from the hospital were Court Martialled today. I have not heard the results.

Wednesday 21st April 43

The last of 2/15th to go on the draft left early this morning. With them went Nev Merrifield and the last of my gun crew. I was extremely sorry to see him go. He is a wonderful chap and regular gentleman and soldier although it is only a couple of weeks since he had his 21st birthday. Of the original 'C' Troop there are now only four left at Changi (not including hospital) Captain Makepeace, Sergeant Jim Callow, Bdr. Bill Reeves and myself.

I believe the English, Scotch and Dutch who are left in the other camps are coming into this area so it is certain we will have to move to other quarters when the last of the force have gone which should happen about Friday.

Thursday 22nd April 43

Rumoured that when this force (F) has gone another one (G) is required to consist of 1,200 Dutchmen, 600 Tommies and 200 A.I.F. Where they are going to get this many fit men God and the Nips only know.

There is a grass that grows in the area which has a very distinct taste of lemon and a couple of blades in a billy of tea gives it a real lemon flavour. It also is used by the cooks to make a sauce for the rice puddings. It is much stronger in flavour than lemons.

Court Martial still going. It has now finished its third day. I think there is more in it than what is known and I believe a lot of hospital orderlies will be extremely lucky if they are not involved. I heard that the drug stolen sold at \$3 a tablet the size of an aspro, and the demand for them outside is great. Lieutenant Colonel Bill Leater is in the chair and one of our officers Lieutenant Walker (the Water Buffalo – due to the resemblance) is Counsel for the accused. ... (*unreadable*) ... is to prosecute.

Friday 23rd April 43

Good Friday minus the hot cross buns. Another Easter spent in a P.O.W. camp. Eight of the balance of our Regiment are to form part of 'G' Force, composed of mostly cooks and a couple of Batmen. The Batmen have had a great life, very few ever being on a working party, they are all the picture of health and should have been used before this, but I suppose the poor officers must be considered and now some of them will have to share. This P.O.W. business must be a terrible hardship to them. Why shouldn't they all have a personal servant, whilst sick men have to do their (the servants') share of working parties and duties. They are not just ordinary men and it is high time their bodies realised it. Getting catty again, really they are not all like that, some are marvellous men and gentlemen, but the majority. Well!

Saturday 24th April 43

And so passes another milestone in both Rod's and my life. This is my second birthday as a P.O.W. and I trust the last. I suppose Rod is busy with his studies prior to the Leaving.

Our quarters have for the last few nights been overrun with rats twice. They awakened me last night by running over my face. Made a trap and caught one within a few minutes of setting. Walked around to the mango tree I had under observation, obviously someone else had also, there were no mangoes.

Sunday 25th April 43

Dawn service with the usual bugle calls and wreath placings. Also another service at 7pm. All troops were represented in the morning and the Tommies attended the evening service. Worked very hard all day carting gear, bricks and utensils to our new area which is about ----- mile from our present area. Looks as if we will be kept busy all day tomorrow. The day was very hot and I am at present suffering extreme pain in the eyes and head. The officers, or most of them, bucked in and worked hard: they are the only fit men, the rest of us are crocks and found the day a very hard one. 'G' Force

left at 10am this morning for unknown destination, travelling by boat. General opinion is Samoa. They did not waste much time getting the Force away.

Monday 26th April 43

Worked very hard and feel very tired, also eyes and head still aching like blazes. Our new quarters are not too bad, a bit bomb happy and leaks but the view and the beautiful perfumes from the surrounding trees compensate for its defects.

Sandflies gave me hell during the Jap check parade, expect a few sores from their efforts. Mosquitoes are also very troublesome this last few days.

Tuesday 27th April 43

Mucked around the garden in the morning, pruned a few shrubs etc. Reviewed by eye specialist, found my left eye had practically ceased to function and on the whole both eyes much worse, no doubt due to the last few days hard work. I am now confined to my quarters and have to report back on Saturday. He wanted to send me to Hospital but I asked him to wait a few days more as I thought they would be much better if I was able to keep indoors, so he gave me until Saturday.

Wednesday 28th April 43

Stayed indoors all day, eyes still the same. Did not sleep very well last night.

Thursday 29th April 43

Eyes maybe a little better, at least they are not aching so much. Most of our officers are hopping in and doing more than their share of work. Mr Knox, Mr Leod, Gibson Edwards and Captain Lendgrin, all great scouts and always have been, are doing the lion's share. Everybody likes these few officers and they are amongst the few who did a good job in rout of action.

The conversation at present is on the letter cards previously sent home by us and it brings to my mind a card made out by a Gunner Bradden [Russell Braddon?] which I saw and thought very humorous and typical of the cove (he is the replica of Gary Cooper, possibly not as tall, but over 6', his features are identical even to the smile). It read something like this: "Mother Darling, Guess who's a P.O.W? I am unscathed, whole, but empty. My thoughts are continually of your food."

Friday 30th April 43

It's on again, at least rumour has it, 3,000 to comprise 600 A.I.F. and the balance English and Dutch are to form 'H' Force which will depart a week today. Also (still rumour) the balance will be shifted before the 23rd May, including Hospital, sick and wounded. No doubt we will be spread pretty thoroughly over the North Pacific.

Saturday 1st May 43

Another review by the Eye Specialist. There is a slight improvement and he gave me another three days under the same conditions and if there is no improvement by then I'm for the Hospital. Had a few words with a couple of peacocks from the old mens' home (the quarters where the young unwanted officers reside). By crossing the grounds of these particular quarters by a well worn track

quite an appreciable distance can be cut off. We have been using this track ever since we arrived back in Changi, but yesterday evening two of the inmates, no doubt trying to reassure themselves that they had still the authority of an officer and a gentleman tried themselves out on a couple of bodies, as they are pleased to term us. They called out in their best parade ground voices to us asking what authority we had to come through the grounds and in a very nasty tone told us to go back the way we came, although we were just stepping onto the road off the grounds. I told them we were quite unaware of our stepping on holy grounds due to the fact that no signs or indications had been posted to inform us but had we known who occupied the quarters we would have taken special pains to keep as far as possible from them. One of them (I think he is known as the Gemas Express by his Battalion. This name was given to him by the Battalion Medical Officer when he sent him back to base with a slip written in Latin, declaring he had cold feet and not fallen arches as complained of by him after the first Nip barrages came over) became very annoyed and threatened all kinds of things for what he considered an attempt on my part to be impertinent. I said it was a matter of opinion and walked away and left them.

Food (that is rice veg) has improved considerably and there is now plenty. Physically I feel perfect and my health, outside my eyes, could not be better. I now weigh 10 stone 8 lbs.

Sunday 2nd May 43

And Mae is another year older. I wonder is she growing fat in her old age. Her next birthday I hope will be a much happier one with myself home helping to make it so. This is the second birthday I have to make up.

Another original 2/15th died last night with TB and was buried today. His name is John Buffett and is a Norfolk Islander. Tommies are still working hard transferring their gear etc. from the Southern area. The more I see of the Tommy and their officers the more I admire them. No doubt they are at their best when things are adverse and they take everything with typical British spirit and humour.

Monday 3rd May 43

It is interesting to note the magnification of small and unnoticeable pleasure of civil life under these conditions such as: cutting yourself a sandwich when the fancy takes you, or pulling out a packet of real cigarettes and having one and numerous others. 'H' Force today were medically examined, actually as much as 80% are very far from being fit men. It seems the Nips are determined to have so many fit men and our people are determined to find them. Head and eyes aching violently again and my ears are ringing much more noticeably than usual. In fact I hardly notice the ringing unless I think about it.

Our present Medical Officer attached to our particular section, Dr. Fagen (Major) is a marvellous type of Doctor. Nothing is a trouble to him and he is kindness and consideration personified. The Eye Specialist, Dr. (Major) Orr is of the same type.

Tuesday 4th May 43

Whilst walking last night trod on a scorpion which flicked up its tail and clawed my heel. I was wearing a pair of slippers made from old boot sole – I put in a very painful night but his morning, other than the marks and little swelling it was OK.

Attended the Eye Specialist and this time I could not wheel him and tomorrow I go into hospital. It appears my eyes are deteriorating.

Wednesday 5th May 43

With 38 others driven over to the hospital in ambulance. The building I occupy has three floors and all eye cases as inmates. There are 110 on the top floor (the floor I occupy), 115 Second floor, 117 Ground floor, making a total of 342 eye cases. I have a bed on the verandah making it very comfortable. Tea, my first meal there was good, vegetable stew, rissole (veg), desert spoon of fruit salad and a biscuit (rice), tea and a slice of bread flavoured with peanuts for supper. I can see my weight increasing rapidly.

Ken Chapman our BC's driver who has been in hospital for many months suffering badly all the time with his particular complaint from the verge of death is also on the verandah. He cannot be moved and every day they expect to be his last. He is just a bundle of bones and does not recognise anybody. No visitors are allowed to see him.

Thursday 6th May 43

My first day as a hospital patient and a very comfortable one more than I can say for my first night when I found that I was definitely not inured from bugs, they gave me a torrid time and I gave them a torrid time per medium of a blow lamp this morning. Tonight I hope to be the sole occupant of my bed. Meals are good, not too much but tasty and well put on, of course, 90% rice. Palm Oil and rice polishings are issued twice daily and I believe yeast about twice per week, Marmite has run out.

Visited the hospital eye specialist and I go for review in a week's time. There are about 10 of the Regiment in this building so plenty of friends.

Some of the chaps are complaining about the food, but I definitely could not see anything to complain of and conclude they are just nature complainers and usually notorious bludgers.

Glorious sunrises and sunsets and my bed is in the right position for me to enjoy both.

Friday 7th May 43

Slept very well last night, no bugs. Received a very thorough examination from head to toes by the floor doctor. Blood pressure still not so hot. Have not received his general report as yet. --- McLeod, Jim Callow and Joe Meech paid me a visit. Our portion of 'H' Force were supposed to pull out this morning but at the last moment their shift was cancelled for 24 hours.

Grass soup makes up part of our treatment and the way it is done up here makes it rather nice to take. It is just grass boiled and a fatigue party is employed to cut the grass. The doctors consider this soup as beneficial as Marmite.

This is an inglorious way of spending my soldier days and the thought of it makes life much harder to bear. If I was here to some purpose it would be a different matter but when I think of all the training and the little actual fighting then this inactivity it certainly does not balance.

Saturday 8th May 43

Inquired about Harry Craig, he is still here will look him up later. Meals not as good as yesterday but still not too bad. Received a banana during the day. Another A.I.F. cove, an Engineer, was buried yesterday, poor soul, he had suffered very great pain since the show, his stomach having been blown out by a bomb. Ken Chapman has improved slightly and has been shifted to another ward.

Sunday 9th May 43

One of the patients was awakened last night when someone was cutting his wristlet watch from his wrist. He made a grab at the thief who rushed down the stairs and disappeared. Worked peeling spuds in the kitchen this morning as usual the knife slipped and I cut my hand, there was more blood than wound. Went for a walk around the grounds last night, it was glorious, the place was heavy with exotic perfume. One tree in particular known as the Chinese Lotus and very similar to our "Cestrum Nocturnum" could be smelt hundred of yards away, its perfume is overpowering and I'm sure too much would make one sick. The mangostein trees are in bloom and the perfume is the taste of its fruit. The flower is much like an orchid and the perfume similar to a magnolia but more tropical fruity.

'H' Force left yesterday morning and I think all told there are about 1200 A.I.F. on Singapore which includes Hospital staff.

Monday 10th May 43

Uneventful day, spent most of it sleeping. Food gradually getting worse, my first day here must have been a special effort. They must have unearthed some more Marmite as I received some this morning, very weak but acceptable. Felt hungry all day, my eyes have not affected my stomach.

Tuesday 11th May 43

Rained today for the first time for some days. Fifty men were taken from the building to supplement 'J' Force which leaves this week. They were the most improved eye cases. A chap was admitted this morning blind in both eyes caused by acid from a battery.

For the last three nights I have had very vivid dreams of 10 Ocean Street with Mrs C. playing the leading part. They were that vivid I had to convince myself that here was reality and not a dream.

Wednesday 12th March (*Julian – Jack wrote 'March' for the next couple of days and then reverted to 'May'*)

Much movement in the camp. 70-odd officers hurriedly moved north. At present there are now 6 of our officers left, 3 of these are in hospital. Alas fifty crippled cases are going north together with 500 ----- troops. Everything points to a batch of hospital cases, that is those moveable, going every other day.

The Doctor In Charge of Hospital today inspected Changi Civil Jail where the civilian internees are at present and it looks as if the cases unable to travel will take up residence in Changi jail. I expect to take my place in one of the batches moving north before long.

Thursday 13th March 43 (*May*)

Visit to Eye Specialist, slight improvement, also had another examination for blood pressure, still very high but improving. Speaking to a chap from Timor. During their transfer to Java they were attacked by one of our subs and also bombed by our bombers. They were carried in the hold of the ship and were that crowded that it was impossible to bed down all at the one time. The only time they were all allowed on deck was for calls of nature and they had to line up and only one person was allowed out at one time. This meant a continual line up and sometimes they were in the line for hours. Included in the P.O.W. were two Dutch women who also shared the hold and the line up. The men screened them off as well as possible and every morning kept away from the line and let them go first. No one washed for the seven days and the smell of the hold was horrible. Meals (twice per day) were passed down in buckets.

Saw a chap with a bucket of snails and he assured me (which I later confirmed) that he boils them and then fries them. He said they were very nice and tasted like fowls gizzards, quite a few ate them, snakes also, from boys out on the working parties. The Dutchmen are great ones on cats and dogs and I have seen them eat both in River Valley Road camp.

Friday 14th May 43

A Tommy died today and I had an invitation to attend the Post Mortem. I did not accept as I have had more than enough of gruesome sights and smells.

The death rate has declined considerably. This is due mostly to the wonderful discovery of a cure for dysentery. This cure is tablets called M.C. and will be the means of saving many thousands of lives. It has changed dysentery from a very dangerous complaint to a very ordinary one and even the worst cases are cured within a few days. An A.I.F. doctor experimented with these tablets and is supposed to be one of the greatest discoveries in the medical history.

Have been hearing from orderlies some of the most gruesome, heartbreaking and sickening stories, and I cannot believe human bodies could be capable of enduring what these orderlies describe as common. They also speak in the highest terms of the doctors and nurses.

Jim Callow came over again today and brought me some biscuits he had cooked.

Saturday 15th May 43

Very strong suspicion that the snail collectors do not collect them for their own consumption. Included in the collectors today were two doctors and the grass soup tastes with a slight flavour of chicken. I am beginning to wonder whether it contains only grass. I don't think I will inquire too deeply.

Sunday 16th May 43

Another A.I.F. man died last night. He died of a rare disease called Hodgson's Disease. There were four suffering with this disease, the other three are always at death's door. Ken Chapman is one of them.

Meals very bad today, rice and pie melon stew.

'J' Force left yesterday and the officers party are scheduled to leave tomorrow. These movements depend entirely on the shipping.

Impromptu concert in No. 2 ward last night. Went off very well but I'm afraid it would not have passed the normal concerts.

Monday 17th May 43

Food getting worse, the three meals today would not make one of the meals from the other camp. I think there is a lot of B_____ going on somewhere and I can now understand the growls I thought were unnecessary when I first arrived.

Holes have been dug around the hospital and in these Flame of the Forest trees are being planted in memory of soldiers who died in the hospital, a tree per man. Wonderful concert last night and quite a few world famous musicians took part. I don't remember their names but they were introduced with their history. Three were Yanks, 1 Dutch and the rest Englishmen.

I could eat a Tamil.

Tuesday 18th May 43

Spent a very enjoyable few hours listening to classical music played on a portable gramophone. One of our chaps is friendly with an English officer who is in hospital with a badly shattered leg (shell). This officer is a great lover of music, in fact all arts, and every Monday night he gives a gramophone recital to his friends. I am now one of the favoured few. He exchanges records with different persons during the week and selects the best for Monday nights. We had the [New] World Symphony by Dvorak, another by Beethoven, Chopin.

The botanical name for the Flame of the Forest (the color of them here is breathtaking) is Poinciana, so I am told.

Have not heard from Harry Craig as yet, I tried to contact him but he was out. I left word I was here some few days ago.

Trying an experiment on fifty of the worst eye cases, of which I am one, with the synthetic Marmite that we are making, we take it three times per day, a half cup each time. It is not bad to take and helps appease our hunger a little.

Wednesday 19th May 43

Uneventful day just watched and felt myself grow old. Hair going very gray and what is worse, falling out, and I am becoming bald rapidly. Still take my pleasant walks after sunset.

Thursday 20th May 43

Saw the Eye Specialist. Eyes much improved but still far from right. Otherwise I feel pretty fit.

Big Japanese check up this afternoon. They counted everyone in the hospital wards and lined up the orderlies etc. They were very thorough with their check so it looks like the prelude to something. Food has improved slightly, due to the number of complaints received from the inmates.

Friday 21st May 43

Went for a walk to "No Hoper's Hill". It derives its name from the number of chaps who sit there all day looking out to sea towards Aussie, with a look of blankness on their faces. There were about a dozen there when I arrived. The giggle house is not far away and I think most of them come from there, if not by their looks it won't be long before they belong there.

Here they call the putrid smelling and tasting herrings "MC" meaning "Malayan Command". On the other side they have another name.

Saturday 22nd May 43

A.I.F. concert party came over from the other side and put on a show for us. Dreamt that Dad was over here with me last night, it was a very vivid dream. Felt worried about it all day. Hope everything is alright back home.

Chap in a bed near me has a diary he found whilst in Singapore on a working party,. The woman's name is not shown. She is English, has two children and at least eight lovers, including a wealthy Chinaman and two French sailors. She must be well connected by the description of her daily routine. Her husband must be a pretty big noise. So much for the tropics. She also mentions her husband's numerous mistresses and illegitimate children.

Our own guards on the gates etc. have been taken off and the Japs are doing the job. Maybe it might mean something.

If anyone desires they are allowed to watch post mortems and any operations that are being performed. I have not availed myself of the opportunity yet. I doubt if I will.

Sunday 23rd May 43

Another walk up "No Hoper's Hill". I'm becoming a real no hoper. Pay day yesterday. Bought some green bananas and will have to wait until they ripen. On the floor below where I am there is a Dutch (quadroon I think) soldier. He looks just like a very thin elephant with the skin hanging from him in great folds. He was once the biggest man in Java and weighed 25 or 28 stone; he now weighs somewhere in the vicinity of 12 stone. He is very bad with beri-beri and can just move about with the help of two walking sticks. He looks grotesque.

Monday 24th May 43

Eyes improving, able to read a couple of chapters of big print. Made my eyes a bit weary but nevertheless I was able to read which is something.

Physical Culture classes are now being held in our ward. My name was not on the list so I asked to be included but was informed that I was not to do anything at all not even sweep around my bed. I said I felt OK and my eyes were very much improved but I was told my eyes were not my worst trouble and that was all the information I received. I think they are barking up a wrong tree as I feel both fit and well. Still it's a good life for a P.O.W.

Tuesday 25th May 43

Woke up with very bad head and neck aches and they have been with me all day. I am beginning to think they are caused by my high blood pressure. Another banana issued this afternoon, the ones I bought are still as green as grass.

Wednesday 26th May 43

Quite a few happy feet cases in our ward, they have my deepest sympathy. All of them look like scarecrows and suffer terrible pain. One chap who has been badly wounded and has never left hospital, claims that his happy feet have caused him more suffering and acute pain than his wounds at their worst. One of the Nip guards informed a couple of the boys that if Japan is ever bombed, they (the guards) will cut off the heads of ten P.O.W.s for every woman or child killed. A nice chap and a nice thought. Had more food than I could eat for lunch and it was very nice too, whitebait and Soya beans with rice and a banana.

Thursday 27th May 43

Headache still going like mad, attended eye spec and found eyes have improved considerably. Have to see him again in a week's time. Lieutenant Colonel Callaghan (Black Jack) graced the hospital with a visit today. I was not there when he did the rounds. Believe our rations have been increased which explains the improvement during the last few days. Another Tommy funeral today.

Friday 28th May 43

Chap two beds from me spends all his time knitting soxs. He has made needles and has pulled the wool out of scarfs. Headache gone and feel OK again. Would not surprise me if I am able to leave the hospital in a few days. Weighed this afternoon and find I'm the heaviest I have been for a considerable time – 11 stone.

Saturday 29th May 43

Dutchman buried this afternoon. Started reading today, find I am long sighted and cannot see anything close and have to hold the book a considerable distance away. I read the other day and I think it was that which caused my bad headaches. Examined by Doctor today and was very pleased with the result, my blood pressure has improved remarkably. The Doctor said it had improved 90 points on my coming in. He said nearly all of us had a long well earned rest. I am more than inclined to believe him judging from how good I now feel. The improvement to my eyes has lifted a great load off my mind. When I arrived my blood pressure was 230/130 it is now 140/94.

Sunday 30th May 43

Spent the morning on "No Hoper's Hill" and went for a walk around the area. Three of the boys had boiled fowl for their dinner. It wasn't on the menu but I imagine there will be one fowl less to lay eggs for the Tommy Officers who have a real poultry farm around their quarters. Strong rumour around that 600 eye cases will be shifted from the Island within a week or so. No doubt I will be one of them.

Monday 31st May 43.

And Julian's second birthday. I drank his health with my synthetic marmite. When I realise what I am missing I feel very depressed and sad, but the time will come and my whole enjoyment will be making up for what I have missed when I eventually become a free citizen.

Heard a very vivid lecture on the battleship Prince of Wales by a Petty Officer. He spoke on her career from her launching to her sinking. He was genuinely affected whilst giving the dramatic account of her sinking. British sailors certainly have pride in their ships.

I have made friends with two chaps, Claude Stevens and Tiny Turnbull (6' 4") brother to the young Turnbull of tennis fame. They are both great scouts, Claude has been in hospital since three days before Capitulation, a bullet going into his heel and coming out at his toes. The wound has not yet healed. He introduced me to a chap today who had been wounded very badly and at one time only weighed 43lbs. He is OK now and weighs 12 stone, his usual weight.

Tuesday 1st June 1943

Another burial today. Remarkable play entitled "He Came Back" has been produced here. I went last night and enjoyed it immensely. The theatre here is very good. It is the same as used by the garrison here before the war. The fittings were not interfered with. Quite a few beautiful pieces of music have been composed by different people and one called "Singapore Shadows" was played on the violin by the composer as part of the play. It has the same effect on me as an indescribable sunset has.

Able to read big print but find I cannot read murder or gorey stories, even the thought of blood etc. turns me up, can't understand it after having seen as much. I suppose I will get over it someday.

Wednesday 2nd June 43

Believe over the other camp (Selerant) the boys have opened up a cabaret where a cup of coffee and a rice rissole can be obtained for 5 cents. Also music is supplied by an orchestra. They have named the place "Smokey Joes". It is run by the A.I.F., Tommies and Dutchies and the profits go to camp funds.

Hair cut today but it is still too short on the top to part.

Thursday 3rd June 1943

Eye specialist today, eyes have improved marvellously, have to see him again in a week's time. Talking to a young chap from Gympie, Queensland. He told me he had not worn a pair of boots in his life until he joined the Army at the age of 20 and had not been out of the district he lived in. They (the boots) gave him plain hell for a good time and the first leave he received he went home to Gympie by train and then walked 23 miles in the boots. Before joining the Army he even went to the local dances

in his bare feet. The peculiar thing is now he will not be able to walk without special made up boots as half his foot and ankle has been blown off which means he can never go without them again. Another Tommy funeral this morning and a Dutchie was also buried this afternoon.

Friday 4th June 1943

Nasty accident at Selarang. One Tommy killed and two badly injured when a trailer capsized whilst negotiating a bend at the bottom of a hill. Down in the corner of this area the undergrowth and trees are very thick. Went there for a walk this morning saw quite a large colony of monkeys and some squirrels. Also saw five graves, two were unknown soldiers, one an English nurse whose body was found when we first came out here. How it got there no one seems to be able to reason out as there were no nurses supposed to be within 15 miles of the place after war started here. The rest were Tommy soldiers and an Indian Surgeon. Indian surgeons and doctors only receive the same designation as our N.C.O.s (some of them are brilliant) yet an English, Australian, Dutch doctor receives the rank of Captain and continues from there.

Saturday 5th June 43

Another physical examination, am as healthy as a two year old colt. Heard that it is impossible to buy anything in Singapore, even second hand shirts bring exorbitant prices and new shirts (army) are \$40 = 6 Pounds. The Nip guards are around every night trying to buy clothes from us to sell in Singapore.

Jim Callow over today to see me, says they are working very hard at Selarang in the gardens and trailer parties.

Sunday 6th June 43

Three years: Three ages; today since I joined the A.I.F. It's hard to realise I even knew any other kind of life it seems so long ago since I was a civilized human being. Still I am as yet alive, more than can be said for thousands of others, including the poor corpse of a Tommy that has just passed on the way to the cemetery. There are now only about 500 graves (not including those that were buried in and around Singapore since Capitulation) which, considering the conditions and the number of men who have passed through here since capitulation, speaks volumes for the medical staff and hygiene. It is only an average of about one per day. Of course there are a great many buried in other areas. A.I.F. concert party gave us a very good concert in our ward last night.

Monday 7th June 43

Just a dull P.O.W. day.

Tuesday 8th June 43

Talking to the chap in charge of the planting of the trees around the area (he was before the blue the Sultan of Johore's chief gardener). He told me a tree was to be planted in memory of every individual soldier, English and Australian, who was killed or died in Malaya and each tree would be marked with the individual's name and will later be handed over to the Graves Commission. Only one type of tree will be used, the "Flame of the Forest" and I should imagine when they are in flower it would be

worth travelling many miles to see. Day rather cold and wore a shirt all day. Food still very fair and I believe it has improved considerably at Selerang.

Sixteen captured allied officers have been brought here and taken to the Southern Area (Changi Village). I believe they were captured in Burma, so far they are not allowed to have contact with the P.O.W.s here.

Wednesday 9th June 43

Sumptuous feed of fried egg fruit for tea, they were delicious.

There is a Dutch artist in the ward below us. He has painted some marvellous pictures, some in the theatre walls and also some biblical scenes in the chapels. They are also done on the walls.

Thursday 10th June 43

And still another anniversary to be put aside and celebrated when once more I become a free man and a father and husband. It is three years today since I said "I will" or is it "I do"? What ever it was, given the chance, I certainly will do my best.

With thanks to Decimus Magnus Au----- I give my wife this, his poem: -

Be life what it has been, and let us hold
Dear Wife, the names we each gave each of old;
And let not time work change upon us two,
I still your boy, and still my sweetheart you.
What though I outlive Nestor? And what though
You in your turn a Sibyl's year should know?
Ne'er let us know old age or late or soon;
Count not the years, but take of each its boon

Went to the eye specialist, and have to see him again in another week. I myself think my eyes are back to normal, for which I am sincerely grateful. A great load has been lifted from my mind.

Friday 11th June 43

Could not sleep too well last night. I don't suffer very much with nightmares but by the sounds of the screamings, very blood curdling, that issue from some of the wards, somebody does. These horrible screams are also very common during the night over in the other area also.

I feel deeply for the poor chaps suffering with Happy Feet. I could hear them sobbing with pain during the night. Only those who have experienced them can appreciate their pain, it is like an earache magnified a thousand times in your feet.

Another Aussie buried today, so another tree will be planted. Reading a delightfully written travel book entitled "Cities of Spain" by Edward Hutton, he is sure a word artist.

Saturday 12th June 43

Both yesterday and today have been dull, cold days and I woke up this morning with a fever. Stayed in bed all day but still feel pretty crook. It is a fair while since I had an attack anyhow this is the best place I could have one.

Jim Callow over today said they were living very well over at Selarang.

A.I.F. put on a concert here last night in the form of a Revue, they were pretty good but they don't seem able to put it over like the Tommies.

Sunday 13th to Wednesday 16th June

Spent in bed – not so good.

Thursday 17th June 43

Felt very well, went to the eye specialist and found my eyes are now back to normal and everything is OK. Thank God. Will see the ward doctor tomorrow and see if I can go back to Selarang. The whole area here is enclosed, with hibiscus hedges which are now out in flower, an unforgettable sight. Also all the buildings are hedged in with the same flower.

A chap from Merewether named Wood came up to see me today. I would say he is about the worst liar I have struck and I couldn't be bothered talking to him but just sat and listened to his skite and lies. I believe he is noted for both. He is on the staff of the Garrison Headquarters. I did not know him before and I can't say I'm anxious to further our acquaintance. Two of the hospital orderlies caught outside the wire yesterday at present they are locked up in the Jap Guard Room awaiting for whatever is going to happen to them. One of the boys ate a nut off one of the trees growing near the ward, he was immediately sick and during the day was purged that much that he was unable to leave the lavatory. I have never seen a man look so washed out. This happened yesterday and today he had to take six packets of salts. All the doctor said to him was: "I was only four years old when I was taught not to eat nuts or fruits from unknown trees".

Friday 18th June 43

Exceptional hot day and hazy – a typical Australian dry day. Japs allowed the orderlies caught outside the wire to return to be dealt with by our command, but with a promise that if any one else is caught they and the orderlies will be shot.

Asked could I go back to the unit but was told not today but they would see later.

Pay day, 75 cents for 15 days, 5 cents per day, not enough for tobacco. The men outside the hospital are receiving 20 cents per day. N.C.O.s, 25 cents or 30, I'm not sure.

Another chap tried the nut the cove ate yesterday. This chap only bit the top off and was up all night vomiting etc. It's sure a potent nut and an answer to constipation. I had a look at the fruit which looks like an Apricot, the nut is like the inside of the brazil nut. Another funeral – Tommy I think.

Saturday 19th June 43

Felt delicious last night, had two clean sweet sheets to get between, laid there feeling that feeling that clean sheets gives one and watching one of the most vivid lightning storms I have ever witnessed, displaying its might over the town of Singapore.

A banana this morning, it was delicious, small things thoroughly appreciated and its only appreciation that makes life worth living. That is why I'm sure that people who do not taste many or frequently the good things of life, have more to live for and get more satisfaction out of their existence. There must be millions of these small pleasures in our civil lives that go unnoticed and unappreciated.

Fifty A.I.F. hospital orderlies and 100 Tommy orderlies together with 6 A.I.F. doctors and 25 Tommy doctors are leaving in a few days for a [...] northern working parties. I'm afraid this points to something serious as regards outbreak of disease or fever etc. in those camps. It is a hurried move and is very ominous.

Murray Griffin is giving an exhibition of official war paintings at Selarang. I went over and found one painting which to me was very interesting. It was called "The 2/15th Field Regiment in Action at Gemas" it was well portrayed and fairly true to details. The picture was composed of Jim Callow and my gun in action (mine being the most prominent) with the infantry 2/20th Battalion in their firing positions at the rear of the guns. Memories flooded back and the whole crew keeps going around and around in my mind, probably have a nightmare tonight.

Sunday 20th June 43

Feel like a bloated pup. Egg fruit for tea and as quite a few don't like them had a great tuck in. Doctor told me today I could go back to my unit tomorrow if I liked, so I hope tonight will be the last night I ever sleep in a hospital again, not that the treatment etc. wasn't good but I just don't fancy them. Tried to see Harry Craig again but he was not around his quarters.

Monday 21st June 43

My last night in hospital was not a very pleasant one. A small hurricane came up during the night and as I slept on the verandah I was swamped out before I could get out of bed.

Saw Harry Craig before I left. He was exceptionally well and has put on a lot of weight. He is going away with the party of orderlies. Up to the present they do not know when they are leaving but think Friday. I will make a trip over to the Hospital (Robert Camp) and see him again before they leave.

Arrived back in Selarang this afternoon. Everybody here looks exceedingly well and all are putting on weight due to the good food and not too much work. The tea here tonight was exceptional, if all the meals are like it I will be content. Have to see Major Orr, the eye specialist, over here tomorrow.

Tuesday 22nd June 43

Saw the eye specialist, Major Orr. He said my eyes were as good as it was possible to get them. There are still a few blind spots but nothing can be done about them. They don't seem to affect my sight so I'm not worrying and feel thankful to be even able to see properly again.

Met Mr. Murray-Griffin, the war artist, and had a good yarn to him, also gave him a book I had on ceramics, he was delighted to receive it. He gave me quite a bit of flap and said I would be foolish not to continue art studies when I returned home as I had it in me. I laughed but he said my work had

impressed him and he felt sure if I was to put my heart into the study I would do well. Wish I had been afforded the opportunity of meeting him 20 years ago.

Went for a good walk tonight and renewed acquaintance with my favourite trees and shrubs.

Horrible incident at Black----- Island. There are about 200 A.I.F. and 50 Tommies working on the island which is about one mile across the harbour from Singapore. Whilst travelling to another island nearby one of the Nip Guards pushed a young A.I.F. Corporal into the sea and he was drowned. The A.I.F. officer and men remonstrated and told the Nip that the matter would be reported and that they all witnessed he pushed the boy overboard. When they landed the Nip guards tried to make them say they did not see the murder, which they all refused to do. The result was the guard took to them with bricks, sticks and rifle butts knocking hell out of them. The matter was reported and the outcome not yet known. I believe this happened some weeks back.

Wednesday 22nd June 43

Five blisters on my hand, work[ed] hard in the Changi garden digging sweet spuds. There were not too many spuds, apparently they had been well bandy-cooted by the personnel of the garden party beforehand. Thank God it was a half holiday (Wednesdays and Sundays) as the work was a bit too solid for the first day.

Rumour current that a batch of 1500 are to go from the Island. That will about clean us out. I will be sorry to go now and would much prefer to be relieved (?) from here, much better the devil you know.

Thursday 24th June 43

Feed of mangostenes this morning from the trees growing in the garden area. They are the most delicious fruit grown in Malaya. Potato digging today a fair crop, over 32 bags. Feel pretty sore with sunburn – will have to watch my step for a while.

Friday 25th June 43

Harry Craig left tonight with 'K' Force. It was raining when they moved. I imagine they will be pretty uncomfortable for a while.

Carry and placing manure and making up beds to set beans; pretty consistent work this garden. We work from 9am to 12.30 and from 1.30 to 4.45 with two half days, Wednesdays and Sundays off, so don't have much time for anything else. I don't mind the work, in fact, I'm enjoying it.

Sunburn pretty sore, heels starting to skin and a touch of tinea crutch have been too long away from work.

Saturday 26th June 43

Both heels very sore and tinea crutch developing fast. Had to take off my boots and looks like I won't be able to wear them for a while.

Had some fried durians (a type of Jack Fruit) for tea, it tasted like veal or pork, at least it seemed to me so, although it is quite possible I have forgotten their taste and only imagined it. Play bridge most of the time we have off, but was able to read a very good book "Precious Bane" by Mary Webb.

Sunday 27th June 43

Rained like blazes (good for the garden) thanks to which we had a day off. Did some sewing, washing and played some bridge.

Monday 28th June 43

We buried poor Ken Chapman this afternoon. Death must have been a great relief to him, although it seems a shame after him fighting so hard for the last six months or so and being at death's door most of the time. The A.I.F. cemetery is a credit to the people looking after it. I went to the funeral in a pair of sandals I made myself and now I have added a few skinned toes to my skinned heels. Will have to go barefooted until they heal. It's a thousand to one on my kicking the top off my big toe.

Gardened this morning, had an easy job training climbing beans to climb.

Tuesday 29th June 43

Eye Specialist today, have to go back in a fortnight's time. Saw the Sissiest Sissy I have seen this morning. He is a Tommy and undoubtedly a Batman. The Orderlies at the hospital have a fair sprinkling of that type in their midst but none equal this one in appearance or expression.

Had a holiday for the rest of the day so tried my hand at making a pair of trousers, don't think they will be much of a success.

We have a Sergeant's mess but there is not much harmony amongst us. Outside of our unit the rest of the Sergeants are from A.S.C. base and Para units and keep to themselves. They are not a very nice lot and their dislike of us is very pronounced. It's a remarkable thing, especially amongst N.C.O.s. These type[s] of units hate the fighting units, why, I don't know, unless it is an inferior complex but it is and has always been very pointed. Naturally we don't worry as they don't really interest us, but sometimes their tactics irritate us, especially the Acting Regimental Sergeant Major (A.S.Ra) Staff Sergeant who rides hell out of the gunners. He has not been game to have a crack at the Sergeants but we have had a go at him regarding the gunners' treatment.

Wednesday 30th June 43

Rained and once again unable to go gardening, feel disappointed as I have taken an interest in the job. Received a dysentery needle this afternoon. The needles are now very blunt and require quite a deal of forcing. The one received was exceptionally blunt and before it was in far enough the blood was running down my arm and onto the ground. This happened to most everyone.

Adopted a dog or at least he has adopted me. I call him Tinea. My Tinea crutch and the dog adopted me the same day. I'm afraid if he does not consider his hygiene more seriously I will have to sever our connection: the other occupants of the flat strongly object to his subscription to the flat and actually I have to do the cleaning up. I think he must be a boong dog with boong habits.

Lost my darning needle and as it is the only one around the area, afraid our sox will be just sewn in future.

Thursday 1st July 43

Did my gardening and enjoyed the day. Received another needle after work. I.A.B. The needles are still blunt but this one seemed to go in a little better. Feel in one of those nasty moods as per usual brought about by one of those persons who trade under the name of Officers and Gentlemen. This particular one, I know his history. He was originally a Base Wallah and now a Draft dodger. He was placed in Base because he was useless anywhere else and when the 19th Battalion lost most of their officers, he was drafted to them. He was only about a day there when the Sergeant realised his worth and told him to get in a slit trench and stay there. He was not reluctant to do so and was one of the few to get through with his skin. This person was in charge of the party to be inoculated. He marched us up in Regimental order and after we were finished we had to ... *(can't find where this page finishes)*

Friday 2nd July 43

Still going barefooted, the garden is nice and soft so I'm not bothered much. Big toe still intact.

Tinea (the dog) has changed his affection and I think there is a loose female dog around the camp. I hope he does not come back, his habits have not improved.

Outside our quarters a yellow honey bird has its nest. They are very small birds, about the size of a large hornet, and when they feed their young their wings go that fast they sound like the buzz of a bee. The young ones (two) are fully fledged and should be able to leave their nest shortly.

Saturday 3rd July 43

Planted some beans a few days ago but the doves have played havoc with them, thinking no doubt they were worms, they look like worms when the white shoot pushes through. One of the young honey birds is missing tonight, hope it has not fallen foul of the cats. Have entered in a bridge tournament, it is a knock out so don't anticipate being in the tournament long. Very hot today and lost gallons of sweat.

Sunday 4th July 43

Spent afternoon playing bridge, and incidentally am out of the tournament. Also had a hair cut, I can now part my hair. Had a great laugh at the A.I.F. concert last night. It was a very humorous show and one song composed by the singer, entitled "Binnies from Heaven" was a knock out.

The mother of the young birds pulled the lazy one out of the nest and accompanied by merry protests by the little fellow. The cat did not get the other one. I saw the parents putting their babies to bed tonight and was ingeniously done. The mother or father hanging on the nest which is bottle shaped, and the young ones light on her back and then the father pushed them up and in. It was quite a job.

We are still living well above the starving fare we were getting and even though it is not very tasty there is always enough and we don't go hungry now.

Monday 5th July 43

Hope the Yanks did something spectacular yesterday or perhaps the time's not yet ripe and they are waiting until next Independence Day.

Saw Tinea this morning. He is still courting the lady, in this case being a product of every breed imaginable and no oil painting. Still she seems to be very popular as Tinea has at least fifteen other rivals. The garden comprises 90 acres and the garden party of which I am one averages about 2 men to the acre. We are at present growing beans, sweet potatoes, yams, egg fruit (bindillas), snake gourds (a species of cucumber), four different kinds of Malayan spinach, tapioca, pawpaws and chillies.

It's pathetic how our officers try to ape the English officers. They are just not built that way.

Tuesday 6th July 43

Did some heavy manuring with pig's droppings, made into a mulch. It stank like high hell and I can't get the stink out of my system.

Another I.A.B. needle this afternoon. This needle was even blunter than the previous and took at least five times longer to insert and I felt it all the way and left my arm wiry, stiff and sore.

There is an epidemic of day old duckling buying, they are 45 cents each. I don't know how they are going to be fed but I presume snails and worms from the gardens. They will be in good fettle for Christmas but I sincerely hope we are not here, or I meant the P.O.W.s, to appreciate them.

Wednesday 7th July 43

Half holiday and still another needle. These needles are become as monotonous and part of our existence as rice is. Very pleasant surprise for me when I arrived back from the garden. Jim Callow had boiled and washed all my clothes, was a job I was not looking forward to but still a necessary one owing to the pig manure of yesterday.

Thursday 8th July 43

Uneventful day, worked in the garden, Mosquitoes are very bad at night and I find it hard to get to sleep unless there comes up a strong breeze. It has been very hot all day without a breath of wind which is the usual sign of a storm. Hope it arrives early tonight.

Friday 9th July 43

Mosquitoes took to me with a vengeance last night. They just about drove me crazy, they swarmed around my head in droves. It was hot and muggy all night and all day today but looks like a big storm brewing and at present there is a strong breeze, wonderfully cool and the smell of rain is with it. Where we have our lunch are numerous coconut trees and every now and then a coconut falls and whoever gets it first keeps it. I got two today but they nearly got me first. They fell from the trees I was sitting under and only missed me by inches. Already we have had casualties from fallen coconuts – broken collar bones and badly broken heads.

Saturday 10th July 43

Well the storm arrived about 10pm and it was a beauty. I had the best sleep I have had for some time. I curled up in my home made blanket and dreamt of home. It had cleared this morning and everything looked fresh and beautiful.

Had a great feed of mangoes, there is no doubt they are a gorgeous fruit and have a taste only common to them.

Sunday 11th July 43

Half holiday and very acceptable. Tried some Malayan P.I. and did a little sewing. The Japanese authorities sent in word for a party to go into Singapore and pick up the body of Pc Allen of the A.S.C. A.I.F. He was in the Singapore jail serving a sentence for attempting to escape. He died in prison and was buried here this afternoon. I believe there was not much left of him but skin and bone.

A couple of the garden party have taken a great liking to frog legs and every day they catch some frogs and cook their legs for their dinner. It is not because they are starving that they eat them so I presume they must like their taste.

Monday 12th July 43

Went for a delightful walk to the hospital last night. It was a glorious moonlight which always enchants the place and makes you feel that life even with its hardships is worth living. I saw some of the friends I made during my sojourn there and spent a pleasant evening listening to a chap called Dutch, of international fame playing his piano accordion. I was talking to one of the orderlies and he informed me that the A.S.C. chap who died in Singapore jail died with malnutrition. He was covered in sores and only weighed 50lbs, ordinarily he was a man of 14 stones and tall.

The Japanese informed our Command that 7,000 P.O.W.s which comprised 'F' Force will be returning here in October. Evidently they are in Burma.

Very hot all day, but looks like a good storm brewing. Sincerely hope so. Spent a very restless night last night owing to the mosquitoes.

Enough to eat but horribly monotonous and badly cooked, our other cook resigning and has taken on gardening. The Japanese "Black Bands" (Jap Gestapo) arrived out here yesterday and took away with them a Captain of the Malaya Volunteers (English). He is alleged to have tried to make contact with outside natives. This Black Band mob are pretty tough customers and don't muck about. I believe they have some very effective third degree methods which they are not loath to use. We have also been warned that any future attempts of communication with the outside world will bring about drastic curtailment of our P.O.W. privileges and a serious cut in our rations. Also we will be all housed in the Barrack Square. This also applies if any P.O.W. is found outside the P.O.W. area.

Tuesday 13th July 43

Visit to the Eye Specialist, Major Orr, who reports that Para Scutimatee or something is still present. More than 80% of the eye cases have now been cured and only a very few cases have been hopeless.

It speaks wonders for what the improvement in diet will do, and of course the help of the Medical Officers.

Met Jack Collins, his foot is now OK. He told me that a chap by the name of Roberts, son of Sergeant Roberts (N.C.O. police) is in the Convalescent Depot and would like to see me. Will look him up one night.

The Captain in Charge of the mob of A.S.C. we are billeted with is the weakest and [most] incapable man I have ever met. Even his orders are given in a whining tone and he nearly cries and whimpers if the boys cause him any worry or trouble. One of his Corporals told us that during action some Jap bombers came over where they were and dropped a stick of bombs about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away. This Captain went off his head and a picket had to be placed over him. It's a pity this show did not last a while longer as it was definite more than 50% of the officers over here were to be sent back to Australia. Now the other 50% have to suffer the stigma which is a shame classed in the same category as the incompetent ones. After seeing these types I have come to my own conclusion why these chaps were never worthy of their commands and I think my theory in most of the cases would be right. A good majority of Militia officers joined the Militia in the first place because they could not find a place in men's sports. This avenue had plenty of scope for them to play the man as with a little study they could become officers owing to the lack of interest displayed by the men of Australia who looked on the Militia as a sort of joke. The capable men or officers enlisted in the A.I.F. in the first year of the war. The balance only wanted to play soldiers but owing to whatever circumstances caused them to join these types gradually came into the A.I.F. with the commission they were not capable of carrying out, and it was not until they were tried and found wanting that the powers that be were capable of appreciating the fact. In numerous cases the men they commanded could have informed them during their initial training in Australia.

Wednesday 14th July 43

Work during morning, played bridge during afternoon. Nothing of any importance.

Thursday 15th July 43

Extremely hot day and very uncomfortable working in the glaring sun. Two Tommies collapsed with sun stroke in the garden, one of them very serious and had to be rushed to the hospital. I said rushed, actually it was three hours before any sort of conveyance could be obtained and then it was a trailer which had to be pulled 3 miles by about eight men.

Clothes, especially shorts, are very scarce, and quite a number of the boys have made, and are making shorts from an old canvas tent, some have made very good jobs of them but some are very laughable, still answer the purpose. My trousers are just a matter of patches, one of top of the other.

Friday 16th July 43

Two coconuts today, caught them falling and was there before they reached the ground. These coconuts give us a little diversion as when one falls you can hear it land and there is a general rush

from all angles to claim the prize, the rushes are generally accompanied by much laughter and banter and of course when a Sergeant gains the prize there is much good natured howls and boos.

Before we left yesterday, all men with the exception of our party were searched before leaving the area. The Provos did the job and the search proved successful as they caught one of the Tommies attached to a working party with a bottle of MB tablets, he was immediately arrested and I hope receives the worst punishment possible as we are very short of these drugs and the lack of them would have very disastrous results and more than possible death to a great many of us.

The Captain in charge of our section of the garden is named Captain Schultz, of football fame. He comes from Queensland and was with the 2/10th Field Regiment. He is a great little cove and one of the very few officers and gentlemen entitled to be considered as such. He has been with the garden control section since its inception and takes a great interest in the garden and is a great worker which is a great encouragement to us.

Saturday 17th July 43

Pig manuring day and I'm humming to myself, somehow the smell saturates us and no amount of working and scrubbing seems to remove it. There is a rubber tree near my quarters in full bloom. The perfume from it is delightful so when I finish this I'm going to take myself there and try to get away from myself.

Killed another snake this afternoon, a very uncommon one, at least I have not seen its type before, or even heard of it. It was about 2 foot long, a dark smudgy grey colour on the body, but its head was white and did not gradually tone into the grey but looked like a white head with collar stuck on the body. It also had two black spots below its eyes giving the impression of its having four eyes. Hardly a day goes by without a snake being killed around our garden area. A clump of eight coconuts fell late this afternoon and I was there at the scatter. I got two.

The hospital had roast pork for tea last night ½ lb per man, also beautiful fresh beans. I with three others pulled the beans yesterday morning, 300 lbs.

We used over 500 galls of mulched pig manure on the garden in our area, I'll say no more about the smell.

Sunday 18th July 43

Three nights of full moon and mosquitoes with very little sleep, so was thankful for the afternoon off to make up a bit of sleep. Tried my boots on this morning and wore them to work but am now very sorry with skinned heels and toes. I'm afraid I will have to finish my P.O.W. days without boots.

The interpreter at the garden in a Russian named Simpson (Captain) (obviously a fictitious name). How he got into the army here I don't know. He speaks nine languages fluently, is one of the world's greatest authorities on sound and is at present working on a theory of echo. There is also a very charming English Captain named Frampton on the garden control group. He belongs to the Malacca Volunteers and came back from Australia to join up. Every lunch time he walks over for a yarn and I

find him one of the most interesting and jovial chaps I have ever met. He has travelled the world, and had a shot at everything. I would like to spend an evening with him and a bottle or two of whisky and I bet the women are attracted to him like flies [sic] around a honey jar. I would say his age is anything from 30 to 45 but looks more like 30. Sick of coconut, got two more this morning and gave them away.

Monday 19th July 43

Will have to lay off the coconuts for a while, as a medicine they are too severe and I made many trips last night and today.

Have taken over a portion of the garden, about 5 acres, not much of anything good growing in it, some eggfruit, Malayan spinach (Cankong), snake gourds, chillies, artichokes, and amaranth (cox comb). The garden wants rain badly and one of our hardest jobs is carting water, the closest well being some 200 yards or more from the area.

Plenty of bees about our quarters, two swarms have been boxed in the last two days and another swarm is buzzing about, naturally the honey is not worth while as they make very little but they are of interest watching them working.

Listened to a very interesting lecture given by Lieutenant Colonel Heath (Late Commanding Officer of the Changi Coastal Defense) on the coast defenses of Singapore Island. He is English and a natural humourist. We all thoroughly enjoyed the lecture and now appreciate why the Nips did not attack Singapore from the sea but as he said they did not play cricket and came in like an uninvited guest through the back door.

Tuesday 20th July 43

And as hot as hell, no rain for days, consequently a hell of a lot of work watering the gardens where possible. Owing to the condition of the chap that died in the prison at Singapore a complaint was lodged to the Japanese authorities from our Command. This complaint has evidently borne fruit as eight prisoners from the same jail arrived at Changi Hospital yesterday and were admitted. They are in horrible condition, covered in sores and ulcers, all undernourished. One chap, a Flight Lieutenant I have previously mentioned, weighing only 50lbs. Most of these chaps are A.I.F. who have at some time attempted to escape. I am told their cells are 10' x 6', their beds consist of one plank which is removed during the day leaving only a dish in the cell in which they prisoners has to wash and then use for his calls of nature. This dish is emptied during the day when the prisoner is allowed his 20 minutes per day exercise. The food consists of very little plain rice and once a week rice boiled in fish water. They are not allowed to sit or lie down during the day. God grant the war is over and we are the victors before these poor creatures are cured (if possible) and returned to this hell of hells.

A visit at the garden by Colonel Gallagher, he gave me a cigarette and asked for any complaints. He received a few from different chaps, some groundless of course.

Wednesday 21st July 43

Big storm last night, plenty of coconuts on the ground this morning, also my special charges, the beans. Spent a busy day putting the beans back in their normal position.

One of the filthiest and contemptible things that has happened during our period as P.O.W.s happened the night before last. Someone broke into the Pathologist department and stole a microscope, also more M&B tablets. Like the tablets, microscopes are a dire necessity and of course very scarce. An appeal was made to all P.O.W. A.I.F., English and Dutch to help catch this gang of murderers who are conspiring with the Japanese guards. God help any of them if they are caught. It is unthinkable that men could lower themselves to the level of the lowest scum of the earth, one who steals from the sick and dying, also his cobblers.

Friday 23rd July 43

Felt so strongly about this Black Market racket that I decided to offer my services to help combat these degraded thieves. Saw ---- Boswell, our group Commander; he thought it a good idea and introduced me to Captains Kinder and Graham, who are in charge of the Vice Squad. Captain Kinder has much experience being in civil life a Captain in the International police and was on vice work in Malaya before the war started. They were very thankful for the gesture, as they called it, and assured me that I could help considerably. They gave me a rough outline of the rotten business and informed me that the racket was highly organised and the mob had liaison with the Nips who were also in the racket. They suspect the brains of the organisation comes from high up and that more than one officer some of high rank are involved. So far I can only keep my ears and eyes open and later on help in other ways when required by the Vice Squad. Very drastic measures are going to be taken when this organisation is brought to heel irrespective of rank, etc.

Opposite our present camp is Burwood Camp. There we were installed when we first arrived here. This camp is now being used by the Japanese as a base for native working parties who are to be shifted up North. Those natives have been coming in for the last four or five days at a rate of about 1,200 per day. God knows where they put them all as none have been as yet shifted North. They consist of Malays, Chinese, and Tamils, including women and children. They don't look too happy about things and if they are herded much longer disease must break out. Today they were given inoculations and the humiliating 'order of the glass rod', irrespective of sex, just like animals being drafted and marked.

Saturday 24th July 43.

The microscope was found thrown into the grass. Evidently the feeling amongst the troops became too strong and making the microscope too hot to handle. No word as yet from the vice squad. More coconuts today, six came down in one bunch.

This life is beginning to agree with me and I am putting on weight fast and feel very fit. More native labour came into Burwood camp this morning and I heard five died last night, two being despatched per medium of Japanese bayonets for going outside the wire. In fact, I saw them crawl through it yesterday afternoon. They walked down the road and no doubt walked into a Jap sentry box which is situated down the road a few hundred yards.

Sunday 25th July 43

Practice air raid precautions today. The sirens were flat out and brought back memories of Kulang [Kluang?]. I should estimate around another 1,200 natives arrived in Burwood area this morning and I have not heard of any leaving. When we were billeted there we were very crowded and there would not have been anywhere near 2,000 all told in that area. If an epidemic starts it will go through them like wild fire and possibly extend to us. There are no sanitary arrangements and the natives are naturally careless in that regard, so the sooner they are moved away the better it will be for them and us.

Visited Smoky Joe's last night. It was a real good night, a floor show and a good orchestra. Also coffee, sweetened, was for sale 2½ cents per cup and very nice too. Cakes (rice) could be obtained some 5 cents and some 12½ cents. The latter having sultanas in them. Where they procured them I don't know. I did not have any as they were too dear for my limited capital. During the day they put on a dollar dinner, that also was [as] far from me as home. One dollar equals ten working days of pay.

Pulled up the egg fruit (Brindles) plants this morning and brought home a few fruit. We fried them for lunch. They were delightful.

Monday 26th July 43

Japanese General paid us a visit this morning, a sample of all our garden productions were shown to him. The first batch of natives were moved from Burwood area this morning. I think their destination being North where they will be used in labour gangs. Three trips were made up till 5pm and I would estimate each trip would take at least 1,000. I know these poor unfortunate creatures did all in their power to hinder us during our fight here, but I cannot help feeling very deeply for them. They look pitiful [sic], just like a dog that is starved and kicked from pillar to post. They have lost all their jubilant looks that they had just after our Capitulation and they now know only too well they have been sold a pup. They have paid and are still paying dearly for their folly. They had, like all civilians, the worst time during the fighting and now once again they are dragged from their homes and families to work like slaves for someone who they must hate now to a much greater extent than they ever hated the British. I speak of the Malays and Tamils, the poor old Chinamen never alters, even his facial expressions are still the same but under that expression a volcano. Anyhow it is heart rendering to see those poor creatures and I then realise that my lot is not so bad.

Tuesday 27th July 43

Visited Eye Specialist. Still traces of the eye disease, but they are not getting any worse.

Thank God all the natives have been shifted and I don't have to think or see them any more for I am sure they would have had me in a bad state of depression.

Spent all day mending my trousers. There is not much left of the originals and they are now just a mass of patches sewn together.

Black market seems to have eased considerably and looks like they have decided to lie low for a time, no doubt until things ease down a bit. It's very hot for them now. I don't mean because I'm on the job, but every decent man is against them and they know it and fear the consequences.

Wednesday 28th July 43

Still very hot and garden visibly wilting. Rain is wanted badly as the small quantity of water we can carry is of little use.

Whilst going to the garden this morning a truck passed us carrying about 10 Nips and two young Chinese girls. The Nips were evidently returning from guard duties and apparently took the two girls along to wile away the long hours during the night. The girls, poor creatures, looked as if the night was much too long for them.

Black out and brown out practice tonight and I have a job of going around our area and seeing that the men obey the signals. It is a very strict practice and if we do not carry it out correctly it may jeopardize us as regards our light supply. Rumoured that the hospital have to vacate their present position and they are sending out all the cases that can be treated outside the hospital.

Just thought of something that I have often noted: I feel greediness and myself see it in everybody and get a momentary dislike for them for being so.

Thursday 29th July 43

This time two years ago I was watching with a very sad heart the coast of old Aussie gradually fading away in the dust [dusk?], but never once thinking that I might not see it any more. I have always had, with the exception of the last few days of action, more than just the feeling that I would someday return home and the feeling is still very strong.

A little rain this afternoon but not near enough. It is still overcast and there is a possibility of more rain to come. The air is still like it is sometimes at the lake before a southerly buster.

The late P.O.W.s from Burma have been now transferred to our area. They arrived yesterday and I expect some interesting information will now be available.

Rats are playing havoc with the ducklings, two of the ducklings had their heads chewed off by them last night and previously others met the same fate.

Friday 30th July 43

Rumour regarding the shifting of all P.O.W.s out of this area very strong and I'm afraid is more than a rumour. I will be very sorry to leave especially as regards the garden. This garden means a lot to we P.O.W.s and is the means of our improvement in health, supplying what or at least a portion of what we were lacking. At the present time we are producing greens and vegetables at the rate of ½lb per man per day with the hope of more as the garden improves. Admittedly once the Jap Red Cross have taken over food conditions have improved considerably but without the garden I doubt whether their supplies will be sufficient.

Had a good feed of Durian this morning also guavas. The benefits of the Durian will be wasted under our present conditions.

Saturday 31st July 43

Still no rain with very hot burning days and garden going to ruin. Heard some interesting figures this morning to wit: the garden last month produced 35 tons of vegetables and the Japanese for the same period supplied us with 3 tons, an appreciable difference, so the effect of no garden will have a great detrimental effect on all our welfare.

Baked a couple of week bucks [ducks?] in the ashes for dinner, they were delicious.

Had the ideal slam hand last night, finished up bidding it, although vulnerable and when my partner laid down the ace of clubs I just laid my hand on the table. I was next to certain he had it and bid accordingly. We finished up the night with nearly 4,000 points to the good.

Sunday 1st August 43

Shifted to new quarters in the same building but further along and upstairs. From these quarters a good view of the Straits of Johore can be had. Did not go to the garden today, had to have my foot which is still giving me trouble attended to.

Able to take a copy of the Alexandria Hospital atrocity as written in an eye witness diary.

Extract from Diary: Saturday 14th February 1942.

During the early morning the water supply was cut off. Shelling and air activity became intense some shells bursting in and around the hospital area; these appeared to be mainly enemy mortar bombs. The enemy were drawing nearer and approaching the rear of the hospital in the Ayer Rajah direction. The number of incoming patients had lessened considerably and there was little or no road traffic. During the morning routine work was continued. Japanese troops were seen for the first time attacking towards the sisters

Monday 2nd August 43

My last day in the garden until my feet get better. Tomorrow I go in charge of our Company's hygiene. It's not a bad job and I will have plenty of time as the job usually finishes around lunch time.

Tuesday 3rd August 43

Finished all I had to do by 11am, but still feel I would rather be working in the garden. Japanese Check Parade (I think new guards are taking over) this afternoon. We fell in at 1.30pm and marched to the place of assembly. I was detailed to piquet the lines. The Nips arrived and searched each individual and I believe a pretty thorough one. I was in the lines and was not searched. They then marched the troops into the shade put ... (*unreadable*) ... on them and then started a very thorough search of all quarters. Being on piquet I had to accompany the search party that were doing our particular area. Nothing was found of importance. My particular guards were congenial enough and only ... (*unreadable*) ... they came across anything that ... (*unreadable*) ...

Sunday 8th August 43

Feel too full even to write, a great meal and more if wanted. I had all I could manage, but was greedy enough to consider some more. Had an excellent supper last night. Captain Schultz proposed that the Sergeants of his garden group have supper and he donated a tin of herrings and a tin of peas (evidently saved by him in case of necessity). We, the Sergeants, put 20 cents in and bought some onions and cucumbers, rice bread with the help of the garden produced an excellent supper. Captain Schultz also produced a little sugar, about ½ teaspoonful per man.

Portion of the garden control had to evacuate their quarters this morning to all 100 P.O.W.s who are to arrive today to occupy them whilst they are quarantined for a week. So far the new boarders have not arrived. Who they are or where they are coming from no one knows as yet.

Found a beautiful shrub today. It had the most delicate cluster of flowers of a faint mauve colour. They are as big as saucers and practically transparent. They make a glorious show and I am going to keep my eye on the tree to see if I can get some seeds when they are ready. Also the tree orchids are in profusion of blooms. They grow high up in the coconut trees and look like delicate lace fringe around the trunk.

Some more letters came for our group but for me another disappointment. One letter received which was dated October stated that this chap's people had received a telegram to the effect he is a P.O.W. after nine months of anxious waiting.

Monday 9th August 43

The inevitable happened this morning. I kicked the top of my toe. The rest of my feet are improving very gradually. It is now 10 months or more since I have been able to wear boots and during that period I have either worn home made sandals, slippers or gone about in my bare feet.

There is a rumour about that our Command have appealed to Tokyo regarding our transfer from this camp area and there is a possible chance of our remaining here. I hope so as I am sure a more pleasant place under P.O.W. conditions could not be found. Still doomed to disappointment, no letter for me but some of the gunners got one, in fact, two of them received two.

Another search scare today but it did not eventuate, we must have something somewhere that they are anxious to find.

The rubber trees have finished flowering and have now broken out their exotic new pale green leaves which will gradually darken until they are a deep olive green until such times as they are again ready to fall when they turn into beautiful rustic brown. They are a delightful tree and the perfume of the flowers will haunt me for the rest of my days. This perfume always reminds me of mum, it is the same perfume that clung to any money notes that she kept in her purse and therefore a perfume that I had already known and I have always loved, not because it reminded me of money but for its elusive delightfulness. I never smell this perfume that mum does not appear before my eyes.

Tuesday 10th August 43

Lottie's birthday, thought I might get a letter for her birthday but nobody in the Regiment had any luck today. A screed was read out to Parade tonight. It came from the Japanese Authorities which warned that Cholera has broken out in Singapore and that certain methods have to be adopted by us. These methods were also added to by our own command. It is about 12 months since the last alleged outbreak, which luckily was only a mild one and suppressed very early. I trust this epidemic meets the same fate, both for the natives and for our own sake.

Eye specialist this morning, they are still not nearly a 100%, at least that is what the doctor said and I suppose he must know.

Wednesday 11th August 43

Two of the gunners received very sad news in the letters they received today, both of them have lost their greatest friend, their mothers.

The A.I.F. concert party put on a great show last night. These people are doing an excellent job and some mark of appreciation should be shown them after this P.O.W. business is over. To my mind their efforts rank with the Medical officers. There were quite a number of native Dutch troops, mainly of mixed blood. They, and I have often noticed the Malays, have a look about them of a very pathetic nature, a look that always reminds me of Rod and the look he gets when things have not gone right with him and we all have a pick at him. I remember it distinctly now when before I took it more for sulkiness on his part instead of pure unhappiness.

Colonel Gallagher is guest of our Officers' Mess tonight. They are doing things fine and I might say he deserves only the best as he is undoubtedly a great man and soldier. I feel proud to know him, he is doing a 100% job and a job that only a very strong charactered man could do. I would say he is the most known man in the Malayan Campaign which includes A.I.F., British, Dutch and even Japanese. The Japanese guards have great respect for him and also a certain amount of fear, for them he has no fear and always speaks his piece in no uncertain manner. It is a pity our other officers don't choose him to mould themselves on, instead of trying to ape someone they are not bred to do. (Black Jack) is honest with others, and what is greater himself, and he is just his natural self, hard drilled by himself to be a soldier and do his duty. To him officers are not demi-gods but the means to an end and God help the officer if he knows that officer is not the means. I know he has nothing but contempt for quite a number and he does not hesitate to show it, whilst they are just scared stiff of him.

Thursday 12th August 1943

Japanese authorities sent a memo to Malayan Command to the effect that not sufficient respect is being shown to the Jap soldiers etc. by the P.O.W.s, so we can now expect a few Nips strolling through the camp to give us some practice in saluting and no doubt some practice in bashing. No letters at all today, quite possible that the Nips have a holiday or general manoeuvres, every Nip goes on them, there are no slackers in the Jap army even the doctors have to fight and every soldier is a fighting man. They carry no deadheads, this means when they put in a Division it means a division of fighting men. When the Engineers are not repairing or building they are fighting. This applies to transport, Red Cross, signals, in fact all branches of the services. They are not like our army where a

division means about 1/3 front line troops or perhaps less. No further news regarding the cholera outbreak and up to the present the troops who were supposed to go into the garden control area for quarantine have not arrived.

Friday 13th August 43

An uneventful day. Letters have ceased to come and looks as if they have all been delivered. Rain still needed badly. This very dry spell has been of a very long duration for the country, when the rains come I suppose we will get more than our share due to the abnormalities of this country.

Saturday 14th August 43

Letters must be finished. There was no distribution again today.

Spent most of the day repairing my trousers, now consists of patches over patches. Thought I might study a little English but found I could not concentrate. My brains were never much use to me, now what little I have are very reluctant to function. I find it impossible to retain anything in my mind at all. They call it rice memory.

Sunday 15th August 43

Today it rained, rained like it can rain in this country when it has a mind to. The storm was similar to the one Malaya greeted us with when we landed in the country exactly two years ago today, 15th August 1941. So far the Gods are with us. We have to shift tomorrow but only a matter of 50 yards. The hospital is coming to this area and will be situated in the Square; the square that will go down in history. The hospital move has to be completed by next Saturday. It now looks as if the Japanese are going to allow us to stay and that our impending move to some other country or part of this country has at least for the present been shelved, for which we are grateful.

Monday 16th August 43

Spent a very busy day shifting to our new quarters and cleaning out our late quarters and 25 of us are crammed into where 13 were in the old. There are 10 of us in a room 20' x 18' and I fancy it is going to be very hot during the night if there weren't so many mosquitoes about I would sleep out in the open. We have severed our connection with the nasty type of N.C.O. from the A.S.C. but have to share our new quarters with my pet aversion, the Ordnance, so it was from the frying pan into the fire. The present Company we are attached to consists of Ordnance Engineers and Division Signals. The Engineers and Division Signals are mostly good chaps. I must say that most of the A.S.C Other Ranks were good fellows, they appreciated our N.C.O.s and I'm sure were sorry to leave us and wanted to come with us. They could not make out why we worked with and as hard as them. They said their N.C.O.s never did anything but put them on a charge and I can readily believe them if the N.C.O.s I saw were an example.

There is talk of some kind of trouble between the Nips supplying our Quartermaster Store and our rations. From what we can gather the Nips responsible have been making a good thing out of us and the Japanese authorities have caught up with them. I believe there are some 40 odd and is complicated and they have been ... (*unreadable*) ... What will happen to them we don't know but

judging from the methods they usually employ in their army am glad the culprits are Japs and not me. Cigarettes are supposed to be one of the commodities involved. This week over twelve months since we received a Jap issue so this racket must be dated back some considerable time. As we buy commodities through the Japs to supplement our rations and for canteen purposes it appears that these Nips concerned have been selling us what rightly belonged to us. Food at our new quarters is not too bad but of course does not compare to our late mess. As yet we have not started a Sergeant's Mess here.

Tonight, on parade, we were warned that an outbreak of Cholera had been reported at a camp (believed to be occupied by P.O.W. sailors) only 1¼ miles from our camp.

Tuesday 17th August 1943

Spent a very uncomfortable night. The humidity was deplorable and although we all showered before going to bed the BO during the night was like nobody's business.

There was yesterday a case when the ruthlessness of the Japanese army methods was inflicted. A visit was made to the Southern area by a Japanese General. During his tour it was noticed that one of the Jap (Korean) guards was not at his post to give the General the salute required. A Japanese officer found the sentry, drew his revolver and shot the man dead.

Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher visited our quarters this morning. He asked me what would I give to be breasting the bar of the Northern [Great Northern Hotel, Newcastle].

Have applied to go back on the garden party; my feet are very nearly better and my toe has all but healed. Will see the Medical Officer in the morning.

Wednesday 18th Aug

Back to the garden. Everything looks burnt out down there and more rain is badly needed. The beans I took so much interest in are practically no more and it looks as if they will have to be pulled out. I put a lot of time into those beans. ... *(Rest of page too faded to read.)*

Thursday 19th August 43

Two days now working in the garden with my boots on and so far my feet stood the test well. Had a good feed of guavas today and yesterday, in fact there are that many about it is easy to get them. No one is allowed to take them from the area but we can eat as many as we like ... *(rest of page too faded to read).*

The hospital has started to move over and there is a continual string of home made trailers going all day. There has already been a bad accident with the trailer capsizing whilst trying to negotiate a bend in the road at the bottom of a hill. Three men were seriously injured internally and another a probable fractured skull. A chap from the Engineers came up to me this morning and asked if I was 'young Jack Croft' from Tighes Hill. He is Bluey Miller from Carrington. I remembered him when he fought at the Old Newcastle Stadium. He knew me but I think I have altered considerably since he last saw me. I should say I naturally would as it was about 20 years since I remember seeing him.

It comes back to my mind also that when I was hunting for guavas during those lean periods I was made a catapult and tried my skill on doves, not for pleasure but for necessity. I am thankful now that I had lost my boyhood ability to hit one and only succeeded with frightening them, although at the time I was considerably disappointed.

Friday 20th August 1943

Did not go to the garden as had to do ... (*unreadable*) ... the camp area and believe me it was some job. The job was very solid and hard and Ordnance lived up to its reputation, both of their representatives developed some kind of sickness and were allowed to go off the job in the afternoon. I know it is becoming an obsession of mine but they are a rotten lot; their N.C.O.s are as filthy and greedy a mob I have ever struck in the army. They gallop their food like pigs so they can rush over to me to get what is left if any. Perhaps my criticism sounds very severe but I assure you it is not, I cannot express just how contemptible this unit is. The job we were doing was digging up the electrical cable posts. They are about 20 foot high and embedded in concrete blocks 2' square and bolted to a steel plate and into the ground about 4 foot below the concrete.

Saturday 21st August 43

Another trailer accident this morning, six men being injured, none seriously. A Dutchman was one of the mess convoy in the accident a couple of days ago. ... (*Very faded – looks like more info about his poor feet and still not being able to wear boots*) ...

Heard some disconcerting news from medium of a Nip stationed at Changi jail. Twenty-six of 'H' Force have died. I think they are somewhere in Thailand. There was no news of any of the other forces but if 25 have died in 'H' Force anything may have happened to the others, especially 'F' Force where recently a large number of doctors and orderlies were rushed there, obviously to combat some kind of outbreak of disease.

Another gunner and myself erected a barbed wire fence around our quarters, or I should say our erection. I think the fence was required to keep out the Dutchmen who are our neighbours. Quite a few things have disappeared around our quarters since they arrived there.

Sunday 22nd August 43

Had a long walk last night in my slippers to see a concert in the Palladium at the hospital area. It was well worth the walk. The concert, I should say play, entitled 'The Little Admiral' was exceptionally good, the props, lighting and stage effects were most spectacular and I venture to say as good as anything I have seen on the stage. There were sixty in the cast and for a P.O.W. camp with limits to everything required for so large a show it was a masterpiece. All the dresses and clothing had to be either altered or made. Of course some of the props were existing but quite a number had to be constructed, again with limited material.

Barbed wire again today! God I hate the stuff. I'm scratched and spiked from head to foot, the stuff has me bluffed and knows it and gives of its best to make life as miserable for me as possible. Gemanchen sure gave me a barbed wire complex.

Jim Callow brought home a dove which had fallen out of its nest. It cannot fly but has most of its feathers. We are doing our best to feed it until it learns to fly when we will let it go.

Once again the Officers have shown themselves in their true light. For some days, in fact a couple of weeks, Gula Malacca has been unavailable and as it is the only sweetness we can say it has been sadly missed. Yesterday a delivery came into the canteen, not enough for all. On receipt of this information, before it had been allocated to reach the men, the officers were informed and with their usual smartness when there is some personal gain to themselves they instructed their Club; yes they have a Club; to buy, ... they had 300 worth which was practically all the canteen had, about 99% of the Other Ranks went without. The officers always have first call on whatever is going in the canteen, we get what is not required by them. The name of the Club is 'Cyrils' the name suits the occupants.

Monday 23rd August 43

Still on the barbed wire erecting and if it was possible to hate it any more, I do.

Dove still alive, gave it a feed of crushed and boiled rice. It seems to eat by itself. A party of over a hundred hospital orderlies and doctors leave for the North tonight which points to another epidemic breaking out amongst the working parties, or I hope just relief for the doctors and orderlies who are with them now. No indication has been given them by the Nips as to where or why they are being sent.

Tuesday 24th August 43

Visited eye specialist who said my eyes had improved slightly but were still far from being right.

Met a Newcastle chap named Lew Roberts, son of Alderman Roberts. He has a badly knocked about leg and goes for another operation tomorrow. He came here in January and only went into action on Singapore Island when he received his wound. He has another brother over here attached to the G.C.H who he said knew me ----- was with him when the hospital ... (*too faded to read*)

Wednesday 25th August 43

Rained most of the day and was very cold. Received a copy of an eye witnesses story of the shooting of the four men by the ... (*unreadable*) ... command of the Japanese Army at Changi Jail. Also an extract from a diary of a nurse who is at present a P.O.W. in Java. She was unbelievable and had ... (*unreadable*) ... experiences possible. I am trying to get a copy.

Japanese gave the hospital an issue of unsweetened milk and I think it ran out at 1 tin per 8 men; still it is something. Still on the wiring and I hope to complete the job by tomorrow. Spent a very restless night, bugs giving me more than usual attention. When I did eventually go to sleep I had a terrible nightmare involving Julian. It has been on my mind all day and worried me considerably.

Thursday 26th August 43

Rained all day and I was horribly disappointed as it was impossible to continue with my wire salvaging – like hell!! Spent the day on my back reading a book on the stars and planets, also did some repairs to clothing. I was able to borrow the extract from the nurse's diary which is hereunder:

Hailed a submarine we sighted in afternoon which ignored us and submerged. During night kept course by Southern Cross. Next day heavy thunder storm provided us with drinking water. In afternoon a minefield so we changed course and hoped for the best. Next morning we were very distressed as during the night two English women went mad and slipped off the raft and disappeared. Sighted land near evening but now had no paddles and propelled raft by hand. I swam most of the time in an endeavor to steer. On fourth half-enraged Malay strangled a Chinese girl and went over side taking the girl with him. Later an English nurse died from exposure and we slipped her over the side. Last night I caught a crab and shared it with remainder of party together with some seaweed and a baby jellyfish. Next morning we had dwindled to five. Land much nearer and we had paddled almost to it when a current swept us out to sea again. In late afternoon another girl and myself decided to get off the raft and to push it ashore. Being strong swimmers we soon had the raft moving again but my contribution was ... *(faded)* ... When 100 yards from shore a current swept us to sea again so we climbed on the raft and fell asleep from exhaustion. During the night I found myself swimming aimlessly about. When daylight came a Jap cruiser appeared. I was sighted and a boat lowered. They took me aboard on a stretcher. The Japs treated me well and soon revived the flickering life in me with food and brandy.

This woman is now a prisoner in Java, one of the P.O.W.s transferred from Java to Singapore brought the graphic diary over with him. I thought she was a nurse but after again reading the account I am inclined to think she was a civilian.

Friday 27th August 43

The dove made two trial flights of about 100 yards then found his wings and disappeared into the wide open spaces. Thankful for small mercies, the wiring job petered out today. Japanese have issued us with a number of pairs of Japanese boots, about 1 pair for 1 man in ten. Due to my feet I received a pair today. The balance will go to chaps without boots and those unable to wear their own boots. Good tea tonight, on the whole they have been very fair under the circumstances.

Saturday 29th August 43

Holiday today. Start work back in the garden tomorrow. I won't be sorry. Rumours galore floating about. 200,000 letters waiting sorting at Changi jail. Japanese have asked for lists of medical associations, also trade experience. Large party, 2,500, to comprise Java force. Time will tell just how many of these rumours are false.

Air Sergeant. M----- was in charge of the party of Engineers taken by the Japs last year to Mersing to de-mine that area. They were away four months. Three of the Engineers were blown up and killed and quite a number injured. He told me that hundreds of natives have been killed by the mines, some whilst walking on them and accidentally coming into contact with them. Some of the chaps received Red Cross cablegrams from home. The people receiving them were allowed to answer them to the extent of twenty words. One chap received one from his mother, we were all very jealous.

Sunday 29th August 43

The recent rains have improved the garden and everything in it has a new lease of life. It was a pleasure to be back amongst it all. Whilst going to the garden ... *(rest of page too faded to read)* ... carry their bucket of water which in this country is taken as the reaching of maturity and also the age of consent, usually around the age of 10 and sometimes a little younger, at least they appear so. It is common here that as soon as a Malayan girl can carry a bucket of water she loses her virginity.

None of yesterday's rumours have to date been verified although it has been admitted that a certain number of mail bags were taken into Changi Jail, but as to what they contained and who they were for has not been made known by the Japanese, still there is a hope.

Monday 30th August 43

Our area played the Yanks at volleyball yesterday evening. It was a very tame game and we had a narrow victory and the only interesting thing about it was the repartee which the Yanks excel in.

Had my first lesson in playing Mah Jong. It is quite simple, something like Rummy. The scoring is the hardest part of the game. The game itself looks complicated but is not.

Japanese gave us permission to pull down the attar buildings in the hospital area and remove them to this area therefore all available men were on trailer parties shifting this material as it was pulled down. I was one of the available men. We made three trips today, each being about 3½ miles, but it felt as if it were 300 miles. Was able to scrounge a good bed at the hospital area and, well, I will give it a good bashing tonight.

Tonight I was instrumental in throwing thousands, perhaps millions, of overfed bugs out into the cold, cold world; I diced my bed.

Tuesday 31st August 43

Slept like a log last night and anticipate doing the same tonight. Still on the trailers, clearing the material from the huts in the hospital area. The patients have erected a beautiful monument to the Medical staff in the hospital grounds and I hope the Japanese respect it which I have no doubt they will. Have been wearing my Japanese sand boots but today my feet look as if they are still going to give me some more trouble.

I am finding that, like others, that the thin rice gruel and thin vegetable soup we have for breakfast and dinner is inadequate for the hard work we are doing and the night meal is hungrily looked forward to by us all.

The Queen of Holland's birthday. Great doings by the Dutch P.O.W.s.

Wednesday 1st September 43

Felt very, very weary tonight. This job we are on is no mean one. The trailer we use is the chassis of a 3 ton truck and with the load we pull the gross would be in the vicinity of 2½ - 3 tons. There are eighteen of us and on the loaded up trip back there are two steep hills, both about 300 to 400 yards long, and pushing up these three times is no mean feat and not any fun. Passed a Tommy funeral this afternoon, the first I have noticed for some time.

Rumours about Japanese working party, also mail but no confirmation of either. It is the first day of September at home, but to us it still feels like a long and dreary winter.

Thursday 2 September 43

Drenched with rain most of the day but still did not deter our Command from sending us on the trailer party, naturally we got wet. Only one thing of interest, today was pay day.

Friday 3rd September 43

Fourth anniversary of the entrance of Britain into the war and there is more than an indication that this one will last much longer than the 1914-1918 show. I personally don't ... (*unreadable*) ... or have no ... (*unreadable*) ... it will be months or years but whatever the time maybe the actual time will be magnified a thousand times to me and I'm sure any minds of my fellow P.O.W.s.

Two Tommies were Court Martialled today for stealing or having in their possession stores and food which had been stolen from our last Red Cross issue. They were hospital orderlies and whilst bringing their possessions across to the area, the trailer turned over and their things were found to contain the stolen goods. I know at least one chap had over 50 tins of bully and God knows how much he had already eaten. I don't suppose they were the only ones but they were, unluckily for them, caught. Still trailering.

Saturday 4th September 43

A much needed rest from the trailer but spent a very busy day doing my washing, debugging, mending and general cleaning up.

The last few days rations have been light and the old hunger pangs are starting to work over me. The Japanese did supplement us with fish. Fish ... (*unreadable*) ... and sophisticated, of unrecorded antiquity; fish, I imagine they had found where it has lain since the great flood receded and left them high and dry. I am hungry, but not that hungry.

The Nips have taken over one of the buildings in the area for their guard house which no doubt could bring about a certain amount of tightening up and a lot more dos and don'ts, mostly from our Jap-happy officers. Below is a copy of the story of the shooting of the men at Changi: -

Execution of 4 POWs, by the Japanese on September 2nd, 1942:

Corporal Brevington, Private Gale and two English Other Ranks.

The two Australians escaped from Bukit Timah camp on May 13th 1942. The IJA stated they had obtained a small boat and rowed to the island of Colombo (?) (*Jack's question mark*) 200 miles from Singapore. They were arrested in a semi-starved condition and taken to the Isle of Davos. Brevington was then suffering from Malaria and after he recovered both Australians were taken to Davos jail.

On the 1st July they were brought back to Singapore to the Liaison Office at Changi. Their excuse to the Japs was that they escaped to rejoin their families. Both men were admitted to the Changi AG.

Gale was discharged on September 1st but Brevington was detained as a patient. On 1st September orders were received from the Japs that Brevington was to be taken to Kuran camp,

if necessary in an ambulance. At 2300 after reporting to Lieutenant Okusaki he was handed over to the Indian Garrison.

At this stage no reason was given as to why Brevington was required. It is to be noted he was still an undischarged Beri Beri and Malaria patient and a certificate to that effect was sent to the Imperial Japanese Army.

At 1300 hours on 2nd September the Command A.I.F. received order to ... *(unreadable)* ... at 11th Division gate with other Formation Commands. With their Adjutant, Captain MacCauley, the Commander reported and was directed to walk towards the sea. He was later picked up by Lieutenant Okusaki and party in cars. They were then taken to an area behind the beach where Formations Commands, Japanese and Indians had congregated. Corporal Brevington also present. Gale and the two English Other Ranks were also present. Colonel Holmes, Malayan Command then informed the other Commands that they had been brought there to witness the execution of 4 men for attempting to escape. For nearly an hour the party were waiting in the hot sun, as were also the prisoners, two having been brought from hospital. A Sikh's fire and burial party then arrived and an examination of the ground took place with a view to detecting grave sites. At the conclusion of this the prisoners were placed on the selected positions and they were given the opportunity of speaking to them. *(too faded)* handed a cigarette to the prisoners. He then made a final appeal to Lieutenant Okusaki, he pointed out that he was only a young man and that he was not responsible for what he had done as he, Brevington, had in his capacity as Corporal ordered Gale to do what he had done. He stated that all Gale had to do was to have obeyed. *(Next 4 or 5 lines too faded)* ... the other 3 men. Brevington then called for the Padre and asked for a New Testament from which he read a short passage, Lieutenant Okusaki again called the firing party and indicated to them the position of their targets by nominating points on his own body. He then ordered to fire and the 4 men fell to the ground. Brevington, however, sat up and said 'You have shot me through the arm, please shoot me through the heart.' The Indian Officer who was a member of the firing party fired again and Brevington was shot in the leg. He said, 'For God's sake, shoot me through the heart.' The Indians fired again and each body received 6 to 8 shots. Subsequently the firing party moved over to the bodies and fired another 5 shots into each. The Indian Officer threw his rifle to a Sikh and exchanged it for his walking stick. Lieutenant Okusaki turned to the party which had witnessed the execution and addressed them in Japanese. The interpreter was called and said 'You have just witnessed 4 men put to death who tried to escape against Japanese orders. It is impossible to escape as the great Nipponese ----- *(too faded)* ----- will be brought back here and put to death. Your officers are responsible for the men under your command and you will again tell them not to go outside the wire. If they do they will be put to death as you have just seen. We do not like to put them to death. You have not yet signed papers saying you will not escape which is an admission you intend to escape.' Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher then said we had no intention of escaping, that we knew it was foolish and that all men had been warned to that effect. Lieutenant Okusaki then ordered them to return to their quarters.

Just received a pair of white sox which were issued to us by the Japanese. I definitely appreciate them as my others are far past darning.

Heard a remark passed by a gunner which I think very apt. Our quarters, and in fact all our quarters with the exception of the officers, are very much cramped, whilst on the subject of quarters heard the remark 'Order of Preference' (regards quarters) 'Officers first; Officer's fowls and ducks second; N.C.O.s third, and if anything is left, Other Ranks'.

Sunday 5th September 43

Compulsory Church Parade and March Past. The service was good, conveying a wealth of meaning in a veiled way and very ... *(unreadable)* ... The music was supplied by the concert orchestra and was pleasant. I fancy that orchestras in Australia back home would improve the attendance and would be a good addition ... *(unreadable)* ...

Monday 6th September 43

Started work in the garden again, for how long, who knows? Had a bellyful of guavas, found a coconut then had it pinched by one of the officers. Very nasty trailer accident in which 16 Other Ranks and Officers from the A.J.C A.I.F. were injured, some seriously. One chap has two legs broken and internal injuries. The smash happened near the Changi Jail to which the party were on the way, for the camp supply of wood. The trailer parties to the hospital have stopped due to the Nips now occupying the area.

The new Nip guards who have taken up residence in the area dished out a few bashings yesterday to chaps who forgot they were entitled to a salute. They did two rounds at different periods, seemingly with the express purpose of catching the unwary.

Tuesday 7th September 43

Day off to see the eye specialist. He informed me after a minute's examination that my eyes are as good as it was possible for them to be, that my left eye is much below the standard of my right, but due to the results of the complaint no more could be done about it and it would always be so. I am to see him again in a month if they behave in the meantime. Tonight I go on guard for 24 hours.

Of the sixteen injured in the trailer, 12 were admitted to hospital. It is also rumoured that the Officer in Charge is under arrest although he is also in hospital. That chap that fell from the coconut tree is in a critical condition and not much hope is given for his life.

Wednesday 8th September 43

Spent a very uncomfortable night on guard. Firstly the mosquitoes were unbearable and secondly it rained like hell coming through the roof and side of the guard house and flooding our bed.

Air Force (British) funeral passed out of the camp area. I fell out the guard and as a guard we paid our respects. I believe he died with Malaria dysentery.

Nip guard gave me a present of a pack of cigarettes (Virginias). I'm afraid my taste for good tobacco has been ruined. I didn't even taste them. Had to smoke some boong tobacco after them to complete my smoke.

During my period of guard two cars full of Japanese women took a tour of the camp. I gave them a salute and they returned it with a very nice bow. The Japanese women impressed me as being a homely type of individual with plenty of feeling. There is nothing antagonistic about them and their look is one of friendliness and sympathy.

Thursday 9th September 43

A.I.F. mail definitely at Changi and is being sorted. I have great hopes. That itself is great news so on the whole things are very rosy and we are all excited and happy. ... (*unreadable*) ...

Friday 10th September 43

Started off for the garden, got caught in the rain and was soaked. Stayed in the garden for an hour and then told to pack up and go back to camp. Spent the rest of the day spine bashing. Japanese Medical

Board were in our hospital today examining the prisoners sent here from the ... (*unreadable*) ... no doubt it ... (*unreadable*) ...

Saturday 11th September 43

Worked in the garden. No letters for me. Uneventful day.

Sunday 12th September 43

Very heavy rain and unable to go to the garden. Spent the day doing repairs and reading. Still no letters for me and some of the boys have been lucky. The dates of the letters vary, some September 1942, December 1942, and some as late as February 1943.

Monday 13th September 43

Helping to erect barbed wire fences around perimeter of Burwood Camp. Advice has been received that 500 P.O.W.s from Java are to occupy Burwood Camp. We worked under the direction of a Tommy Officer and it was a pleasure and our chaps appreciated the difference. This show has made us all realise just what gentlemen and soldiers the Tommy officers are. I think I have said enough about our officers. There was no issue of letters today.

Tuesday 14th September 43

Still wiring and fed up to the teeth with it. So far the Java party has not arrived but everything is in readiness for them. The A.I.F. Concert party had a rehearsal today of their performance ... (*unreadable*) ... record with the possibility of going on the air. The rehearsal was attended by Japanese. Four letters came into the quarters I was in but I was only one of the envious. The twenty four hours between deliveries are very long ones.

Wednesday 15th September 43

Feel very ill tempered and cranky, due no doubt to waiting anxiously all day for mail time and not getting a letter. The Java party arrived last night, 500, which includes 150 British and 350 Javanese. I spoke to one of the Tommies in the party and he said the A.I.F. in Java were being treated handsomely and spent most of their time making propaganda films for the Nips, such as shots of them fishing, golfing, etc. He also said that 2,500 more P.O.W.s were coming or are on their way here from Java. Most of the chaps who arrived look healthy and seem in pretty good condition.

Have a big ulcer on my instep and my foot has swollen pretty badly, so once again I am going about barefooted, a very ticklish job when handling barbed wire which I have been doing for the past few days. My hands feet and legs are covered in small cuts from the barbs and get very painful. Sick Parade tomorrow.

Thursday 11th September 43

I feel stunned and cannot yet realise that Julian is the little man he is. I'm afraid I still visualize him as a small baby. The letter dated 23rd September arrived whilst I was having tea and I am now suffering with a bad attack of indigestion caused by me galloping my food down, and incidentally leaving half, to go to my quarters to read it and reread it numerous times. I still cannot conciliate my mind to my eye regards Julian. The letter is now 12 months old and it is beyond me to visualize what he looks

like now. I try – but my mind becomes chalky and I finish up as I last saw him. Instead of feeling happy I now feel very discontent and hopeless.

Friday 17th September 43

Worked in the garden today but I believe it is only a flash in the pan and tomorrow we work for the Nips on what they call a ‘playing area’ but what it really is is a fighter plane strip, situated about a mile from our camp. I don’t fancy the job but 200 men are required. I’m sure to be one, bad feet and all (*next section too faded*) ... rifle butt. A complaint was lodged with the Jap Camp Commander and later the Nip guard asked to see Captain Cross as he wanted to apologise to him. Captain Cross sent him a message to the effect that he, Captain Cross, considered it beneath his dignity to even accept an apology from him. Evidently he, or some of the hospital orderlies are not living on a rice diet. Last night two were caught performing an unnatural act. This is the second known case of this kind in the camp since the capitulation. The other performers were two Tommy hospital orderlies. There is no accounting for taste.

I hope Bobbie still retains that part of an Englishman that I have learned to admire so much about them. He has it and I think will keep it.

Saturday 18th September 43

The same Nip guard that got into holts with Captain Cross put on another couple of shows. His first one was very surprising from our point of view. There appears to be some animosity I believe in the Nip perimeter guard and the guard control guard and yesterday after the garden guard had been sent off to the garden the perimeter guard, the one that did the ... (*unreadable*) ... called the garden guard (a good cove) over and slapped his face. The garden guard retaliated by swinging a punch that knocked the other over. He then got up and swung a punch that knocked the garden guard over. Whilst he was on the ground the perimeter guard ... (*page missing I think*) ...

Sunday 19th September 43

Spent a very uncomfortable night with the mosquitoes, but personally saw one of those humorous things that make this P.O.W. business farcical. The Tommies have stacks of wood near the Guard House on which they mount a picquet all night. We have a guard at the main gate where the guard now is situated and the Nips have guards on the road. Last night or early this morning, Tommy, our guard, and the Nips all sat down at the entrance to the gate yarning and smoking (illegal). I noticed things were quiet from that quarter and as the mosquitoes were giving me hell decided to go out to the gate also. I found the Tommy stretched out on his back asleep, our guard sitting on a stool asleep, and the Nip with his head on his hands, also asleep. The Nip’s rifle and bayonet were leaning up against the guard shelter about 5 yards away. So much for all our sentries.

The chaps working on the playing area killed four snakes and the Javanese killed a cobra 5’6” near our guard house. It was as thick as my arm and seemed very angry.

Believe the Java party set out tomorrow or the next day, where – it is not known.

Monday 20th September 43

Feel very weary, did a hard 6 hours work on the Jap playing area. I with others, carried trunks of coconut trees about 200 yards. This was our job the whole period and believe me they became very heavy at the finish.

A.I.F. chap caught outside the wire last night, he was taken to the Jap jail.

The Java Force left this morning and we expect some more to arrive in their place.

The playing area of the Nips is to be shaped like an L. It is about 1½ to 2 miles long and about 600 to 700 yards wide. Some playing area. Thousands of coconut trees have been pushed down but there are not too many coconuts left lying about. The job is in the charge of Jap Engineers (fighting force) and they seem to be quiet and friendly and up to the present no incidents have occurred. The trouble, like our own units, comes from the non-fighting forces. The Mad Nip who has been doing the stand-overs was taken from his post yesterday and marched by 2 armed guards to the Changi jail.

No more letters, but some of the chaps have received quite a number. One chap received 20 and a big parcel, all from different persons. It does not seem fair as some chaps have not received any. ...
(unreadable) ...

Tuesday 21st September 43

(Faded) ... In our area we killed five snakes and numerous rats and scorpions and caught a flying squirrel ... (unreadable) ...

Wednesday 22nd September 43

Another wet tail coming back from work; had to put on wet clothes this morning and it looks like history repeating itself tomorrow. Work today was under the worst conditions as yet. We worked clearing a swamp of thick tropical growth of the worst kind, every creeper was armed with numerous thorns and their long tendrils grabbed at us and never missed. This place was ... (unreadable) ... and gave us hell. ... (next section unreadable) ... long and one of the snakes killed in our area was a cobra 5'6" long and very ferocious. There are twenty parties of us, 100 in each, and we have an area allotted to each party. We are the unlucky party and drew the swamp area. The Nips are still friendly and seem to appreciate our difficulties. There are numerous species of orchids in our area, some are out in flower and are magnificent blooms. A contrast: scorpions, cobras, Nips and orchids.

Thursday 23rd September 43

Beat the rain home tonight. Did a systematic bludge today. I have decided that although we are only working on the playing area? (Jack's question mark) I am only going to do anything towards finishing it when actually forced. It is much harder not doing work and looking as if you are working, but it is the only way out. Amongst the Sergeants I have received the booby prize for receiving letters. Air Raid precautions active from tonight. Holiday tomorrow which is badly needed to bring my washing etc. up to date. Foot not too good, so holiday will be appreciated from that angle.

Oh for a dozen or so of cold Resch's Lagers or, in fact, anything cold to drink. I've never felt thirstier and the water is hot and sickly.

Friday 24th September 43

Caught up on my mending and washing and spent the rest of the day on my back.

Saturday 25th September 43

Conscience is at least clear for the day, started back at the garden. Epidemic of blistered lips going about the camp, practically everyone has them, another deficiency disease perhaps, or maybe the change of season. It rains practically every day. Hear that P.O.W.s at Seloran Airdrome are having a very rough trot, bad food and plenty of bashings. We have two cases in the hospital from there who have been knocked about that much they have lost their memory and one is also practically dumb and blind. Two of our Regiment who were captured and taken to Sumatra are supposed to be amongst the party there.

Sunday 26th September 43

In luck, received a letter from Mae written 28 August 42. 1 year and 1 month old. It looks as if I have a tornado for a son, and someone else has to bear the weight of it; nevertheless I would more than willingly be there to collect my share. Surely now it can't be very much longer before he will not have to resort to photos to see his dad; but I'm afraid his dad at present does not resemble his photograph, for at present he looks like a scraggy-necked turkey and not a plump one either. Have not weighed myself for some time and am much thinner since I last weighed. I imagine I am less than 10 stone. Air raid precaution practice going on and I believe will not finish until the middle of the week. It is the longest we have yet had, and is already boring.

Monday 27th September 43

Pulled over 150 snake gourds from our garden area this morning. They are similar to cucumbers but grow into face-like shapes, mostly resembling snakes in different attitudes. Helping us were 12 Malayan Volunteers, Englishmen, Scottish, Australians, and a Scotch 'Canadian' person. I don't go much on these chaps. They certainly don't compare with the average English officer. Most of them are planters and appear to be a degenerated crowd. Was able to buy a pound of sugar after giving it up for months, the cost being eight day's wages.

Tuesday 28th September 43

During last night (late) lorries filled with men passed the camp, first going towards the Southern Area and then back towards Singapore. They are a mystery as no one knows who they were or where they came from. The only things we are definite about [it] is they did not come from camp.

Had sugar on my rice porridge this morning, it was dear, but it was nice. Spuds (sweet today ... *(unreadable)* ... A chap who was in the next bed to me in the hospital was operated on yesterday and during the operation his heart stopped. They worked on him for 3½ hours and brought him back to life. He is about 48 and named Charlie Griffiths.

Wednesday 29th September 43

The Mad Nip is back on guard and yesterday opened his score by giving a Tamil a terrific belting and then kicked him when he was on the ground. He put up a good score during the day and finished up

last night making three Tommy officers kneel on the roadway, using the point of his bayonet as a coxer, and then slapped their faces. Of course the matter has been reported but he was still on guard this morning. The Nip garden guard was posted to the garden, the one that got into holts with this lunatic before but took no risks and armed himself with a mattock just in case. The precaution evidently deterred the Mad Nip.

Eight P.O.W.s who have been the guests of Nippon in the Singapore jail arrived at our hospital yesterday. They are in a pitiful condition, two are practically at death's door. Included in the party are Major Wild, who we thought had been evacuated some time back, and the Red Cross Rep Roberts. The chaps previously brought out here have not yet been returned to the Jail.

Thursday 30th September 43

Another party from Java arrived this morning, the vanguards of a part of 2,500. There are some A.I.F. machine gunners amongst the arrivals.

Whilst walking to the garden this morning we could hear loud pitiful crying and wailing and when we arrived at the Nip Guard tent we were able to see the reason for it. A young pretty Chinese girl was tied up in front of the tent and her hands were bound behind her back and her head forced back facing the sun. Her cries were heartbreaking and I think all of us felt the same. It is a horrible thing to have to witness these atrocities and be unable to do anything about it. One feels that his manhood has deserted him and it lingers with one all day. The girl looked as if she had had a torrid time, evidently she had been forced and their base nature had to be satisfied. Thank God she was not there when we came back. I believe she was released just after we had passed. "Asia from [for?] the Asiatics." For some time we have been asking the Japanese for the release of news, as the issue of the English printed 'Syonyn Times' has been discontinued. Today they issued a screed to the effect: Australia and India are expected to fall to the Glorious Nippon Army at any minute; they have America surrounded and Russia is fighting for her life at Stalingrad and lots of other stuff too numerous to mention. It's very nice of them to put us in the picture and we now appreciate just how they feel about things. I suppose their own people are just as well informed.

Friday 1st October 43

The Mad Nip collected his dues and the protest entered by our Command bore fruit. Yesterday he was taken to the guard tent (Nip's) his rifle taken from him, he was made to sit down in the tent and the Nip in Charge hit him over the head with his (the Mad Nip's) rifle, kicked him in the stomach three times and he was then taken, relieved from his job as guard and marched away to cool his heels and his belly in the Jap jail. No one feels even the least bit sorry for him, in fact the little Nip from the garden was elated.

Spent most of the day amongst the pig manure and still humming to myself and all and sundry, pity I am not a little younger as I'm sure I would sprout a few more hairs.

Saturday 2nd October 43

Had some of the new Java party (English artillery men) working on our garden area. They stated they had a vile trip over, were battened down inside the hatches all the time whilst they were at sea. They also stated that the Japs were denuding Java of everything moveable, even to the extent of ... *(unreadable)* They heard a rumour to the effect that an epidemic had broken out in one of our working parties up north and that over 500 have died. I sincerely hope that rumour has no foundation. A working party was required by the Japs to do some work in the Jail area today and when our boys arrived they were put to work sorting suits made up from our military cloth. The Jap in Charge informed our N.C.O. that the suits were for P.O.W.s who were going to Japan. Trust I won't have to wear one. The place they were sorting in is next door to a Japanese soldier's brothel and our chaps said the girls (Japanese and Koreans) were very young with neat figures. At least our diet has not stopped our chaps from observing from the masculine eye.

Had some more Malay Volunteers with us also today and amongst them were some very nice chaps, middle aged men with families, most in West Australia. They were more like the sober type and from what I gathered from the chaps I believe were businessmen and not planters.

Sunday 3rd October 43

Guard tonight for 24 hours, therefore no work today, at least no work on the garden, etc. but found plenty of sewing and debugging to keep me occupied. Rumoured that an exchange ship on her way to a Portuguese position near India is at present in Singapore Island. Will be sadly disappointed if some more mail does not arrive and also food on her return journey; might still receive something for Xmas dinner yet.

Monday 4th October 43

Helped feed some of the million of Malayan mosquitoes during last night. The guard house is one of their main bases. The newly arrived Java party has some officers (Dutch) and very high ranking Generals and Admirals, a large number of the personnel being Dutch.

Received a cigarette from one of the Nip guards and some cigarette papers from a Dutchman.

Tuesday 5th October 43

Back working on the playing ground and a rotten job it was. We had to again clear a mangrove swamp, working over our boots in slimy mud. Killed three snakes and hundreds of rats. Able to get some coconut cabbage which is very nice to eat in the raw and cooked; we ate ours raw.

I would estimate that at least 6,000 are working on the area, mostly boongs who, of course, are kept well away from us. I imagine the area will make a great golf course for the garrison forces (ours) when this war business is over.

Feel feverish and not too good tonight, probably due to getting soaked twice during the day.

Wednesday 6th October 43

Spent early part of last night vomiting, afraid I did myself too well with the coconut cabbage, felt much better this morning. I thought perhaps I had the very prevalent complaint in camp 'ulcerated stomach'. This complaint is nearly as common as eye trouble.

The ants in the swamp nearly drove us all crazy today and everyone sighed a sigh of relief when 'Gabriel' (the Nip bugler) blew his final piece. Jap photographer with his motion picture paraphernalia (should have thought of an easier word than this so could have spelt it) arrived on the job and took a few shots. Naturally he did not come into the mud but took them under the coconut palms.

Thursday 7th October 43

A funny day. We were relieved to be relieved of the swamp area and were given another area amongst the coconut trees which lent itself admirably to a good bludge and we did at every opportunity. A cove had produced a wasps' nest of not mean size and two bees' nests in an old drum and the other in stumps. We did not disturb them but left them in case of emergency. The first nest was disturbed when the Nip guards put in their appearance. Of course we kidded to panic and one Nip received three stings. This kept them away for a good period but they eventually started their 'speedy' talk again, there was another prod and our second barrel ... (*unreadable*) ... in the drum as the Nips gave us and the bees and wasps a wide berth perhaps it will come in handy another time. Admittedly we also had a few casualties but we ... (*unreadable*) ... of them.

During the afternoon some of the Java party were taken back to the camp to receive the 'Order of the Glass Rod' which points very much to a new move (pun, but not meant).

Great excitement at the guardhouse this morning at 1 a.m. Two mental cases escaped from the mental portion of the hospital and tried, or at least it was alleged they contemplated by one of the Malayan Command Officers, they had tried to make a break. One was captured after putting up a good fight, the other is still at large, apparently not in the camp area which has been thoroughly combed. God knows what will happen to the poor fellow.

One of the very young officers came up to me on the job today and during the conversation I asked him did he intend going on with his pre-war job, which I knew to be a shop assistant. He said "No" definitely, adding "I can't imagine myself taking orders and being looked at by every type of Tom, Dick and Harry." The war has certainly altered us and forced a different complex onto most of us. This was very evident amongst the Other Ranks who had to stand and take it from at times a much inferior type. He cut the conversation off and I wasn't sorry.

Friday 8th October 43

A day off. Spent in the usual repairs and debugging. The Java force played the Tommies at soccer this afternoon, it was a grand match and although the Tommies had three leagues (I think that is what they call their football forces) the Java force beat them by 2 goals to 1 and I considered, as everybody else did, that the best team won.

Attended the eye specialist last night and was informed that my left eye had deteriorated slightly. I have to go back in a fortnight. I was only thinking last night it is nearly two years since I owned a match, over twelve months since I tasted fresh meat and over two years since I have had a feed of meat. It is nearly 1 year since I have tasted meat of any description. I have seen one white woman from a distance in well over two years.

The moon is again half full and I am still (now) patiently waiting.

Saturday 9th October 43

Just another day in a Prisoner of War camp. On guard for 24 hours starting 7.30pm tonight.

When the mosquitoes had had their fill they retired and called on their reserves for the sandfly who open his ... (*unreadable*) ... (meaning I had a very rough night on guard). Once more I had to call out the guard to pay their respects to the dead, this time it was a chap from the 2/26th Battalion, Company Sergeant Major Russell. I believe he died a shocking death having been dead from his feet up to his chest for some considerable time. I saw Charlie Griffith, the cove that died and was brought back to life, getting about and looking as fit as a fiddle.

I'm sure the Dutchmen here suffer with a definite inferiority complex and that due to this the jealousy they have for the Englishmen is very pronounced (the feeling seems to be mutual). I have spoken to numerous pure Dutchmen and all their variegated breeds and it is as plain as my nose what ails them. With us their complex does not worry them and therefore they have no need for jealousy. One I spoke to today, one who in civil life must hold a very prominent position in the Commercial World of Java judging from his conversation and I have no reason to doubt his position, was extremely bitter and I took from his words that he would rather have the Nips. Naturally I had some harsh words with him and he seemed surprised so I take it I must have struck him as a sympathetic Australian ear before and he judged my sentiments to be the same. As for myself my opinion of the Englishmen on the whole has improved considerably, and improves each day I see them under these circumstances and I'm afraid my opinion of the Dutchmen to the same extent in the decline. In fact I must [much?] prefer the Dutch-Javanese to the full blood Dutchmen and feel very kindly towards them. They are the essence of civility and helpfulness.

Monday 11th October 43

I feel extremely annoyed tonight ... (*half a dozen lines too faded to read*) ... the garden. I put it down for a minute and it was gone, it could have only been taken by a party of Malaya Volunteers or a party of Tommies. The Volunteers I doubt very much would have taken it, so the Tommies or one of them (they are about the worst type of Tommy I have ever seen, a real low lot and worthy of the name if it means anything) and am pretty certain stole it. I told them all, both the Tommies and the Malays if I ever found any of them with it I would not ask any questions.

The Nip Guard put on a show of might with our guard and made the sentry on duty stand at attention for his two hour shift and made the balance of the guard sit at attention all night in the guardhouse. A

complaint has been lodged with our Command. I was lucky to be on the night before. No tobacco in the camp and no more is expected until Wednesday. We will need it as it helps a lot to forget.

Tuesday 12th October 43

My knife turned up this morning and I was that pleased to get it back I asked no questions and I hope the clearing of whoever's conscience it may have done gives them as much pleasure as the return of it gave to me. The snake gourds yielded over 2,500 today but they were not as large as usual but still a good crop.

Two of the prisoners from Singapore Jail, who are at present inmates of our hospital, were serving a sentence of 5 years solitary confinement for trying to escape from 'B' Force who are working in Borneo. They say the treatment at Borneo is good, food so much better. Prior to when they made their break they were getting fresh meat and plenty of vegetables, also fish. Java people, whilst in Java, also received ample food and are finding it very hard here, they say they are now practically starved. What would they have said this time last year, in fact ever since we have been P.O.W.s. At present we are living better than we have been for many a day, due principally to the products of the garden, nevertheless we are always hungry.

Helped carry to the hospital one of the 2/10th Field Regiment officers who is attached to our Company. He is suffering with Dengue and Dysentery.

Wednesday 13th October 43

Rained very heavily all day and no working parties. Rumoured that the women and children from Changi Jail left yesterday and it is possible they may have embarked on the exchange ship. God grant they have. The Jap authorities have notified us that now all countries have been notified regarding the names of P.O.W.s held by them, very quick work, only two years later, or at least nearly two years. Sympathetic nation, the Japanese.

Thursday 14th October 43

Swamped, fouled and eaten alive in the swamp. It rained like blazes, mud slime everywhere and the ants and mosquitoes etc. were extra vicious. Adjacent to the swamp is a native Kampong. We were working close to it today. I saw a few gaunt half-starved natives, Tamils and Malays. They looked pathetic. Misery and starvation seemed to hang over the place like a veil or fog. I felt as if I could feel and taste it. This one would be typical of many thousands of Kampongs in Malaya. Usually when we are on the jobs we cut logs of wood and each man carries one home to supplement our supply at camp, but there is one N.C.O. Nip who goes mad when he sees us and makes us, usually with the help of whatever weapon he can lay his hands on, throw the wood away. We were unlucky and struck him tonight, after having carried the wood more than a mile and mostly through the swamp. In this swamp are about 20 varieties of mangroves, some weird and some very pretty, both in leaf and flowers. The crabs have spewed up the ... (*unreadable*) ... and some of the mounds are 5 to 6 feet high and there are thousands of them.

One of the 4th Motor Transport A.I.F. chaps was buried yesterday. I believe he died of a bad ulcerated stomach, the first death of this kind we have had here.

Friday 15th October 43

Back in the garden. I had four young Java-party coves working with me. I asked one who spoke English how old he was and he said 18. It appears that he was still going to school when the Japs arrived in Java and all boys 16 and over were mobilised and taken to the front line. Luckily for them Java capitulated before they contacted the enemy as very few of them had even held a rifle and I'm sure they would have been slaughtered.

There is a Dutch Captain here accompanied by his son aged 15 years. It appears the boy's mother is dead and he has no relations, so his father, who was a P.O.W., approached the Japs and was allowed to have his son with him.

Two A.I.F. chaps working on the playground were caught chopping down coconut trees in the native Kampong. Both of them received a terrible bashing. The Jap guards used pick axes to good effect.

It is raining heavy and I hope it keeps up long enough to postpone the now daily Jap check parade.

Saturday 16th October 43

We invited a Petty Officer, late of the H.M.A.S. Perth, to the Mess last night. He gave us a very interesting and graphic talk on the life of the Perth from her christening to her sinking. Some of the things he told us of what happened to her at ... (*unreadable*) ... Docks in Sydney whilst she was in there for repairs was incredible. He thinks that some of the dock workers are the lowest on the earth and from what he told us he has ample reason to think so. Half day holiday both for the Japanese and naturally the working parties under their control. The holiday was so the Nips could attend the Services in Singapore to pray or do whatever their soldiers do for the soldiers that have been killed in the war.

Sunday 17th October 43

Very lucky. Was able to swap my waterbottle for a Dutch one. There is no comparison in the two, in fact any of our gear to the Dutch. My bottle is made of tin, theirs is aluminium, and so is all their gear. Concert or something on every night now so there is always, if not too tired, somewhere to go. Haven't heard as yet anything definite about the women and children from Changi Jail. Just at present the place is full of rumours of all descriptions.

Monday 18th October 43

Java party left this morning. It is thought they are going to Japan. We passed them while waiting for their transport and they did not seem at all happy about leaving. All the British parties have been left behind, also sick and ailing of the Dutch portion. I was talking to a couple of English Air Force chaps who came over with the Java party. They told me that the Dutch Army made no attempt to stop the Nips landing in Java and as far as their, the Dutch garrison, also the Javanese effort, was concerned, it was a farce. They never attempted to fight, all the fighting that was done was by the British and a few Americans. The Dutch were under the impression, no doubt due to the Japs' propaganda, that the Japs

would place the Dutch and Javanese back in their old pre-war positions and they would be called upon to help the Japs run the country. It did not turn out that way, instead the Japs placed them in P.O.W. camps and later distributed them over Jap occupied territories, still as P.O.W.s. The Dutch are very annoyed about it and say that the Jap went back on his word, not mentioning that they went back on their country and allies. Nevertheless, these Air Force chaps said "The Dutch Navy and Air Force fought gamely and did an excellent job". They also said the Japs have stripped Java of everything moveable and the place is becoming a shell and will take years to rebuild.

Tuesday 19th October 43

The Mad Nip was on the job again this morning. I don't think his forced holiday did him much good as he started the day off raving like a lunatic and I think it is only a matter of time before he creates another incident. The Nips found one of our land mines this afternoon. A lorry driven by a Nip and carrying some Tommies ran over the mine causing it to explode. The result was the Nip had his leg and part of his buttock blown off, two Tommies slightly injured and the lorry wrecked. The accident happened at the playing field and we heard the explosion at the garden which is about 2½ mile to 3 miles away. There were many thousands of these mines laid around this part of the Island and I think this is the first Nip casualty from them. It was thought that all these mines had been taken up, our Engineers doing the job, and one day I was detailed on a party mine-sweeping. It was not a job to my liking as the grass was long and they were very hard to locate. We found a considerable number. I was a very pleased man when the day was over, it only meant our standing on one and it would have been all up for the unlucky one who trod on it, and possibly others in the vicinity.

Wednesday 20th October 43

The Nip who was blown up yesterday died before he reached the hospital. The Tommies, one a Captain, received wounds much more serious than first anticipated, but all are doing well.

The Japs at this camp yesterday with apparatus for recording our A.I.F. concert. The records will be broadcast over the air, or at least they say they will. They were that impressed with one of our singers, Bernie McCathry, that they made three records. I believe the concert party put on an excellent show.

A Malaya Volunteer named Jim Wilkie who is friendly with a few of our chaps visits our mess nearly every night. Last night I had a great yarn to him and struck up a friendship. He is a Scotchman and did have a rubber plantation 50 miles from K. Lumpur. He is undoubtedly one of the nicest chaps I ever met and I'm only sorry I did not know him earlier, especially before the blue. The chaps ... (*unreadable*) ... knew him before the blue and he treated them handsomely and they think the world of him. He is almost 43 and exceptionally handsome. His family live in Scotland.

Set a big hunk of rubber alight and gave bed a good debugging this afternoon and roasted them up in their thousands. The stench was putrid. They gave me hell last night and I finished by getting up and doing my washing at 3 a.m. by moonlight.

Had some very salty fish for tea and I had a thirst of 20 miners, water of no avail. The fish was of antiquity variety but that was all there was, so I ate it.

Thursday 21st October 43

One of fifteen horses pulling a trailer around all day. It was the practice up till a few days ago for the Japs to put a lorry at our service and distribute and collect the produce from the garden on cropping days. For some unknown reason they have withdrawn the lorry and we have to supply manpower to take its place. Feel pretty worn out and won't be long out of bed tonight.

Two anti-tank mines were discovered in the playground area today and our chaps had the job of digging them out and taking the charges out of them.

Friday 22nd October 43

Acted the horse again today. Together with 19 others we pushed a heavy trailer about 3½ to 4 miles out along the road, loaded it with nearly 3 tons of wood and then dragged it back to camp. As usual the going out was mostly downhill and coming back with the load was very hard work. Passed quite a few native houses and issuing from them was the most gruesome and dirgeful howling. It gave me the creeps to hear it. Evidently someone had died or some other tragic happening had occurred there.

Visited the eye specialist last night and found that my eyes are still deteriorating. I have to wear dark glasses and was told to report back in another week. I'm afraid there is very little that can be done regarding them unless food miraculously arrives from somewhere, that seems to be the whole basis of the trouble.

The Java party who left for Japan arrived back at Changi this morning after boarding the ship and staying on it for some days but never left Singapore. The story I have not heard but naturally rumours are rife, some fantastic.

Saturday 23rd October 43

Had five of the newly returned Java party working for me in the garden. They stated that they were taken aboard a ship in which they stayed for a few days being allowed to come on deck twice a day for a smoking period. The ship did not leave the harbour and they were later taken from it and returned to Changi. They were told by the Japs that sickness had broken out and that to safeguard everybody they would be returned to Changi. This may have been so but no cases of sickness had been reported from the Java party and these chaps are inclined to think that it was an excuse. They also stated that Singapore Harbour was full of shipping and during the period they were in the ship they did not notice any movement of shipping outward bound. The party were very happy to get back here. I don't think they fancy a sea voyage at this stage. I trust my next one will be Aussie bound.

Japanese half holiday and of course we get one. The Nips Air Force are giving some wonderful displays of aerial aerobatics and it appears as if they have some 1st class pilots and 1st rate planes around this quarter.

Sunday 24th October 43

Air raid precaution practice made exceedingly realistic by the Japanese planes practicing their manoeuvres and dog fights whilst the sirens are screaming.

Our hospital authorities have been told to make room in the hospital for ... (*unreadable*) ... sick men who will be coming from the North. The latest rumour also from the North is very disquieting, and is to the effect that one working party has had 600 Other Ranks and 13 Officers die and the balance are coming back here. The outbreak or epidemic causing these grave casualties is alleged to be the dreaded cholera. Where this information came from, i.e. regarding the deaths, no one seems to know and all of us are loath to believe it but feel very uneasy for our mates and cobbles.

Fish rations must have arrived just now as a terrific stench of decomposed fish has filled the air, and will give them this they are not labelled fresh. Anyhow I don't suppose it would matter if they were labelled to that effect. We could sue them, but I believe they have the law on their side, in fact they give us to understand they, with the help of the ... (*unreadable*) ... Powers (or should I say Power), will soon have the world and what goes with it on their side but we are like 'Pop Eye' and 'we knows what we knows' (the influence of the American papers which we are issued for certain purposes, but mostly use for cigarette papers, which is not the purpose).

Monday 25th October 43

Just spent 24 hours guard stopping those that are in from going out and those who are out coming in; the trouble is we don't get any customers these days.

Last time I was on the Mad Nip got a craze for moving the guard's seat about. There is a sequel. Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher arrived at the guard house with the instructions that as most of the guards are sick men and battle casualties they are allowed to have the rest and if the Mad Nip or any other Nip guard complained he was to be notified. The Mad Nip arrived down at the guard house with two beautiful black eyes and smacked mouth and looking like something just come through a mangle. He looked in the guard box, saw the seat, grunted, turned on his heels and disappeared up the road. Perhaps he just came down to show the seat the damage it had caused him.

A new guardhouse has been built with electric lights and an electric fan which will now make sleeping in there a pleasantry, the fan blowing away the mosquitoes and sandflies. Japanese excuse for the Java party arriving back was that some had diphtheria. The supposed cases were taken to our hospital but they showed no signs of that disease. Today all the Java party were examined by Japanese doctors.

Tuesday 26th October 43

We cropped 4 rice bags of Tapioca roots and a bag of mangoes this morning from the garden. The roots are exceedingly nice baked, and if par boiled and fried are delicious. When one sees the roots and then visualizes tapioca as we know it, it is hard to believe they ever came from the same roots, but a Malayan Volunteer explained the method of its extraction and how it is eventually made as we know it.

Had a very nice rissole for tea. It was made of rice, sweet potato, with onion tops chopped up and fried in coconut oil.

Wednesday 27th October 43

Feel I am boiling up inside. Just witnessed one of our genial hosts beating up with feet, boots and rifle, one of our Tommies on the roadway between the garden and camp gate. My thoughts were murder, and I hope I never find myself in the same predicament. I just don't know how I would react.

Saw a great effort of nature today in the garden. Where I was working I disturbed a rat, evidently a family. She had four young ones who, when she made a squeak, attached themselves by the teeth onto her body, and that is the way she carried them. I saw where it went to and followed, after giving her a few minutes to settle, rushed over to the spot. This time she was taken by surprise but was equal to the occasion. She again gave the signal and the four young this time attached themselves to the tail while she was slowly moving. Her pace was very restricted and it would have been no effort for me to have killed them, but I hadn't the heart and let them go on their way.

Have been suffering with very bad eyeache and neckaches lately so decided to go to the Medical Officer. He informed me that I am suffering migraine brought about by food deficiency. He stated that there was an epidemic in the camp but nothing could be done about it. All these deficiency diseases seem to come in waves and at certain periods. A very bad hangover is paradise compared to this migraine but are of a similar feeling.

One of the officers asked a Nip guard at the garden a few questions. The Nip seemed to act dumb so the officer sarcastically said "you wouldn't know". The Nip retorted in his best Australian "You think I know _____ nothing, but I know _____ all!"

Thursday 28th October 43

Over 3,000 snake gourds and 8 tons of Tapioca 'roots' and 2 cuts of Bringul (egg fruit) from our garden area today. Air raid precaution practice still going on. I believe tomorrow will be the last day. The Nip planes have given us some interesting demonstrations during the exercise of making this thing realistic.

Went to the eye spec. My eyes have improved slightly, due no doubt to the sunglasses I have been wearing. Everyday I have them treated with drops. Headaches still going flat out.

Friday 29th October 43

Nips shifted the Indian camp from River Valley Road to the new Aerodrome. Sorry! I meant the 'playing field'. Jap authorities have instructed us to build ourselves air raid shelters. If we are going to need them here the Indians will need them where they are going to be housed. Very strong rumour that a relief food ship has arrived in Singapore. I think someone has had a very beautiful dream as it is too good to be true.

Saturday 30th October 43

Tried wearing my boots again today, was the third day and it looked as if my feet were going to hold but tonight I took off my boots and the skin started to come off, so evidently whatever complaint I have is still there. A fungi disease is starting to attack the sweet spuds and egg fruit plants and it looks as if it will take control. If this happens it will be disastrous to the garden and also to ourselves. There are also signs of this rot showing on the tapioca and beans. I personally think we have had too much rain, but the Malay people say it is the bad soil of Malaya.

Sunday 31st October 43

The Nips have taken an 'all of a sudden' interest in our welfare such as forbidding us to drink such and such water and taking this and that precautions and even today they pulled up the garden party, fell out the men without boots, inquired why, and those who did not possess any or those that had ill fitting boots have to report to them tomorrow for an issue. I have come to this conclusion. Our death rate since being P.O.W.s is exceptionally high if the figures we have heard from the working forces are correct. The Nips know that questions will get asked some day and they are making a belated run with their concern for us, or I should say their concern over themselves, for when the day arrives. From the food point I don't think they have it to give to us, at least not here, and they cannot afford the shipping for food to send us.

The Java people are still in quarantine and little is heard from them. Some cases of dysentery have been reported at the Convalescent Depot and a cobbler of mine, Claude Stevens, is in hospital with Malarial Dysentery, I suppose the most dangerous form of illness we have had here, and a large percentage of our deaths have occurred from this complaint. Poor old Claude has never left hospital since he was wounded in the show and he's had a pretty rough time of it. Now thanks to the M & C [M&B?] tablets it is possible to cure this Malarial Dysentery and Claude has started to come good, although he is a sackful of bones.

Although the Air Raid practice has been completed there are still numerous planes doing their stuff and it looks as if this Island is being used as a forward training base for their airforce.

A chap working at the playground area brought back a tale last night of a Dutchman receiving a bashing down there. It goes that the Nip N.C.O. caught the Dutchman loafing on the job. He gave him a couple of hits and the Dutchman went crazy and arrived back with an Interpreter. It annoyed the Nip N.C.O. so he called over a Nip guard, told him stand behind the Dutchman with his rifle pushing into the Dutchman's back. The Nip N.C.O. then picked up a boat oar and cracked it onto the unfortunate Dutchman's head and shins until he knocked him unconscious. The boys howled out to the Nips and called him everything they could lay their tongues to, but evidently he did not understand English and continued with his task.

Monday 1st November 43

Went over to hospital last night to pay Claude Stevens a visit. He is coming along in great style. As I was passing the operating theatre I noticed some of the boys watching with interest something that was going on there and decided to have a look myself. I arrived just as the surgeon was making an incision and stood there and watched his very capable hands. Numerous instruments ... (*unreadable*)

... It was artistic and not gruesome as I expected. The operation performed was for an appendix. The patient was a chap who took bad yesterday afternoon whilst working on the playground. The doctor did not seem to mind having an audience.

Our cooks have found a very effective way of dishing up what we call 'Malayan Command' (stinking fish). They now smoke them well before cooking and I must say that tonight I thoroughly enjoyed them. I mean it, as my share was a half of a small fish.

Fifty men required to reinforce the working party at Blackang Mati (island past the ... *(unreadable)* ... This working party is just plain hell and come in for much more than their share of Nip atrocities and bashings and, typical of the army, the personnel are mostly infantry or some other fighting troops. It galls me to see chaps here who have never left the safety and ease of this camp. Men young and fit who, during the show were attached to base services and rear Headquarters, never seeing or tasting the rottenness of war, are given the secure jobs like canteens and supplies, whilst the coves who bore the brunt of fighting also have to go away on forces and working parties, looking all like old men. It is not at all just and naturally causes them to hate with a terrible hatred those chaps that always stay behind. I appreciate their feelings as they are mine. They look so well clothed and generally superior and, what is more, they consider they are superior and essential.

Tuesday 3rd November 43

Had a great yarn with a Malayan Volunteer at lunch time. He was exceedingly interesting having spent 24 years in Malaya and these he spent walking through the jungle from Singapore to S----- surveying the route for the East Coast Railway. He originally came from Brisbane and now from what he says must hold a very responsible Engineering position – strange as it sounds he assured me he had never seen a tiger in its wild state. He has seen plenty of tiger tracks and all the rest of the Malayan animals. I mentioned Ern Buck's bring them back alive [book or film title?] and he had a good laugh and told us his picture was taken mostly on this Island. In fact he mentioned the exact spot which I know is at the end of Reformatory Road. Naturally he said some of the scenes were shot in Malaya proper, but the thrillers such as the fights between the tiger and the python were shot on the Island. He confirmed this by referring to another Malayan Volunteer I know whose spot was used as Zoological garden.

Wednesday 3rd November 43

Received written instructions as to how we are to act in case of Air Raid and the penalties which can be expected if we do not act on instructions. These penalties are mostly in the form of lead and they give no guarantee that only the offenders will be the recipients. Another Air Raid Practice will be held during this month and from then on if the siren goes it won't be practice and that will be the day.

The Chooms put on a marvellous three act play entitled 'Outward Bound'. I went last night and I have seen nothing better in that line. The acting was superb and would have been a credit to any first rate actor.

Thursday 4th November 43

Jap soldiers have been on exercises the last few days and last night they carried them out around our camp. They "Banzaied" and howled all night and sounded like a pack of dingoes gone mad. They go in for a lot of noise and the shouting etc. appears to be all part of their training and part of the policy when actually at war.

When the Playing Area was first begun each section were supplied with a new tent for markers. I believe it is now impossible to find one down there but many a P.O.W. has a new pair of trousers and the material is identical to the material the tents were made of.

Friday 5th November 43

Rained all day, no work. Spent the day on my back reading. Tonight I go on guard for 24 hours.

The party for Blackang Mati left this morning. They did not seem anxious to go and did not look as happy as the party that arrived back from there to go into hospital. They also arrived this morning, some looking very ill and worn out. There is one consolation, the chaps who arrived back said that conditions there had greatly improved and that mutton was now included in their rations at odd times.

Saturday 6th November 43

Mosquitoes were terrific last night and made sleep impossible even the fan in the guard house going full out had no effect on them. The recent rains no doubt was the cause. Once again the Java party are on their way, this time to Formosa (as far as they know). They left about 5pm but were supposed to leave at 1.30pm but I'm afraid the Jap army functions just like ours and the poor _____ had to wait in the broiling sun with the gear strapped on them for 3½ hours.

A Pommy Major informed me that there are 14 P.O.W.s from Burma in a camp near the Changi jail and they will be coming to Burwood camp tonight. They are to be isolated from the rest of the P.O.W.s and no communication with them will be allowed.

Three men from our house were pretty well beaten up by the Nips at the Playing Area today. One had his eye split open, another his head, the third cuts on his legs and shins. It looks as if bashing are going to be ordered every day on that job, not a day goes past that someone does not receive one.

Sunday 7th November 43

Have plenty of washing to do but the rain has been consistently on and off that can't get a chance, so spent most of the afternoon off reading.

The champion soccer team of the camp, the 29th Field Ambulance (Tommys) played the rest this afternoon. The game started at 6.15pm so we had an early tea. We had the Japanese Commander honour the game with his presence. It was a wonderful game and the rest won by 5 goals to 4. If the ground had been firmer it would have been a champion game. A collection was taken and the receipts are to go to the Changi Christmas fund for buying toys for their Christmas. One of the many bands was scheduled to play but owing to the drizzle they did not do so. Malayan Command put on an excellent comedy play and I went last night. It is many days since I laughed so heartily.

Still rumours about the food ships, but so far nothing substantial has arrived in this camp that even looks like food. Perhaps they are keeping our stuff for a Christmas present. Pay day yesterday and it was 6 days overdue. I am saving up for another pound of sugar.

Monday 8th November 43

Got wet as a shag today and was ... (*unreadable*) ... Robinson Crusoe, on my own.

Nips turned it on again at the Playing Area and one Artillery chap was brought home unconscious and has not yet regained his consciousness. This was brought about by the use of a heavy stick by one of the Nip guards. These guards are having a ton of fun. For the last three days they have had a young Chinese aged about 19 tied up with his hands behind his back in their guardhouse. Tonight when the boys came home the poor soul had collapsed.

Six Tommies who have been here in hospital and who were previously prisoners in a Singapore Jail – Japs sent out doctors and declared them fit to go back to the jail. Yesterday these six men broke camp and have made a break rather than go back. What the outcome will be for them if caught, also the sick who belong to the jail and are here in hospital or the prisoners that are present in the jail and maybe sick, I hate to think. Still, I can't say that I can blame them after what we have seen and heard of their treatment back there.

Tuesday 9th November 43

Killed a 3'6" snake this morning, it was entwined around a tapioca tree. I know it does not sound the right thing but as soon as I saw the snake it reminded me of Mae. I suppose this statement needs some explaining and pretty quick too. Well it was a Malayan Green Tree snake, the colour the most sickly green and the last time Mae and I visited the Zoo we saw this type of snake, there were lots of them in the snake house, they looked repulsive and Mae could not bear to look at them. To me now it did not effect me that way as this country is just a mass of all shades of green and my eyes are accustomed to them. Again I have often seen this type of snake since I have been in Malaya.

There were not six Tommies who broke camp, the correct number is two. So far nothing has been heard of them. Both of them also had to face a Court Martial for black market business having to go back to the civil jail. One of them had already made two previous attempts at escape and the other one attempt. Some time back an Internee at the Changi Jail was caught contacting a Chinaman. The Chinaman lost his head and all the male internees were locked in their cells. Yesterday the blokes on the trailer saw them for the first time since that happened.

The Chinaman at the guard tent has been removed, whether dead or alive I am unable to say.

A Dutchman also received a beating yesterday and his arm was broken. Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher personally and strongly protested to the Jap Commander of P.O.W.s Malaya and the Commander (Jap) informed the Nips at the Playing Field that he will not tolerate any beatings being handed out to the P.O.W.s and if it happens again he would not allow the future services of P.O.W.s.

Wednesday 10th November 43

... (*unreadable ... too faded*) ... the paper and ink are of fair quality but why are we only issued with the comic scripts. There are lots of others but I have forgotten them.

Beat this one: Last night when the Malayan Command Concert orchestra were playing 'God Save the King', the Tommy Guard on the gate about 300 yards away did not stand up. The Nip Guard who is right opposite his box, noticed it, came across, made the Tommy stand up to attention and boxed his ears. One of our officers told me and swears it is the truth and was seen by quite a few of our P.O.W.s.

I put a mango into my haversack to ripen and I can smell the pungent overpowering smell of it from here, which is in another room at least 40 feet away. There will be some moans from the boys when they go into that room. Whilst I am writing I can hear a squeeze box or accordion and they are playing 'Down at the Old Bull and Bush'. What memories it brings back only Mae and I can appreciate.

Jim Callow and fifteen Other Ranks went to Changi Jail today to do some excavations. While he was working an Indian Sergeant, late of the ... (*unreadable*) ... came up to him and when the Japs weren't looking took Jim's hand and wrung it. He told Jim that all Indians, with the exception of Sikhs, were loyal to Britain, but the Japs under torture and floggings made them sign papers making them part of the Jap army.

Thursday 11th November 43

Armistice Day; the two minutes silence was observed. The Japanese authorities gave their permission and at the Playing Area they had arranged for motion picture cameras to record our chaps observing it. Not only our chaps but the Jap guards themselves stood for two minutes with bowed heads. Last week they were concerned but I don't think it has been a practise of theirs to observe it.

Supplied or helped supply the horse drawn power for the trailers collecting the garden products. When I arrived back this afternoon I noticed great excitement around the kitchen and quite a few onlookers. I investigated and was stunned to see half a pig, our first issue from a P.O.W.s Piggery. It was not a very big pig but it means about 3ozs per man, including fat and bone. The pork was boiled and is being kept until tomorrow and we definitely hope it will keep or God help the Quartermaster. The water from the boiler was put in the vegetable stew and we had it for tonight's tea. I can't say that I noticed or tasted much difference. The fat will be boiled down and used for frying rice rissoles. What ho! for tomorrow.

We also received an issue of 7 tins of sardines amongst 200, presumably from the Japanese. I have come to the conclusion that some English reading Jap has accidentally read the part of the bible that deals with the loaves and fishes and not knowing that Christ died nearly 2000 years ago got the impression that he was in the Changi P.O.W. camp. I will admit that there are certain persons in the camp who think they are, but the only miracle they ever performed was getting their pips.

Friday 12th November 43

I with 14 others were detailed on the excavation at the Changi Jail. It was a pretty hard job, the digging was in sticky clay; but it had its compensation in that it made me even more hungrier [y] than usual and I was able to attack a beautiful pork pie with the greatest gusto. I cannot describe just how much I did enjoy it, my vocab is too limited. Also our dinner was very good whitebait, rice, two rissoles, and a piece of crackling (pork) and fat about 2" x ½" x ½".

The Indians kept well away from us and I fear they struck trouble by talking to Jim Callow the other day. The eight P.O.W.s are from Indo China and it is believed they are members of a bomber crew whose plane was bought down. They are now in the Brev area opposite us and are heavily guarded and will be isolated for some days. They were marched in handcuffs and tied to one another like a camel train. They are believed to be Americans.

Tonight I drank five cups of tea so anticipate a lot of walking to a certain place during the night.

Saturday 13th November 43

And that's another Melbourne Cup I did not see run, maybe the next.

The sole topic of the day was still the pork pie. God knows when we will taste the next. Tea tonight was a very ordinary affair and once again rice and rice products. We ran a sweep on the Cup but I did not draw a horse. The entry was 10 cents and over \$26 was collected, the winner gets \$5, 2nd \$2, 3rd \$1, the balance goes into house funds to buy something if possible for our Christmas Dinner.

It is the Regiment's (2/15th) birthday this month and we are trying to arrange a birthday party. We shall have our Reservations and as they are gradually going bad they will be used for the party. I suppose on that night we will see our Commanding Officer. I have never seen him other times and he seems Commanding Officer in name only. I believe he sometimes visits us at the request of the Regimental Officers. What ... (*unreadable*) ... Lieutenant Colonel Peggy O'Neill. I think our present Commanding Officer thinks he will indeed be unable to take ... (*unreadable*) ... place and feels it and I think it has caused him to keep to himself, sometimes I feel sorry for him although I know he has as far as P.O.W. business is concerned, fallen down on his job and has been giving some self centred action.

Sunday 14th November 43

I think it would be impossible to find a more patched pair of trousers than mine anywhere, some places the patches are four deep and a good deal of time mending them today.

I don't know the full story but it is said that the two Tommies who made a break have returned, whether under their own steam or under Jap escort I have not heard, nobody seems to know much about it. I suppose it will come out later on. It is also rumoured that the Japs ordered all the P.O.W.s who were brought from the jail to hospital back to the Jail. I sincerely hope this is not true, poor wretches, some of these chaps say they will not live another three weeks if they are returned.

Church service (volunteer) singing and a service on the square tonight. An Armistice Service.

Ulcer broken out on my foot again, much larger one than previous and is very painful, especially during the night.

One of the Infantry boys has a peculiar type of beri beri, his chest has swollen to the size of a woman's bosom and it is now necessary for him to wear uplift brassieres. This portion of his body looks exactly like a woman and naturally is very embarrassing but other than that it does not cause him any inconvenience. They say his coolers [cobbers?] won't let him out of their sight in case he changes sex completely.

Monday 15th November 43

Foot pretty bad, had to go to see the doctor about it. He told me he thought there was something foreign in it and I have to put hot pomegranate on every 2 hours. It is very painful to touch and it feels as if there is some sharp body in there. Nine poor souls were taken to the jail by the Japs today, whether this is a reaction from the attempted escape it is hard to say. Information regarding the two escapees is very scarce and it appears as if it is being withheld. Saw the eye specialist and he informed me that my eyes were improved slightly and I need not see him unless necessary for another month.

Tuesday 16th November 43

Hot fermentations on my foot during the day and the doctor decided to lance it this evening. The lancing business was not too nice but a terrific amount of stuff came out, including a small piece of steel about the size of a match head. How this got there I don't know, unless I collected it at Gemanchen when the tank shell bowled me over. I had a number of cuts etc. on my legs and it is most likely that's where I got it. All the trouble I have had with my foot for the last 18 months can be put down to this, at least I hope so, as it will end the trouble now that it is out.

Heard today that the story about the two escapees having returned was unfounded and as far as known they're still at large.

One of the Tommies (ex prisoners of the Jail) who was not fit to return to the Jail died yesterday. It is said that the shock of the others having to go back was the main cause of his death.

Wednesday 17th November 43

Pay Day. Treated myself to another pound of sugar, will have to be economical with my tobacco. Had to have my foot opened again and would rather drink a pint of beer any day. Quite an amount of stuff was released and the wound was then packed inside with lint to keep it open. Very nearly on the wrong end of what could have been a nasty accident. The buildings we occupy are badly bomb happy and hardly a complete piece of the ceiling which is asbestos is left, most are jagged pieces. Yesterday I was lying down on my bed watching a chap pulling the wiring from the ceiling when a triangular piece of asbestos about 4' x 3' fell from the ceiling, edge down. I just had time to roll a little to one side and ward it off me with my hand. I received a cut on the hand and also on the leg where it just grazed me. If I had not moved as quickly as I did I have no doubt it would have made a nasty mess judging from the way it cut through my bed right where I had been lying.

A Scottie died last night as the bagpiper played a Scottish Lament outside the hospital.

I have been reading quite a few travel books lately and the wanderlust has got me bad ... (*unreadable*)

...

Thursday 18th November 43

Still plugging my foot with lint and it seems very much improved. When one thinks of some of the things others have to put up with both here and outside (for instance a Chinese woman tied up to a picket fence, her hands behind her back and her lips sewed together with packing string) how infinitesimal my little sore seems.

A Nip guard at the Playing Area threatened an A.I.F. cove with a piece of iron, the A.I.F. did not give him a chance to use it but got in first and laid the Nip out. So far there had been no reactions and the Nip when revived just walked away.

This no work business is getting on my nerves and I will be glad when I am able to get about and do a bit. If I only had some paper I could amuse myself, but paper, other than newspaper, is practically an unknown quality.

The dog problem is becoming acute. They seem to be everywhere which has resulted in an order being issued from Malay Command that all dogs have to be registered and carry a tag to that effect. Any not registered will be destroyed and all litters of new pups born from this day will be destroyed by the owner of the bitch. There is a proviso that if required special permission will be given for the keeping of one male pup from each litter. I suppose it is all necessary and is for our own benefit.

Friday 19th November 43

The Nips asked for 300 more men to work on the Aerodrome. Our Command said they could not supply any more. Now the outcome is the men at present engaged on the job have to work an extra hour per day making the hours now 7 per day.

Saturday 20th November 43

Today is the last day that I have to have my foot packed with lint and I'm not sorry as the prodding has made it very tender and painful. It is well on its way to getting better and I will be back at work in a few days and I won't be sorry.

Nothing of interest.

One of the boys just arrived with a gramophone and records. There is only one needle and this has to be sandpapered after each record ... (*unreadable*) ...

Sunday 21st November 43

Just another day in a P.O.W.'s life.

Monday 22nd November 43

Just the same as yesterday.

Tuesday 23rd November 43

The Nips played a trick on us today. Instead of issuing us with the usual Tuesday stinking fish they sent us pork, real pig. Admittedly it only ran out at 1oz per man but was enough to make a little pork pie and boy was it good. (Americans live in the house next door). Otherwise it was like the day before with the exception that it rained.

Wednesday 24th November 43

Three years today the 1[2?]/15th was formed, it seems 30, and tonight we are having a little evening to celebrate its birthday. Foot well on the way to healing and I am going to the garden tomorrow. The last few days it has been cold and I have, with many others, picked up a cold. While I am writing this I have on a woollen sweater and this is the tropics.

Thursday 25th November 43

The birthday party went off very nicely last night. There was 58 attended out of 59, the absent one being confined to bed at the hospital. Coffee with sugar and milk and biscuits and jam were on the menu. I drank two cups of coffee and was up at least 10 times during the night and so were all my pals. The Commanding Officer spoke and gave some interesting figures of my old troop, there were Captain Makepeace, Jim Callow, Ad McCormack, Bill and Keith Bryant and myself, also Jack Collins from Newcastle. Struck a very lucky day at the garden. Pig excreta day (we don't use the same words here) and I still try to get away from myself, no matter how one washes the aroma still hangs around. I think things are going to be bad at this garden, everything with the exception of the amaranthus has some type of disease which is spreading rapidly.

Japanese authorities say we have too many men around the camp not working and they are going to personally look into the matter tomorrow.

Air raid precaution practices on again, they started today and are to last a week. We were under the impression that the previous practice was the last. It is dark now but planes are roaring overhead as I write.

Just received word that two P.O.W.s have arrived at our hospital from Seletan Aerodrome. One of them is a chap by the name of Erickson and belongs to our Regiment. He was one of the crowd that tried to make a break on the Friday before capitulation and who were captured and taken to Sumatra. We are all anxious to hear the tale of what happened after. I believe there are another 3 or 4 of our chaps still at the drome.

A Warrant Officer from the 2/10 Field Regiment has just been telling the boys some of the filthy things some of the hospital orderlies put over our wounded, sick and dead. They are unbelievable but he assured us that what he said was correct and I have also heard the same things from other patients. This Warrant Officer swears the first thing he is going to do when he gets back home is to ask for an inquiry as there are hundreds of witnesses ready to give evidence.

Friday 26th November 43

Severe splitting headache and bad cold. I seem to have a mass of complaints lately. Unable to work today.

Japs made their inspection but it was a very perfunctory one, don't know the results. Captain Makepeace contacted Erickson last night and this is his, Erickson's, story.

He, with others from our Regiment, obtained a 100 ton steam boat, coaled and watered her, also put on provisions with the idea if the worst came to the worst they would have a vessel to take off as many of the regiment as possible. This was on the day before Capitulation. Late Friday afternoon they were fired on by machine guns and they had to pull the boat out of range. During this Brian West was hit by a bullet in the abdomen. They rowed him ... (*unreadable*) ... British ... (*unreadable*) ... and Brian died a little time later. Just before nightfall a Tommy Captain with some Tommy Other Ranks came out to the boat and informed them that the show was over and the Japs had taken the force as prisoners and their only chance was pull out ... (*unreadable*) ... time 58 mixed troops, A.I.F. and English were on board. At last it was decided they had to get going but found themselves stranded on a mud bank from which they were unable to float off until Saturday morning. They kept going until the Wednesday without incident, when a convoy was sighted a long distance away but the Captain said the convoy would be an American one. After an argument amongst them it was decided to try and make contact. The convoy turned out to be Japs and a destroyer left the convoy and took them prisoners directing them to make for Banker Island under destroyer guidance. On the Island they were made prisoners. After three days there Erickson and 3 others from our Regiment were put back on the boat and under guard brought it back to Singapore and then taken to the Naval Base at Seloran, where they have been ever since. The balance were taken to Sumatra. Erickson, the other three and some more mostly Naval chaps live on a boat on the Island straits and work on the drome. Their treatment has been bad. Erickson stated that three times he has been belted unconscious. Food has been bad and all of the party have been suffering from deficiency disease. All of them have beards and have not shaved since their capture. He has never heard from the Sumatra men.

Saturday 27th November 43

Severe headache gone and only the usual one, cold practically better and another day or so will see my foot completely healed, I hope. I was given a rise in the garden work scale today. Instead of being on No Pay I was elevated to the human excreta, which we obtain from the Jail's septic system. It makes pretty good manure and does not smell as bad as our friend the pig. I call them our friends because tonight we again were issued with 1oz of pork per man. I spent some of the time this afternoon pollinating female paw paw flowers, using male flowers. This is necessary when the female tree (i.e. the bearing tree) does not make fruit and therefore needs contact with a male species.

Colonel Holmes, Commanding Officer of the English and the whole camp, and Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher some few days previously wrote a very strong letter of protest to the Jap General in Charge of Singapore regarding the treatment of P.O.W.s in the civil jails. It was worded, I believe, in very strong terms. Today Colonel Holmes was sent for by the Japs. He was treated very rudely and insultingly, told he was nothing to them but another P.O.W. and as far as they are concerned there

should never be P.O.W.s. The cannot understand why we all did not kill ourselves as every Nip soldier would. For his impertinence he was told he will have to go to the Aerodrome for a fortnight and in future he will be known as the Senior Officer of the P.O.W.s, not Commander of the British and Australian Troops as he signs himself. In the letter it was asked that a Red Cross official, neutral or otherwise, be allowed to visit the P.O.W.s in the Jap jails to see that the conditions of treatment complied with Red Cross Regulations. The Nips informed Colonel Homes that they do not recognise the Red Cross. I wonder what's eating them? They don't seem too pleased with everything?

Sunday 28th November 43

Attended International soccer match this afternoon, Scotland vs England, and the latter won by 3 goals to 1. It was a good game and some of the comments from the spectators were jewels. I could never understand how these footballers kept their condition and were able to keep up their fast pace. I inquired from one of the Tommy spectators and he informed me that they were Bullies and Marmies (Bully Beef and Marmite). Of course I asked him to explain and he then told me the teams were composed of Hospital Orderlies. He finished with the statement, 'So I need say no more'.

Air raid precautions practise still on and the planes are roaring overhead. It is very annoying to know it is only practice and a one sided affair. Met a very interesting and nice Dutchman last night. He is a teacher of Art in Java. We had quite a pleasant yarn. The Japs took all his art gear before he left Java and he is very disappointed. He, unlike the usual Dutchman, loves the Javanese, as he loves children, which he said 'they are'.

Monday 29th November 43

Nips have cut down our rice rations by 4oz per man, but are giving us 4ozs per man of Soya beans in lieu thereof. At least it is something to go with the rice they left us. Air Raid Practice finishes tonight and once again they say the next warning will be fair dinkum. It's a new moon. I wonder if it is the one.

Tuesday 30th November 43

Spent last night and today on guard. No incidents. Rumoured that there are 1,000 P.O.W.s in Singapore, but so far they have not arrived out here. It is said that Major Ball, our Battery Commander, is amongst them. I sincerely hope and trust his health is OK. I wish young Nev Merrifield and the rest of my gun crew were there also and would come back to the camp in health. I often feel worried about them, especially Young Nev. He's a grand kid and a real soldier, must be getting near his 22nd birthday.

Wednesday 1st December 43

The garden is becoming a heartbreak. After all the work, I with others have put into the beans, they have developed a disease and we now have to root them all up and try and grow something else in their stead. I have also been struggling with a few of our tomato plants, caring for them like a child and they seemed to be doing well, now they have gone to hell with some kind of rot thing. I had to pull out three of my best plants. American Airman gave us a very interesting lecture this evening on the American method of training a pilot. He finished his lecture by saying "Here is something that

might interest you Aussies. The girls back in Australia when I was there were wearing a new type of scanties – a Yank and they are off.” One of the boys replied “Well they couldn’t have been Japanese scanties!”

Thursday 2nd December 43

We started on our 6oz man per day of Soya beans today. They are certainly the goods and I feel they will better our diet deficiencies. They have a great satisfying effect and a little goes a long way. I am sure if the Japs had given us these rations before our health etc. would have been much better. I sincerely hope they keep them up to us. They have one bad point. After a meal of them one becomes full of wind which would be most embarrassing socially, rice also to an extent has the same effect together with filling one with water necessitating numerous trips during the night. Bugs gave me a hell of a time last night so after work this afternoon I had to do my bed over with burning rubber, the slaughter was terrific.

Friday 3rd December 43

The Nips again made records of our concert artists and messages from a lucky few to be broadcast (doubtful). Jap guard at the garden put on a search but as we were leaving this evening, two Javanese were found to have vegetables concealed and they were made to fall out. They were still there when we marched off and if the humour the guard was in amounts to anything they certainly have my sympathy, but deserve what they get. It’s an unwritten law between us that we do not take anything back to camp from there unless it is coconuts, which is allowable. Enjoyed another good game of soccer this evening. I’m becoming a real soccer fan.

Saturday 5th December 43

Another 200 men required for the drome. As my foot is still undergoing treatment I hope to be exempt. If these men are not forthcoming it will mean that those men already working there will have to work another hour per day.

Contrary to thought the two Javanese caught with the vegetables were let off with a caution by the Nips.

Typical Aussie day today, a westerly wind, and typically Australian.

The soya beans are doing a good job surprising us all, which will not do us much ... (*unreadable*) . . . I know it will do me good as I suffer badly with constipation, a very common complaint around this place, unless of course those who are subject to recurrent dysentery.

Sunday 5th December 43

Westerly wind still blowing and the sunrises and sunsets are truly glorious. Nature paints and produces unbelievable beauty when the mood strikes her which in this country seems always.

Joe Pearce (a Malayan Volunteer) told me that a scene is enacted three times a year at the Sultan’s Palace near Kula Bilah (a town I was very much in love with) which as far as colour and beauty is connected has no equal. At these times the Chiefs of the Villages come from all parts of Negri

Sembilan, the Sultan's province, to pay their respects and homage. The ceremony is attended by many thousands of his subjects, all in full Malayan Dress with very known and unknown colour present, which would put any sunset to shame and together with the glorious surroundings of the palace and gardens make an unforgettable symphony of colour. It is a peculiar thing about Malays, they can wear many colours, colours that are never meant to blend, and yet on them they ... (*unreadable*) ... but are in complete harmony. This I think I have always noted about them. The Malay are very vain in their dress and I sincerely hope they continue to be so. Poor things, at the present time they just don't seem to care and have lost all their personal pride. This worm that has invaded their garden of Eden has only left them the husk of the fruit and very little of that.

Monday 6th December 43

A large cutlet of Blue Pointer shark for tea (the shark was 8' long) to me it tasted equal to any fish I have ever eaten. Hunger is a great sauce.

Whilst working the drome today one of the P.O.W.s received a compound fracture to the leg, I believe a nasty break. Three more P.O.W.s arrived at the hospital from Blackang Mati yesterday and all the previous Blackang Mati personnel were taken back, i.e. those who have recovered from their illnesses. In future it is a Jap order that all Blackang Mati personnel when discharged from hospital will go back there and a return has to be made periodically to the Japs regarding these people.

I am visibly putting on weight, no doubt due to our new rations.

Tuesday 7th December 43

Our first real air alarm last night, the sirens starting about 9pm and it was after 10pm before the All Clear was blown. Whether the Nips were pulling our legs I don't know but we all had high hopes and were disappointed. I am on guard for 24 hours tonight, I do not mind. It is a nice moon and the moonlight is very pleasant. No doubt Daddy Christmas is beginning to get busy back home, lucky fathers.

Wednesday 8th December 43

The eight latest arrived P.O.W.s (American Airmen) who have been segregated from the rest of the P.O.W.s were given the freedom of the camp today, which will mean some of the latest news and usually some good lectures.

Before the show started, the maximum number of persons allowed in one 3 ton or 30 hundredweight truck was 14 (I think). Failing to comply with this law was considered a serious offense on account of the danger of overcrowding. Today one of our late 3 ton trucks pulled up in front of the gate, and I counted 108 men, women and children stacked like sardines in it; they were on their way to the drome.

Another big shark for tea, and we gave a great exhibition of a man eating shark (no[t?] original).

Thursday 9th December 43

Saw a three act play last night entitled 'Murder has been Arranged'. It was exceptionally good and well acted. The producer wrote the play from memory, having seen it twice played in London.

Food has improved remarkably. I am never hungry now, thanks to the Soya beans. Our tea tonight was: Shark (fish), vegetable stew with a pinch of garlic (delightful), bean rissole, vegetable pasty with bean flour covering, bean biscuit with smoked fish paste and two sweet bean biscuits. Breakfast is rice and bean porridge and dinner vegetable stew and rice. Of course this menu is not on every day, nevertheless it is much better than previously.

Just received some good news. We have been issued with cards and are allowed to write 24 words.

I personally have as poultry never had enough money to buy any [?], but I believe there are about 8,000 head of poultry in the camp. Of course mostly owned by officers and those who can afford to buy them and also do not depend on their return to live, although small worms, grass and slops are mostly used for their food.

Friday 10th December 43

Made out my card writing the allowed 24 words. There was very little I could say in that many words. I have handed it in and basically now it is up to the Nips to get it home, which is problematical.

The guard at the garden told us today that there is mail at the Jail for Australian soldiers and naturally we were very thrilled but we were doomed for a disappointment as all they consisted of was a few that had been written in America and included in the Yanks' mail. The Yanks have been very lucky. They received letters and also a parcel each.

Discarded the bandage from my foot and in the course of a couple of days should be able to wear my boots, which is just as well as my Jap boots are nearly worn out.

Saturday 11th December 43

Outside the rain is falling in a typical tropical torrent (original) and it is very acceptable, firstly causing the Jap Check Parade to be postponed, and secondly it would do a lot of good in the garden as today we did a lot of planting.

Sure sign the food is doing us good, sex is becoming the popular topic.

A Johnny Gurkha was telling one of our boys today that the Nips gave them a horrible time and treated them very cruelly. He also stated that a Gurkha Officer refused to sign a paper denoting that the Gurkhas had joined the Nips, so they severed his left hand and again pushed the paper in front of him. He again refused and he lost his right hand. The Gurkhas have not seen him since.

Sunday 12th December 43

The P.O.W.s have made a great effort at building toys for the Changi Jail children. Some of the toys are beautiful and very well made, especially those made by the Java Party, which include some ingenious things such as horse and rider, both can move; dogs that wag their heads and tails, others

that lie down and sit up. Horse and cart with driver, all moving, the driver using a whip; boats with sculler and steerers, the man at the helm even having a beard. The most amazing toy is a miniature home from which the roof can be removed and the interior displayed. The furniture and fittings are a masterpiece, not a thing has been forgotten, even to actual miniature (very) pictures on the walls done by a Dutch artist. Included also in the toys are a motor car capable of seating two children and can be propelled and looks like a modern sports car. Some of these poor kiddies were born in the Jail (I think –(?)3(?) to be exact) and I know of one father who lives in the camp being not more than a mile or so from his baby son and unable to see him. Why arrangements have not been made to exchange these women is beyond me.

Monday 13th December 43

Just came back from the Eye Specialist, my eyes have definitely improved since my last visit.

Used my last drawing tonight. Needs must, but it went the way any art critic would have condemned it I suppose. Our paper supply is very uncertain these days and if it keeps up there is a big possibility of my diary having the same fate.

There are some excellent books in the camp, they are of all types, even to filthy ones, books that would not stand the slightest chance of passing the Censors back home. I'm afraid I'm not up to the standard of that type of book yet.

I got myself in such a mess pig manuring today that I finished up jumping into the Creek, clothes, boots and all, but I still find myself quite easily in the dark.

Tuesday 14th December 43

Feel very depressed. Just heard rumours and if it is correct, and I think it is, it will be one of the greatest catastrophes of the war. Today a lorry brought in the body of an A.I.F. chap who was one of the party camped in Singapore and lately came down from the North. It is alleged that the Officer in Charge of the party who brought in the body told one of our chaps that there were 18,000 P.O.W.s working near the Thai border. 13,000 have died and of the 5,000 left, only 500 are able to move. He also stated (the chap he spoke to was an ASC man) that 96 ASC and A.I.F. had died and out of the 1,000 personnel which comprised 'H' Force, only 200 are living. They, the working party, worked 3 shifts of 8 hours each and the men who came off shift during the morning had to turn around and bury the dead that died during the night. If this is true what a tragedy it is and what questions someone will have to answer. God I hope Young Nev Merrifield and the rest of my gun crew are amongst the survivors. Perhaps I should wait for confirmation before I believe this rumour, but I can't help it.

Just heard there is Group Commander's Conference being held now and perhaps after it is finished we will hear the truth, or as much as will be told us.

Just heard one of the protected, who never saw a minute of action or had a minute of horror, crack a joke at the expense of those who have died, something about a woman loose in the camp and cholera, the filthy bastard swine, and once again Ordnance lives up to their reputation. He is one of them.

Feel much better, but still armed, so have just told the Ordnance Wit what I thought of him and his clan, and he now knows just where he stands with me anyhow.

P.S. It is now 10.40pm and we have been informed that we are to fall in at 7.30am tomorrow for a Muster Parade to be prepared for some bad news. I feel like a man awaiting a death sentence to be passed on someone near and dear to him. God grant it is not so bad as I feel it will be.

Wednesday 15th December 43

The camp today reminds me of a Mortuary, whispering and yet heavy and intense that one only feels. Even the essential noise of cookhouse and workshop seem to have a muffled sound. The information given to us was not the fullest and most of it was only current last August and up to the present little is known as yet. Most of the information was gathered from a few letters of the party who brought the body yesterday which were to be delivered and these were written last August. Little personal information could be obtained owing to the Jap presence. Also only two forces 'F' and 'H' were mentioned and little is known of the others but it is felt that their fate is similar. One thing we did learn about 'A' Force was that they had been bombed by our own planes and at least 20 A.I.F men killed. 'H' Force consisted of near ... (*unreadable*) ... and the number who left there was ... (*unreadable*) ... They were split up into different forces on their arrival. They left there by train and travelled by 4½ days, conditions and food appalling. They rested for 1½ days and then were put to work constructing split rails on the Burma Thailand border. They worked in 12 hour shifts and the treatment dealt out to them was brutal and the food inadequate. Most of the deaths were caused by Cholera and the figures up to last August were 'F' and 'H' Force, Camp 1, 1,200 dead; and at Camp 2, 240 died out of 740. A list of names was included in the letters, but so far the list has not been displayed or the names circulated. Judging by the figures from these two forces the astonishing figure of 13,000 of last night's rumours could be possible.

Day off – tonight I go on guard for 24 hours.

Thursday 16th December 43

What a day; my mind is crammed full of figures, Forces, names, atrocities, heroisms and mental pictures and they are all jumbled together like a bad dream. I do not intend writing anything down until such time as all the information available is sifted and made clear.

Five hundred A.I.F. of mixed forces arrived at Changi about 12.30pm. They came from Burma by boat and the sight of them tore at my heartstrings – they looked filthy, starved and looked like something just emerged into the world and could not appreciate what it was all about. Although they had this peculiar look about them their morale was still high. There were eight 2/15th amongst them but have not been able to get much first hand information. Naturally there were thousands of rumours, I think with some foundation, but as I said I will wait until everything such as lists, figures, are put in order before I record them. One thing I am sure of that the truth will be the greatest tragedy of this war and all our feelings are very high towards the yellow peril of bloody vermin. Motion pictures were put on last night in an effort I think to divert our minds as much as possible. The

programme was 'Our Gang', 'Krazy Kat', 'Laurel and Hardy' and some shorts. The laughs were half hearted.

I felt too disgusted to salute a Nip guard when I was on guard. He was very annoyed and I did not care much when he fronted me I just stared him straight in his filthy narrow eyes and kept my eyes glued on his for some minutes. He was ropeable and bit his tender lip but eventually he grunted and turned on his heels and left. It was the closest I have ever been to a bashing from them, I think I could have welcomed it and felt better for it, after seeing and hearing what the boys just arrived back had gone through. I felt very – well I don't know how I felt.

Friday 17th December

News from up North horrible – feel too upset to write. Deaths in 2/15th Field Regiment so far are 52 (fifty two) and it is believed there are more. Had Air Raid Practice this afternoon and our places allotted, if this place is bombed. My position is an open drain about 2 foot deep.

Saturday 18th December 43

Gave my bed to the hospital – another party expected to arrive at any time. The hospital is preparing for the sick which is known to be numerous. Forty of the last batch were admitted and they were supposed to be the healthy ones of the force. There are 8 of our Regiment under quarantine, one of them old Tom Irvine, is a cobbler of mine and I am at least thankful that he has been spared. The story when it is known will compare with the world's worst atrocities. A very conservative estimate of the poor unfortunate native labour force from here and put to work on the railways and are dead are numbered from than 40,000 and they still remain scattered and unburied. The Java parties (Dutch and Javanese) casualties are terrific, the English the next highest and the A.I.F. suffered the least casualties. I heard a Tommy say today that the Manchester (English) Regiment were wiped out to a man.

The Jap authorities are allowing a certain number of P.O.W.s to broadcast a message of 100 words home. The names have been drawn and yours truly was not drawn but two from our Regiment were.

Sunday 19th December 43

Another party of 700 (A.I.F. and Tommies) arrived back here early this morning, there were 5 of our Regiment amongst them – all look very pitiful. Most of the parties that have arrived belonged to 'F' force. This force seems to have had the worst time. I saw a list of dead and on it I noticed a few Newcastle chaps, Lieutenant Fred Lusk, Don Reeston, amongst them. Of our own Regiment two of my best cobbles are dead, Rus Wright and Keith Thompson, and Hec Byrnes was not dead when the party left but the boys say it would only be a matter of hours. The hardships that the force (F) went through are unbelievable and are beyond a human mind.

To add to our constant companions two of the boys in the quarters arrived yesterday with a dose of mechanised [?] dandruff we are all now itch like blazes and now and then someone will drop their pants and put on a close but intimate search, imagination has run riot frequently since these new guests arrived.

Rained all day, was unable to go to the gardens. Three snakes were caught one being a cobra, two of them were in the vicinity of our quarters and the other was found in one of the rooms of our quarters. This is the first time I have heard of them in this vicinity. I think it was the first garden we have made around the quarters.

Monday 20th December 43

Mixed force of A.I.F. and English about 600 strong arrived back this morning, all looking much the worst force as yet. Notwithstanding the isolation of these forces some of the chaps have been in contact with them. Whether to prevent any more from contacting them or whether it is true I don't know but a rumour is about that four cases of smallpox are amongst the arrivals. Five more of our Regiment arrived with the latest party and I have confirmed the report that Nev Merrifield is well – also heard news of others I was anxious to hear of and most of them were still alive although some have been and still are seriously sick. Ten of us pulled a trailer loaded with tons of wood from the garden to our quarters. It was some job, especially as it was a very steep grade.

(Dates continue on from previous but this is now being written in a new diary)

Tuesday 21/12/43

Bit late in the occasion for a diary but it is something to do so here goes.

Tuesday 21/12/43 *(second entry under this date)*

Nasty accident at garden. Officer with trailer party broke his leg near ankle. More of the Regiment arrived. Another two cobbers amongst the casualties, Bert ... *(unreadable)* ..., Alex McDougall, both were on Dug *(sic)* Munroe's gun. Alex *(unreadable)* with us at the Show Ground.

Wednesday 22/12

Balance of 'F' Force arrived today. Already 7 of the returned men have died here. Keith Thompson previously reported dead, now thought to be alive. Good soccer match. Java vs England – Java 3-1.

Thursday 23/12

Jim Kalbfell very sick in hospital, has had cholera, dysentery, malaria and cardiac beri-beri: he is just skin over bones. Most of returned men in hospital same, marvellous how they even lived let alone travel. They were all covered in sores from head to feet. Tom Irvine, story of his experience with 'F' force. Train trip was horrible: dysentery broke out on train: marched 190 miles in 14 days: men dropping out but later picked up and taken to a base hospital. These men are now the best officers: the reason why, the weakest lived and the strongest died. Passed through 'A' and 'D' Force, their camps were not too bad and food was plentiful: Night marches through jungle, rained all time. Natives very hostile: water very scarce and obtainable only by buying from natives: Personal belongings discarded and medical and kitchen supplies carried, most of these also had to be discarded. Soon after arriving at camp cholera outbreak: work consistently of road and railway building. Work proportioned at rate of 1800 men but only 300 men capable: time limit on work and men taken from hospital some had to be carried and others on sticks and crutches. Malaria: Dysentery: Beri Beri; scabies and ulcers took their toll – bodies were piled up or burnt. Rained all time, no roof on

buildings and no time to repair them: legs were amputated in the open and only 6 minutes allowed for the job owing to shortage of chloroform: Work inhumanly hard, 3 men to carry logs 20'x12', also many bashings and deaths therefrom: Hours for work very long and for one month 6am to 3am, less than 3 hours rest, sometimes they worked 30 hours stretch with little rest. Still doing the work of 1800 men with less than 300. Many died like flies. Food in hospital was rationed to 3 dessertspoons of rice and ½ pint gruel per meal. Many deaths from starvation. All stores had to be carried by hospital patients a distance of 15 miles return trip. (*Jules - lots of sentences here written by Jack crossed out very blackly with ink*) Major Hunt (doctor) and other doctors did marvellous work (*more crossing out*) Major Hunt received a bashing every day and one day received five bashings and never ceased to lodge his protest to the Nip Authorities and in the end was able to make a little headway with them. Everybody unanimous that he deserves every known decoration for the superhuman job that he performed. Tommies unable to stand up to the work, conditions and disease as well as A.I.F. Personal hygiene lacking and a great percentage of deaths occurred amongst them. Eventually railway finished and those supposedly well enough of 'F' Force to travel were sent back to Singapore and Changi. This also applied to 'H' Force. 'A' and 'D' are still up North many deaths have also been reported in these two forces, but their camp and conditions are now very good and I believe 'D' Force at least is not anxious to leave.

Friday 24/12/43

Over 700 patients in Changi Hospital, majority from up North: Whole of 'F' Force with exception of those unable to travel back here now and 'H' Force is in Singapore. Protest lodged by our Commander as to treatment etc. Christmas Eve. Can't find Daddy Christmas.

Saturday 25/12/42

Christmas Day.

Dinner: - Pork and Beans Soup, Roast Pork (1½ oz per man), baked potato, towgay and spinach: two sweet dourers [?]; pudding and fruit salad, sweet coffee. Cooks did a marvellous job (not army cooks, we kicked them out long ago; they never could cook). Went the rounds of the boys in hospital. They are a horrible sight but they seem very happy to be back here. Some were too sick to eat their dinners which was very good. Guard tonight.

Sunday 26/12/43

Guard for 24 hours. Some cases of smallpox amongst the returned forces, placed now under quarantine or at least it is supposed to be. Bitten on neck by a centipede last night and ran into a barbed wire fence with my face. This camp was in darkness owing to the failure of electric system. Glands around throat swollen and very sore. An issue of 20 cigarettes by Nippon as a Christmas present.

Monday 27/12/43

Jim Kalbfell much better and has started to eat. A few more deaths and still some very dangerously ill cases. Smallpox seems to be isolated, no fresh cases. Most of the Changi stayers are now sleeping on the floor, i.e. with the exception of the officers; they still retain their beds, nothing seems to put them out.

Tuesday 28/12/43

Rained all day: no work. Electric supply now back to normal, also water supply. When the electric supply fails so does the water which has to be pumped to high level tanks. Heard that Major Ball, Major Moulton; Captain Lindgren; _____ Knowl; Gibson; Fitzgerald; Playfort are in Singapore: Major Ball pulled through a bout of cholera and is now OK. I believe all our Regimental officers behaved well.

Wednesday 29/12/43

Rumour current of a Red Cross ship in Singapore carrying Red Cross supplies from America – I don't place much faith in the rumour, this rumour crops up every now and then. Season seems to have changed, very cool breezes blowing during the night and gets cold towards morning. Meals becoming a bit light again, due no doubt to the increased numbers. Sugar now costs 11 days wages for 1lb and 1lb bananas nearly 2 days. Glands in neck still swollen but gradually subsiding.

Thursday 30/12/43

Another case of smallpox yesterday and as an added precaution we were all again vaccinated today. Most probably this one will not affect me like my first one. Oh! To be able to lie again the perisa (???) I suffered ill effects of my first one and to be able to receive the same sympathy from the same source under the same conditions.

So that our boots will not get beyond repair they are not [now?] inspected twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays and it is a b_____ nuisance.

Jim Kalbfell not too bright, he is very worried about the possibility of an operation on a very vital part.

Friday 31/12/43

Planted over 700 tomato plants, went to a lot of trouble preparing the ground and if these don't grow it won't be our fault. Some time back as an experiment I grafted a tomato on a brindle (egg plant) bush. Strangely enough the tomato bud has grown and new shoots have been thrown. Whether it will come to anything is yet to be seen. The garden control group were quite interested as the brindle is a hardy plant and not very susceptible to common diseases. For the past few days a very unassuming officer has been coming down to the garden, he has kept to himself most of the time and seemed very shy. During the course of conversation I mentioned beach fishing, he became very interested and joined in the conversation. Later he and I had a good chin wag about fishing and he has promised to tell me about his experience in fishing when he spent a week on the Barrier Reef. I think his name is Hordin and he is an extremely nice chap. New Year's Eve and a very dry one. Commanding Officer came over and wished us the compliments. He also came over on Christmas Day but I was on guard and did not see him.

Just heard of a most peculiar accident. One of our officers Lieutenant (Bull) Barrett (of the Steel works Newcastle) climbed a coconut tree after a nut, he slipped and fell on top of one of the boys and dislocated the poor unfortunate's neck.

1944

Saturday 1/1/44

We saw the New Year in with a singsong. The Nips gave us permission to keep our lights on until 1am. Thank God 1943 is behind us, it has been a terrible year as far as we P.O.W.s have been concerned especially those that survived the horrible ordeal of the Northern working parties. The new year opens with the funeral of one of those poor unfortunates. Public holiday, the Japanese New Year also starts today. Two international sporting features were played this afternoon, Australia and America basketball, Australia won 56 to 28 (America beat Australia last time they met) and England and Scotland at Soccer: England won 4-0. They were both excellent games and the scores were not a true indication of either game. Today's meals were much above the ordinary. Scotties are still bagpiping around the area, they also piped the Scotch football team onto the field.

Heard an authentic story from up North and I'd say a surprising one. It seems that before 'F' Force left to come back here they were visited by the Japanese Military Police (Gestapo). They asked for the interpreter Major Wilde and the Officer-in-Charge of the English (I forget his name but he is a Lieutenant Colonel) and told them they had received word from Tokyo to contact the Commanders of the P.O.W.s working forces to get from them the whole unabridged story of what happened to the working parties as regards ill treatment, conditions, deaths and their causes, all names of Jap or Koreans responsible for any atrocities, ill treatments, and nothing was to be left out. They alledge that Tokyo was up to the present ignorant of any P.O.W.s being used on these parties and the whole report was to be submitted to Tokyo Authorities. They warned Major Wilde that he might have to go to Japan and personally explain to the Authorities and perhaps the people of Japan the whole story. They also asked the Tommy Colonel to give them as much information as he knew, of the laid down treatment of P.O.W.s as for International Law. The Jap Officer-in-Charge of the working party and his staff were very upset when they heard of the visit and the information passed on. I wonder what is behind it all?

The estimated total deaths of all P.O.W.s up North is 16,000. Of this number the A.I.F. portion is estimated at around 3,000. Nothing concrete as far as definite numbers or the names and units of the late personnel has been established but some official lists have been prepared. The number of deaths in our Regiment is thought to be between 75-100 but as I said nothing definite is known as yet.

Sunday 21/1/44

Jim Kalbfell still very worried, the doctors are undecided as to whether an operation is necessary. Bodily his appearance shows a very big improvement. Most of the other chaps are showing marked improvement. Struggled though a lot of accumulated darning and mending and feel very satisfied with myself. Another death today, one of the victims of smallpox.

Monday 3/1/44

Started a new job for a week repairing the barbed wire outside the camp area. We are in the charge of a Jap N.C.O. and our No.1 is Lieutenant (Bull) Barrett. We left the area with the Nip, walked about a mile, sat down under a tree, the Nip produced his cigarettes and presented all around. He then pointed

to a coconut tree so one of the lads shinned up and threw down a coconut each. He then started practising his English and Malayan. Bull Barrett and I found we had a lot of friends in common and we both knew the same people and that is how we spent the morning. At lunch time the Nip said all men go home and that finished the day's maintenance. If all week consists of the same way of working I'll be quite satisfied. Changi orchestra gave a very good concert on the square last night. I think the number of instruments would be around 25.

Tuesday 4/1/44

Now and then odd stories of the happenings up North are told and sound like tales from Terrible Adventure books and more like fiction than truth but unhappily these are true ones. Many attempts were made to escape, but all it is believed failed. One party of nine were recaptured and shot. Another party of British Officers got as far as 12 miles from the Indian border. They ran into a Jap patrol and in the skirmish three escapees were killed, the balance were brought back to the P.O.W. camp. They were covered in ulcers and were later sentenced to 15 years in Singapore jail. One of the A.I.F. who has completed his sentence in the same jail saw them and said they were being reasonably treated. This chap also speaks of a chap named Halliday (A.I.F.) who was caught in Singapore, brought into the jail and shot whilst he was there. He was able to contact this Halliday and he told him that he had lived as a boong in Singapore since the Capitulation and had worked with the boongs on all types of jobs. He had collected quite an amount of valuable information, also trained guerrillas. He had lived this life for over eighteen months and was picked up by the Japs who also found the information he had collected. He knew he was to be shot but seemed unconcerned. Quite a few solitary P.O.W.s made a break for the jungle when up north in sheer desperation, some when of unsound mind, it is not likely that any of these will live to tell their tale, their task being impossible. The tales I heard today from some of the returned boys were horrible and I felt sick listening to them, especially as they happened to chaps I knew, very intimately. I have a rosary I found here which belonged to one of them, Wal Shaw, Warrant Officer II, and I am glad I kept it as it will be all that is left of his personal things that can be returned to his family. He was the youngest Warrant Officer in the A.I.F. One of the anti-tank boys died and was buried today. One of our lads from up north showed me a list of names of those who died who belonged to our Regiment that he personally had collected. There were 55 names including one of my gun crew, Cyril Pitchford. I have heard many more that he did not have so no doubt our Regiment's casualties will be very heavy. So far the official known list has not been completed.

Wednesday 5/1/44

Once again I have had all my hair cut off; it feels clean, cool and comfortable. A.I.F. concert party are running a pantomime "Dick Whittington and his Cat" and a very good show. The Malayan Command have also put on "Aladdin". I believe it is even better and more spectacular than the A.I.F. show. These concert parties are doing a grand job and certainly deserve some recognition.

Thursday 6/1/44

Able to copy an extract from "Syonan Times" 21/2/42 (Nip February 21/2602) Syowa 17

Declaration of the Commands of the Nippon Army

Singapore is not only the connective pivot of the British Empire to control British India, Australia and East India, but the strong base to invade and squeeze them and Britain has boasted of its impregnable features for many years and it is generally accepted as an unsurmountable fortress. Since the Nippon Army, however, have taken a military operation over the Malay Peninsular and Singapore, they have overwhelmed the whole peninsula and squashed the fort to pieces and thus the British dominating power in British India, Australia and East India has collapsed in a moment and changed, as if a fan without a rivet or an umbrella without a handle.

Originally the English had entertained extremely egotistic and dogmatic principles and they not only have despised others, but have been accustomed to carry out the foxy deceit --- and cunning and intimidation and they dared to commit the injustice and unrighteousness in order to keep only their own interests and thus they have really spoiled the whole world.

Now, considering from the military proceedings of the Nippon Army and in view of the fact of the British Administrations and their results, the traces of the British squeeze on Malays are very clear and the British armies during their operations and also on retreating from the front have confiscated and looted the treasures, properties and provision and resources from the populace and sent them backward for destruction and dare to throw the people into sheer pain by burning their houses and also they place the Australian and the Indian troops on the front while the English troops remaining in Singapore had the former at their back. Thus the English egoism, justice and unrighteousness are beyond description and worthy to be called as the common enemy of humanity.

The reason why Nippon has stood up resolutely this time taking her sword of evil-breaking is very clear as already explained in several Declarations of the Nippon Government and it is needless to declare again. We however hope that we sweep away the arrogant and unrighteous British elements and share pain and rejoicing with all concerned peoples in a spirit of give and take and also hope to promote the social development of establishing the East India Co-prosperity sphere on which the new order of justice have to be attained under the great spirit of Cosmocracy, giving all content to the respective race and individual according to their talents and abilities. So Nippon Army will endeavour hereafter to further sweep out the remaining power of Britain and Asia from the adjoining regions and intend to realise the eternal development and policies of Malaya after curing the wound caused by the British Bloody squeeze in the long time past and restoring the war damage, inflicted in this war.

Nippon Armies hereby wish Malayan people to understand the real intentions of Nippon and cooperate with the Nippon Army towards the prompt establishment of the new order and the co-prosperity sphere. Nippon Army will drastically expel and punish those who still pursue bended exclusions as heretofore, those who indulge themselves in private interests and wants, those who act against humanity or disturb the public order and peace and those who are against the orders and disturb the military action of the Nippon Army. Once the fall of Singapore the above Declaration has hereby been given to the populace to indicate the right way for the purpose of eliminating their possible mistakes.

(Tomoyyuki Yamoshita: Commander – Nippon Army)

Friday 7/1/44

Plenty of rain and no work, have not worked for two days. Time hangs heavy. Cold weather has affected the returned boys and re-occurrent [recurring] malaria has the majority of them laid up. It's a long time since I have had a bout of fever – touch wood.

Saturday 8/1/44

Amongst the names of the latest deaths up North are some more of our Regiment, including poor old Heck Byrnes, nothing I could tell him before he left would change his mind that he was going to a land of milk and honey, most of the chaps that went North had the same idea and were anxious to go there. It was read out on parade amongst other things that the Officer in Command of 'F' Force brought back \$3,000 dollars with him. This money was entrusted to him for the benefit of the party, how so many men died of starvation is beyond me as those that had money to buy were able to

procure food and everyone who came back were unanimous regarding this fact, portage being the biggest factor, the natives had food for sale. Saw two returned Newcastle chaps yesterday, Sergeant Barnes 2/30 (?) and Les Shearer: they said Aub Jones was still up there and as far as they knew OK. Grant Gobel was still up there but was sick and had had a pretty rough spin. Sid Wansey was another who was OK when last seen. 29th Battery up-country man died today, also a Tommy. Guard for 24 hours starting tonight.

Sunday 9/1/44

Japanese General Staff drove into camp this morning: maybe he was an Admiral, anyhow, his car flew the yellow pennant which could mean either. Tea very good but still hungry. Another A.I.F. death last night.

Monday 10/1/44

Captain Shelts has very bad arm due to vaccination, possible he will have to go to hospital. I was one of the lucky ones whose vaccinations did not take. Jim Kalbfell not so good and has to have a blood transfusion tomorrow. Picked four ripe tomatoes this morning, out of the 60 odd bushes there are only five left and they look as if they will give up the ghost any day.

Tuesday 11/1/44

Another extraordinary case of bringing a dead man back to life occurred yesterday, this chap was dead for four minutes. The doctors injected some kind of drug into the heart which started it going and six doctors then worked on him with resuscitation methods and he is now hale and hearty. This is the third case of bringing the dead back to life in this camp. Picked another 13 ripe tomatoes, all about the size of a marble.

Had a piece of stingray (a large one, the fish I mean) for tea, it was a bit tough, but went down okay and could have eaten a lot more if available.

Wednesday 12/1/44

Two more deaths, both bodies buried today, one chap from 2/10th Field Regiment and the other from 2/30th Battalion. Medical opinion is that there will be a lot more deaths amongst the chaps who have already returned and some will feel the effects of their illness all their lives, and in some cases castrations will be necessary. One engineer has already had that operation performed on him.

The rumour regarding the hospital ship has died. I'm afraid it was only a myth. It is a great pity. It would have saved many lives. Medical supplies are practically nil and the drugs used for operations such as chloroform etc. are undependable and very dangerous. Also our rations do not give the sick much chance of repairing their lost vigour, it is only enough to keep us alive.

Thursday 13/1/44

Chap from 18th Battalion died last night and another lost his leg which had to be amputated as the result of ulcers. One of our boys, Ivan Beckworth, is on the dangerously sick list but he also has gone a little mental. Eye Specialist tonight, still about the same. Ret. Neut. [Retinal Neuritis?] still existing. Big Japanese Inspection of the camp tomorrow.

Friday 14/1/44

Two years since I had my first experience of actual contact with the enemy, my feelings today are a vastly different nature to my feelings then. Very thorough search by the Japanese this afternoon, don't know whether they found anything of importance. Two more deaths today (A.I.F.) I think the British deaths have been just as consistent. All our boys of the Regiment in hospital are on the improve, we are doing what we can for them.

Saturday 15/1/44

Rains seems to have stopped, have not had any for two days. Just saw a chap shaving with an ordinary table knife. Razors used here are very unique, some are made of car axles, bearing, stool steel, bayonets., clasp knives, etc. Some are very good razors and are works of art.

Sunday 16/1/44

Today the Japs took back to their prison one of the men recuperating in our hospital; to finish his sentence of three years solitary confinement. There are still four of these unfortunates here in hospital and as they are denoted fit by a Jap doctor sent out for that purpose they are taken back. It is not much for these chaps to look forward to. These four are A.I.F. I don't know how many Englishmen there are.

Three A.I.F. chaps caught pinching tapioca roots from the garden and they are now under close arrest and awaiting court martial. They not only stole the roots but did a great amount of damage. Someone has also been thieving paw paws. The paw paws are all kept for hospital patients which makes the theft a mean one.

Monday 17/1/44

Isolation lifted from Burwood area and the up-country people are now free to mingle with the clean skins. During the day orderlies from the Convalescent Depot come to the garden for the purpose of cutting grass to make grass soup. It appears their cutting of the grass only takes a few minutes so they spend the balance off their time rattling the garden. The garden control put on a search today and found potatoes and other stuff in their possession, some of these coves just can't lie straight in bed, any thieving etc. and they are always up to their necks in it. Ivan Beckworth still very sick and looks like nothing on earth, if he ever drops his bundle he's gone for sure but so far other than his mind wandering he is putting up a good fight.

Tuesday 18/1/44

The Japanese have opened a P.O.W. camp in Sion Road, Singapore. This camp is run, or supposed to be run, as per International Law: the officers are segregated from the Other Ranks and the administration is run by the Japanese. The personnel of this camp is made up from up-country parties and it is rumoured that deaths due from the after effects of their recent experiences are even greater than here: up to the present nothing official regarding names or the number has been received here. Spent the day pig manuring and I can quite understand how the sanitary carter does not notice his job. The garden is a great place for my mind to reminisce. I think and visualize numerous places I have

been to and the people who were with me, places like Veichies [?] wine shop and little out of the way pubs and things. The different times, faces and places are vivid in my memory. I can even remember the conversations I had with the Champ in some of these places, they were happy days and I look forward with the greatest anticipation to once more enjoying the conviviality of these things with the added interest of Julian wanting to know how, when or why. He no doubt is at that stage of his life now and it looks very much like he will be even more so before I am able to return home.

There are a few new cases of B.J. Malaria in the camp, also a new type of sickness which is affecting quite a considerable number of the chaps in the camp. The symptoms are very bad cramps in the stomach, high temp and violent vomiting, there are five or six cases in our house.

Wednesday 19/1/44

Two more new cases of Malaria from our building. The two orderlies caught stealing the vegetables from the garden received 14 days in clink. The 2/30th chap that socked the Nip guard at the drome also received 14 days. Instead of taking the usual steps the Nip was quite satisfied to leave the punishment to our Command. I think this cove is very lucky as he is also banned from working on the drome: what a joke! Hope it does not bring about an epidemic, this method of punishment would not then last very long.

Thursday 20/1/44

Dear old Mum's birthday and once more I have to leave it to Julian to kiss her and wish her a happy birthday with many more to come and only hope that I am able to do so before her next one. Air Raid Practice exercises tomorrow with a full dress rehearsal. I will be doing a 24 hours guard and expect to be bothered: the Nips doing their usual run around during these exercises. Very good game of soccer yesterday evening, the Officers and the Rest. The Rest won by 6 goals to 3. Naturally the bulk of the barracking was for the Rest, and quite a lot of wit was broadcast against the Officers. Our Command have barred all types of hard games to the A.I.F. so it is only the English, Scotties and the Java people who play. How they have the condition to play only God and themselves know.

Our rations have been cut down by 3ozs in the last two days. 3ozs does not seem much but to us it is a large amount as we live by ozs. The cut is 2oz beans and 1oz rice. The food problem I think is going to be very acute shortly and I'm afraid there are going to be a lot of real hungry men in the near future. The natives must be having a very bad spin.

Friday 21/1/44

Air Raid Practice on today, during the black out signal all in the camp had to take post in their allotted area. These precautions-practice was only for P.O.W.s. From the work the Nips are doing in our area it looks as if they are erecting floodlights around the camp, presumably to floodlight the area. An order came out today to the fact that all Other Ranks possessing shoes are to hand them in to the orderly room. Where these shoes, or who they are to go to, was not stated but we can roughly guess. Most, and I would say all, these shoes owned by Other Ranks have been carefully tended for the last two years and were an appreciated change from their heavy boots after a day's work. It appears that

in this army the worse you look after your things the less trouble you have when these purges arrive. It is certainly no encouragement to look after your things.

Saturday 22/1/44

Went on a new job today, it was a real AOK Tour. Saw a part of Changi that I had not seen before. It is a gorgeous spot, beautiful trees, homes and barracks. This portion was occupied by the Royal Artillery before the war, then it must have been paradise. The job was an easy one and once again we worked amongst the concrete armies and the Boongs. Six Chinese somehow incurred the wrath of the Nip guard so he lined them up, made them take off their hats and then dealt them a blow apiece over the head with a thick bamboo stick, when he left them they all laughed, so the damage done was evidently not great. There are two of our planes, a Hurricane and a Brewster Buffalo lying near where they were working and I think the Chows were having a look see. We had a look at them but they did not say anything to us as both planes were well riddled. Whether they crashed there or were brought there I don't know but I favour the latter. Jim Callow and I are playing a pair from the Forestry Unit at Contract Bridge tonight. Hope they have something to eat as I am as hungry as hell and just finished my tea. Our ration allowance is now 11.1ozs of rice, 4.58oz of beans per man per day. I could eat it all at one sitting.

Sunday 23/1/44

Same job as yesterday. Noticed the playground and it would take a lot of convincing that it is not meant to be what it is (how is that for Irish?) Great news! There are 15,000 letters at Changi jail awaiting censor, this number is for all the A.I.F. but I imagine it will be some weeks before we receive any. Still they are worth waiting for I believe: by our standards here fairly current, some being only six months old.

Jim Callow and I won our Bridge game last night by 300, it was a close good game, but nothing to eat. Nips gave us some sugar in our tea at lunch time, it was delicious and very satisfying.

Monday 24/1/44

Back to the garden, hot weather is beginning to play havoc down there.

Another dysentery needle tonight, needle much sharper than usual. Very little ink left, using the bottoms, don't know when I will get any more, pen playing up, no doubt due to the ink.

Just came across a very interesting article in an American paper headed "Starvation in France". It goes:

We have the right to buy only a little over 13½ oz bread daily, 3½ oz rice, 18oz sugar, 9oz noodles, 7/10 oz soap, 20oz fats (margarine) and a small quantity of lentils and dried beans and a little more than 11ozs of cheese a month, a small quantity of meat once a week. Sick persons are allowed a daily pint of milk.

Well if that is starvation we must be dead and don't know it. To me it sounds like a sumptuous feast.

Tuesday 25/1/44

A TAB needle tonight, army very stiff from last night's and expect to be very stiff tomorrow. Lost my knife again today but was lucky enough to have it returned. This is the second time I have nearly lost

it in the garden so I am not taking any more chances with it and in future will leave it in camp. One of our Sergeants received a bashing at the drome today, but I believe it was only a half-hearted one and he is none the worse for it physically. Shaved my head yesterday and woke up several times during the night owing to the cold, expected to get a cold in the head but so far OK.

Wednesday 26/1/44

One of the up-country A.I.F. died last night, the first A.I.F. for a few days. The day was burning hot and I spent most of my thoughts on food. I visualized meals I have had and meals I am going to have. Lobster, chicken and asparagus sandwiches, a paw paw or rock melon filled with crushed pineapple ice-cream and flavoured with strawberry straight from the Refrigerator were the most prominent but I think I would compromise and eat and enjoy any white man's fare.

Since my last ulcer my feet have been perfect and I have continually worn my boots. Rumour around camp of a movement, hope it is only a rumour.

Thursday 27.1.44

Two hundred of the up-country party came down to the garden to work for half a day. I believe this is going to be the practice until they build up a little and then they will be permanently employed there. Eight hundred letters came into the camp but they were old letters belonging to the up-country force.

Meal (Yak) arrived today, 3½oz per man. It was frozen stiff and will be eaten tomorrow. Rumoured that 500 officers are to be removed from here and taken to Johore Baru where they will be quartered in the Johore Police Barracks. A batch of sick arrived from Sion Road Camp. I have not heard full details but believe the number affected will be in the vicinity of 200.

Friday 28/1/44

Meat pie and meat soup for tea and believe it or not, I can't, another issue of 4ozs per man of meat arrived today. It is claimed that our new Japanese Commander, who arrived only the other day, made a statement to the effect that his duty was to see that all P.O.W.s under his charge leave him in good physical health and when they are returned to their wives, families, mothers, sweethearts, and that was his ambition. Maybe this meat ration is his doing. If it is it looks as if his word is good and I trust he does not change his ambition. One of my best cobbers, Keith Thompson, arrived from Sion Road with the sick yesterday. He is a complete mental case, can't even remember his name. He is obsessed with the idea that the Japs have passed a death sentence on him. At present he is not allowed to have any visitors. How bad he is is not yet known. I sincerely hope he can be saved.

Saturday 29/1/44

Another good meal tonight, our cooks have a creative imagination and do a great job. Chap named Delaney (A.I.F) was killed at Blackang Mati under very strange circumstances. Tommy Major received a good slap over the face and a good boot up the rear (aimed at another portion but the Major turned at the right moment) from a Nip. No one was very cut up about it as a few hours before it looked like a few Other Ranks were being done over and when this Major was approached by an N.C.O. to do something about it he said No, they must have done something to deserve it. He who

laughs last laughs best. Unfortunately, he received his belting in front of the boongs, and naturally we don't like that.

Malaria epidemic pretty bad, numerous cases every day, all possible precautions are being taken but the cases still mount up. Have opened a special Malaria Hospital.

Sunday 30/1/44

There is bad blood between two Nip guards, which eventually led to their stripping themselves of their bayonets and tearing into each other. They exchanged blows for about three minutes, they did not know much about fisticuffs, but what they lacked in science they made up for in ferocity. The exhibition was ultimately stopped by another Nip guard who happened to be passing.

Spent the afternoon visiting the piggery. This place is a credit and most interesting. It is the cleanest piggery I have ever seen, even the pigs are scrubbed with warm water each day and the place is entirely devoid of any bad stench. No meat yesterday but another issue today. Guard tonight for 24 hours.

Monday 31/1/44

Another dysentery inoculation. These inoculations are fairly severe and quite a few people suffer with the after effects. Had a few words with Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher, he is disappointed with the up-country party. They seem to have degenerated and have to be forced to shave and wear boots and clean clothing, but he intends to see that they pull themselves up for their own good. I myself have noticed this and I'm sure some of them do not even bath themselves. There is no excuse for their not showering or bathing as barbers and razors are there for their benefit and there is plenty of water. I think if we had been allowed to go as we pleased when we first capitulated we would have been inclined to degenerate.

Tuesday 1/2/44

Up-country party working in the garden all day. It seems a natural thing for them to thieve, they don't seem to be able to control this filthy habit; we were continually at them today regarding it. They receive 90% of the garden produce as it is and their ration and food are as good, if not better, than ours. I suppose in time they will come back to earth, poor souls.

Wednesday 2/2/44

T.A.B. inoculation this afternoon. This time the needle was very blunt and took some force behind it before it would penetrate, usually a sore stiff arm is the result. Still very patiently awaiting our letters, so far only the old up-country letters have been censored. Nearly a month since we had rain and it is needed badly, a week without it here is a drought. Have been watching the cooks at work and am I hungry, meals today very light, shortage of rice.

Thursday 3/2/44

Headache the worst as yet, possibly the needle and my usual migraine. Although I am continually hungry I seem to be putting on weight or maybe it is just bean-wind. We opened up a canteen over in the other area for the benefit of the up-country party who occupy the area. It saves them quite a lot of

trouble and walk. Last night someone broke into the canteen and stole 175ozs tobacco, amongst other things. There is a shortage of tobacco and the quantity we were able to purchase was 1oz per man, it means now that 175 individuals will have to go without.

Friday 4/2/44

Poor old Lew Bogot, one of the original cooks of the Regiment, collapsed in the cookhouse this afternoon and died a few minutes later. Terrific storm heralding its approach and I hope it means business. I wrote that the rain started, drops as big as lagoons and plenty of them: the drought's broken. Shortage of tea and we are limited to half a cup per meal and I'm just as thirsty as I'm hungry and that's saying something.

Saturday 5/2/44

Malaria still raging around the camp, our house averages a new case a day. The peculiar thing about it over in this area, the majority of cases are personnel who have never had malaria before and only a few are recurrent cases.

Buried old Lew Bogot this afternoon, it was a very nice funeral and the wreaths were glorious. This camp has an abundance of flowers suitable for wreath-making. The A.I.F. cemetery is a credit to the three chaps whose job it is to keep it in order and do all the necessary grave digging etc. Sergeant Kev Thompson is on the 'Dangerously Ill' list and visitors are still prohibited. All the other boys in hospital are coming on well.

Nips started their hate at the drome, they gave three Dutchmen a torrid time, making them do body presses for three hours, then knocked them down and continued knocking them down when they attempted to get up. They also made one of our chaps hold a chunkle at arm's length, standing at attention and in the hot sun. This happened at about 11am and he was supposed to keep holding it until 5.30pm. One of our officers took it from him after he had held it for about ¼ hour and he, the Officer, took his place and held the chunkle. It annoyed the Nip who then told the Officer he would have to continue holding it until 5.30pm, but after another ¼ hour another A.I.F. officer took over and he then held it. It was too much for the Nip and he gave up. One of the Officers concerned was not in the top class as far as I was concerned but his stocks with me have now risen.

Sunday 6/2/44

[One of the?] A.I.F. up-country chaps died last night and he is alleged to have died of hook worms. We have often been warned of these loathesome things, they eat one from the inside, but this is the first case of them I have heard of in this camp. They are picked up in drinking water, washing water and will penetrate one's feet and gain ingress by that method. Nasty accident at the drome, one of the P.O.W.s had his foot run over by a truck (Railway), it is very badly crushed and may require an amputation of the foot. Prices of commodities at the canteen are now prohibitive: sugar costs \$1.50 per lb or 15 days pay; 1lb bananas, 2 days, 20 cents; tobacco at present is unprocurable; cigars were 4 cents each; coconuts 45 cents; eggs 45 cents and anything else runs to dollars and of course the Other Ranks can't even give them a thought. I believe the Nips charge duty of \$100 on every lorry load that comes across the causeway. Our canteen prices are supposed to be much lower than prices charged

for all goods in Singapore. If this is a fact then the people of Singapore must be in a very bad way and starvation no doubt is rife. Rice, their staple food, is practically unprocurable, even we find it hard to do without.

Monday 7/2/44

Chap from 2/29th died last night, general malnutrition and effects of numerous other complaints being the cause. P.O.W. garden picquet caught a Nip stealing from the garden last night, he was held up by them and handed over to the Jap guards. Two lorry loads of sick from Sion Road arrived here this afternoon. All looked pretty warby.

Rumoured that some mail, two bags, arrived in camp late this afternoon, so far there has been no distribution. Received an order from the I.J.A. that all P.O.W.s are to be compelled to write an essay of 150 words on their most outstanding experience during the campaign; for what purpose no one only the I.J.A. seem to know. It sounds funny to me.

Tuesday 8/2/44

At 10.30pm last night the mail was distributed. Once again my luck was out resulting in a sleepless night and today I have been bitterly depressed and in a putrid humour. To make matters worse I had, with the rest, to write this stupid essay. It is said that the mail delivered last night comprises all the letters for our camp but I am still hoping against hope that mine have been mislaid and will turn up. One of the boys received a compound fracture of the arm at the drome.

Wednesday 9/2/44

Uneventful day. A present of four Three Castle cigarettes from the Nip Guard, they tasted good.

Thursday 10/2/44

Able to closely study the Bee and its method of swarming. In the garden we have erected a small shelter with a few tents and an old steel cupboard previously used for filing official papers. This cupboard has holes in the doors. Early this morning about thirty odd bees made a recce, explored the cupboard from all angles and as events proved, decided it would make a good hive. During the afternoon smoko, someone happened to look out and was startled to see a cloud of bees making a bee line for the shelter, they did not even deviate but made straight for the safe. We thought the place had become too crowded and we did not deviate but made straight for the wide open spaces. The bees have now taken up residence and tomorrow someone will have to get the bailiff as this cupboard contains our seeds and numerous other things which have to be kept there. Myself I'm not a bee man and I don't like interfering with other people's business.

The hospital is that full of malaria cases at present that primary cases are not admitted and are treated in the quarters. There seems to be no slacking off of new and recurrent cases.

Friday 11/2/44

Rained all night and most of day. Japanese holiday, no work. Spent the day reading in the old Malayan style. Rumoured that 900 up-country personnel will be coming back shortly, all, I presume,

that have been left up there. No tobacco, only cigars and canteen prices still soaring. These Nip racketeers would put a 1st class American in the same business to shame.

Saturday 12/2/44

Bees refuse to leave and have already made comb. Rain has given the garden a new lease on life and if the rain keeps up will be possible to save something out of the wreck. Using cigar ash as tooth powder, seems to be doing a good job. Teeth have kept surprisingly well under the circumstances and the lack of suitable foods to use them on, also toothpaste or powders. Possibility of an epidemic of lice and we are using all precautions to combat them. They were brought back by the up-country party and the medicos look upon them as a menace and possible disease carriers. So far I have not had any trouble with them, others have. God knows bugs are bad enough, the two together will be just too much. I have given up hope of receiving any letters this time.

Sunday 13/2/44

No tobacco and feel cranky as hell. All the tobacco I have smoked in the past 25 years is of no benefit to me now and the thought of it does not help. Some of the boys were allowed to go swimming this afternoon. I might be lucky enough to get a turn next Sunday. Meat came in this morning, 3ozs per man, had an oz for tea and the balance tomorrow.

Monday 14/2/44

Still no tobacco, have not had a smoke for two days. Received a soaking this afternoon, too wet to carry on in the garden and arrived back in camp at 3.30pm. Still raining and looks as if it is set in.

Tuesday 15/2/44

We did not herald the day with the blare of trumpets. A few early church services were held but were only attended by those who do not work. Two years have passed since the fateful day of Capitulation, a lot of water has passed under our bridges and a lot of good men have also passed from the earth during those two years, years that to me have seemed lifetimes. What is in front of us God only knows and we can only trust that the worst is behind. Visited Eye Spec last night, my eyes are still improving but they still have their defective spots and as the Specialist said his concern is to keep them from getting worse and improve them if possible.

Have a crop of dermatitis, usually this is a prelude to a fever, so am expecting. Have no other signs.

Reading a book entitled "Menacing Sun" by Mona Gardner. It is very interesting, especially to we P.O.W.s, no doubt more so to the up-country party.

Wednesday 16/2/44

One of the very much over loaded lorries used for transporting the Boongs to the drome gave an extra bump and catapulted 10 or 12 Boongs out of the lorry onto the roadway in front of the camp. Some of the poor devils seems to be badly hurt but little sympathy was shown them and those that could not walk were thrown back into the lorry amidst all the struggling hoards already overloaded and trying to keep their equilibrium.

Thursday 17/2/44

Terrific hot day, another day like it and the good the rain did will be undone. Late last year some Yankee Airmen were brought into the camp. They were shot down somewhere in Indo China. One of them made a statement to the effect that during the time he was flying from India to China as a transport (McI) [?] plane he made over 20,000 Pounds on the side by buying cosmetics and toilet requisites in India and selling them in China. Others had made more and when he left they were still on the job: You can't beat the Yanks and the Nips for running rackets. It is believed that cigars will be in the camp tonight and as it is payday I suppose they will start selling them tomorrow.

Jim Callow came home from the drome very annoyed. We have a Warrant officer who during the blue was attached to base and is now attached to us. He is a fine type physically, and a good lookat with a very smart appearance, but there must be something lacking inside him. Anyhow, it appears that it rained torrents down there and Jim and our boys were out in it, as was the Warrant Officer, but he had a slicker. That of course did not annoy Jim, but there was also a Nip guard there and this Warrant Officer went out of his way to put his arm around the Nip, at the same time sharing his slicker. What the rest of the boys said I would imagine made him feel pretty low.

Friday 18/2/44

Took my place as a horse on a trailer, helped pull it down to the beach where we loaded up with coconut palms which are used for broom making. We went in for a swim but the tide was low and the water muddy. Dermatitis now nearly better, had very bad headaches but no fever this time.

Captain Makepeace, my Troop Commander, is in hospital with kidney trouble, probably due to beri beri which he has had practically since capitulation. During the evening the Nips do blasting on the drome, lately there have been some terrific blasts which shake the buildings here and the rush of air can be definitely felt. The explanation is they are using what once were our aerial bombs, 500lbs, in lieu of dynamite.

Whilst down at the beach I saw for the first time since leaving Tampin one of the big beautiful type of butterfly that abounded around Tampin Mountain. They are like delicate lace and practically transparent, all they need is a tinsel star on their heads and they would complete the picture of fairies of our childhood. They seem too fragile to live. I think I have mentioned this particular butterfly in my letters written whilst we were at Tampin.

Saturday 19/2/44

A limited amount of tobacco, no cigars, arrived in the canteen and is being sold at 70 cents or 7 days pay per ounce. I never imagined I would ever [have] had to pay so dearly for my bad habits. If I am ever reincarnated I will remember not to cultivate any vices or bad habits in my youth. Another 24 hours guard from tonight.

Sunday 20/2/44

Last night a Nip guard came into the Guard hut, closed the door, took off his hat and sat on a bed. He gave us a cigarette and also showed us a nasty wound on his head. He said he was a Korean and a

Catholic Christian. The wound was the result of a bashing he had received from the Japs and his attitude and gesticulations were pregnant with hate towards them. Food he said was little and no good, and that in Singapore the food position was very bad and what there was of it was very bad quality and made the people sick. He spoke little English and Malay and most of the conversation was by signs. The drome guards (Japanese) turned on their hate again and many bashings. Embarrassing impossible tasks were set for some of the chaps and which eventually ended by the chaps also receiving a bashing.

Monday 21/2/44

Meat for tea, the usual amount. This a most peculiar thing. Whilst I am eating one meal I am thinking of the next. I'm afraid, as a glutton I'm past redemption and only satisfaction is I'm not on my own. We all feel the same way and I don't think it is mind over matter. It's little in an empty belly. Apparently a special review of some kind was on today for when we were marching back from the garden quite a convoy of cars flying flags designating Captains, Majors, Lieutenant Colonels, General Staff, Administrative Staff and Generals (they all have different flags denoting the occupants) passed us on their way back to Singapore from the direction of the drome. Was able to procure some cinnamon bark. Have pulped and ground it. Will try some out on my gruel tomorrow morning.

Tuesday 22/2/44

A few cigars arrived this afternoon, but the canteen are holding them until tomorrow when they will be proportioned out to each group according to its strength. I believe there are not very many and will only average a couple per person. No tobacco does not help to appease the ever empty belly.

Thieving from the garden by the up-country party is still rife. They are even taking the unripe Paw Paws. Repeated appeals have been made to them without avail.

Spent a couple of hours last night talking to a Yankee Sergeant who had been a member of the Yankee Air Force. The plane in which he was one of the crew was brought down in Indo China. He told me he received \$250 (American) pay per month, about 15 Pounds per week, and judging from his remarks, their living conditions before he became a P.O.W. would shame a luxury hotel. They have a 24 hour meal service, and can obtain practically anything they require at any hour, free of charge. Some Army.

I don't remember noticing, or I have never seen before, any of the blind being led around the area; tonight I saw four cases within an hour or so. They were great types of chaps and it was pathetic to see them. I shudder at my thoughts of 12 months ago when I despaired of my own eyesight. I am deeply thankful that today my eyes are practically normal again.

Wednesday 23/2/44

Started to rain at about 11am and then continued to pour the whole day and it is still pouring down. The unfortunate drome workers had to work right though and they were very sorry sights when they arrived back at camp. Jap Medical Officer inspected the up-country party yesterday with a view to finding 150 fit men to go on a working party, where or when, not divulged.

Thursday 24/2/44

Rumoured that some American Red Cross supplies are in Singapore. I will believe it when I am partaking of them: if we receive any. Jasmine is out in full bloom at the garden, the perfume is delightful. Also the tree orchids are out and invoke a wonderful show, they are growing on most of the trees; whites, pinks, mauves and spotted varieties! Drizzled rain all day, not enough to stop us working but enough to make the day very uncomfortable.

Heard that the women and children have been shifted from Changi Jail and are at a convent in Singapore. The children are able to attend school.

Friday 15/2/44

Hardest day's work for many a day (hand still shaking like a leaf). Went out this morning cutting bamboos, after cutting we had to carry them $\frac{1}{2}$ mile and load them onto a trailer and pull the trailer and load $\frac{3}{4}$ mile through Kalang and then another mile back to camp. We were a party of five. The Tommies, who were working in conjunction and with whom we shared the bamboo, had a party of thirty, they took half and we took the other half. It was back breaking and heart breaking. This afternoon I was on another trailer party of twelve men, which pulled two tons $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, mostly uphill. Added to all this I was bitten twice by centipedes and received many scratches and cuts. Tonight I definitely feel like bed, I'm not as strong as I thought I was. Some meat tonight, the usual quantity 3ozs per man, what couldn't I do with one of those steaks with trimmings I dream about? Drizzled rain most of the day.

Saturday 26/2/44

Planted some bananas and Paw Paws. Wonder if we will still be here to pick the ripe fruit? Rained on and off all day, one moment we would be soaked, the next moment steaming like a Turkish Bath.

American Red Cross parcels arrived, 340 all told I believe. The American P.O.W.s, of which there are about 28, will receive one complete parcel, the balance to go to the hospital patients, a good deal, if carried out. Shoes also arrived, but not many, enough possibly for the officers. It seems strange that American Red Cross parcels are received and yet there are no signs of any British or Australian. Have been watching a tree in the garden flower and then fruit. I was anxious to find out what kind of tree it was and it has turned out to be a nutmeg. This weather is bringing on numerous recurrent malaria cases, nearly everyone has had it to some degree in the last week.

Sunday 27/2/44

American Red Cross parcels with the exception of what is taken out for the hospitals, and, of course, the officers are getting the shoes, are being proportioned to the different units, English, A.I.F. and Dutch who will receive the contents, cigarettes excluded, through their kitchens. It is expected we will receive 28 cigarettes per person. The whole will amount to something like 1lb per man dry. Nevertheless no matter how we receive it it will be thankfully received.

Garden party allowed to go for a swim this afternoon, high tide and delightful. Just thought I could eat that lb straight away, tin and wrapping included.

Monday 28/2/44

Japanese General visited camp and many rumours circulating as result: such as: raise in pay; all up-country parties coming back here; also increase in rations. Otherwise just another P.O.W.'s day.

Tuesday 29/2/44

Smoking a Camel as I write, just finished a Chesterfield, also received 1oz chocolate and 1oz soap. Meat rations of 3oz per man still coming in, only missed one day in the last four. Great play "Hay Fever" last night. The cast were magnificent. Someone, later traced to up-country party, thieved 28 coconuts and a tent from the garden last night. Why the tent, only they know. The culprits have not been apprehended. Even if we had the money there is nothing to buy in the canteens now, not worried about the rumour regarding a raise in pay. Feel exceptionally tired tonight, spent a very bad night last night, slight toothache, and very feverish. Still feel feverish.

Wednesday 1/3/44 – Sunday 3/3/44

Too Sick.

Monday 6/3/44

Bad head and feel sore in every bone, but, still, much better. Jap photographers around the camp taking photos of groups, concerts, sports, etc. The whole thing had to be staged for their benefit and naturally for their propaganda. Just had a look at myself in the mirror. I feel seventy and look eighty, a few days sick sure plays up with the beauty, also look much thinner, must weigh myself first opportunity. I believe the Yanks only received the same amount of Red Cross stuff as we did at their own request, very nice of them and sporting. The epidemic of fever has reached a tremendous stage, as many as seventy cases and quite a number in the very dangerous stages.

Tuesday 7/3/44

Quite a controversy going on regarding a proposed reorganization mooted by Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher. This reorganization means the absorbing of the up-country party into their original units and the movement of units to different areas. The Medical Authorities are strongly opposed to this movement etc. and have, I believe, paraded as a body with the result that the proposal has been held over for a period. Before the war Singapore had been declared free of Malaria and Dengue, but owing to lack of oils etc. necessary to keep the place free (the Japs have discontinued the supply) the Island of Singapore is now back as a normal breeding ground as it was 35 years ago. It is estimated that it will now take at least 15 years to free the Island of the mosquitoes that have bred here since Capitulation. The position is looked up on as being extremely serious, especially due to the numerous carriers in the up-country party. An epidemic of lice and scabies has also broken out, so far confined to the other area.

Able to get nine watermelon seeds which I have planted, maybe they will grow bigger, maybe they won't.

Tobacco at canteen at 70 cents an ounce. I believe the Japs are charging \$1,000 duty on a pickle (133lbs).

Wednesday 8/3/44

Had a tooth temporarily filled this morning, it had previously been temporarily filled at River Valley Road Camp over 16 months ago. Disconcerting rumours from up North to the effect that Cholera, some say paralysis, has broken out at the camps and hospitals at Canburie. There are over 500 cases of bad malaria at present in the A.I.F. hospital here and there would be more than that many cases of primary malaria in the A.I.F. lines. The tasty morsels of Red Cross issue have all finished. The last a wafer of cheese 1"x1"x 1/32" we had for tea tonight. Good game of soccer, the Javanese are experts at the game, and pretty to watch.

Thursday 9/3/44

Two Tommies were caught coming from the A.G.H. kitchens with quite a quantity of food. They were questioned. One said he bought it, one said it was given to him but later admitted buying it from the hospital kitchen. The outcome was the arresting of three A.G.H cooks and two hospital orderlies for selling the hospital patients' food, also a large amount of food was in their quarters; nothing would be too bad for these scum of the A.I.F., the filthiest actions in the P.O.W. camp somehow seem to be done by the hospital staff. It makes one think that they joined the Red Cross units just for the protection it would afford them. They are the finest physical specimens here, but it is only skin deep. Meat in again, the first for some days, the usual amount.

Friday 10/3/44

Japanese holiday. No man works. The Japs ordered us to put on sporting features, cricket, football, tennis and hockey, also a church service. All these 'features' had to be attended by a large number of spectators who had to wear their best shirts, trousers, hats, boots and socks. The Nip 'photographers' were in attendance, hence the order, possibly the previous shots did not meet with their Propaganda Department approval. Hope they were satisfied today. A number from each house were detailed to attend. I had to watch the cricket match after being marched over and placed in the approved Nippon manner on the grounds.

Weighed myself today, lost more weight than I realised, now top the scales at 9st 11lb. I listened to a very interesting and humorous lecture given by an Englishman, Major Bradshaw, on stage and screen. He gave us some startling figures and information regarding the film industry of British and the quota. One to the fact that for every 10,000 feet of American film shown, 5,000 feet of British must be shown on the same programme. These films (British) are usually shown after the crowd have left and the char people are the only spectators, the films being of a very inferior type, and only made to fulfill the quota. He also explained why British films will never be of quality until the quota business has been lifted. Actors' salaries were another subject full of interest, and are not the lucrative salaries one imagines them, they receive after they are averaged over the season.

Sat 11/3/44

Planted some watermelon seeds, hope for the best, they were brought back by one of the up-country party from Thailand. No vegetables from the Japs for the last few days. They give us green bananas and coconuts to the extent of 4oz per man which includes skins, stalks, etc., the actual edible portion runs about 2ozs per man. A.I.F. concert tonight, very good and jolly, showed a scene portraying the

Sydney Harbour bridge, it was very real and we all felt very homesick. The officers were the butts for most of their jokes, some being very original, true and humorous, their allowance of clothes in comparison to the Other Ranks being the meat of one of their jokes, a very sore point with the Other Ranks and naturally well applauded in the back seats and gods. The officers always have the front stalls. They take it in good part.

Sunday 12/3/44

A glorious swim, the tide was full and the water beautiful. It was that nice the Nip guard also went in which is very unusual. Whilst we were down at the beach, a detachment of the Malayan Youth Movement arrived there. These young Malayans are very lucky and the Nips are doing a good job with them, making them physically fit, feeding them and teaching them discipline. Their ages range from 12 to about 18. All we received from the Japs today as vegetable rations was 120 lbs bananas including skins and stalks. This between 8,000 men does not go far, with the little we are producing in the garden believe me it is a problem and I think the time has come when we are going to have many more dinner times than dinners. Today meals were exceptionally light. I personally at present could eat a scabied Tamil.

Buried a 2/30th boy, 23 years of age, this afternoon, during the week a A.I.F. Provo was also buried.

Monday 13/3/44

Found a cashew nut tree, these lovely nuts in their raw state are highly dangerous to handle and very poisonous and quite an amount of preparation is required before they are edible. They also bear a nice looking fruit, these fruit are edible and strangely enough the nut grows separately from the fruit. Most of these tropical fruits and nuts have in their composition some kind of drug or poison, even the Paw Paw. Speaking of Paw Paw, we are now using the leaves for tobacco and they don't make a bad smoke, when they are dried out they look very much like the tobacco leaf, smoked with a portion of cigar they acquire a very pleasant taste. Meals very light today, but Captain Chilts put on a bit of a spread for a few of us from the garden tonight, which was very enjoyable.

(NOTED ON BACK COVER OF PREVIOUS DIARY)

H Force

Number	Rank	Name	
24076	Gnr.	Crowen	K.Mc.
29008	Gnr	Fuggle	J.K.
16716	Gnr	Meech	T.W.
32586	L/Sgt	McCarthy	R.J.
30072	Gnr	McGann	K.
30438	Gnr	Oddy	V.L.
18769	Gnr	Peck	H.H.
25902	Sgt	Symons	A.J.

Borneo (B Force)

NX.78552	Gardner	I.L.B.
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K.I.A.

NX.29690	Gnr	Bruce	L.L.
NX.24072	Sgt	Buckman	I.I.
NX.29612	Gnr	Curran	P.V.
NX.29978	Gnr	Dunn	F.L.
NX.27288	Gnr	Fisher	H.M.Mc.
NX.59500	Bdr	Fowler	E.K.
NX.28383	Gnr	Gibson	M.J.
NX.79475	Lt	Hingst	H.
DX.141	Major	Julius	W.
NX.32304	Gnr	Kelly	F.J.
QX.19726	Gnr	McKnight	J.
NX.6586	Gnr	Renwell	G.D.
10875	Gnr	Paine	R.E.
GX.17018	Lt	Phillips	J.L.
NX.45314	Gnr	Tornquist	D.J.
NX.4775	Gnr	Thompson	R.E.
NX.30409	Sgt	West	B.J.
NX.45193	Sgt	Wheeler	E.C.
NX.32532	Gnr	Whitham	A.E.
NX.27200	Gnr	Brown	F.J.

Died of Wounds

NX.27089	Gnr	Coles	H.W.L.
NX.18722	Lt	Keating	R.J.
NX.10761	Gnr	Moffat	A.C.
NX.23680	Gnr	McDonell	H.B.
NX.12391	Capt	Rabett	R.P.
NX.37192	Gnr	Simpson	C.R.

Accidentally Killed

NX12312	Lt.Col.	O'Neill	J.C.
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Missing believed Killed

NX.45096	Gnr	Alford	J.F.G.
NX.26541	Gnr	Atkins	W.P.
NX.6903	Gnr	Baxter	E.J.
NX.26248	Gnr	Cassidy	C.B.
NX.38170	Gnr	Danciger	S.

Missing believed killed cont.

NX.57385	Gnr	Dedman	R.H.
NX.2750	Gnr	Everson	C.
NX.26429	L/Cdr	Foy	L.F.
NX.28405	L/Cdr	Greenstreet	A.
NX.66957	Gnr	Goodfellow	V.J.
NX.30765	L/Sgt	Howard	J.O.
NX.20304	Gnr	Harding	J.
NX.59774	Gnr	Higgins	A.J.
DX.25294	Gnr	Hall	R.C.
NX.28570	Ison	J.	
NX.19975	L/Sgt	keiller	E.
NX.32599	Lt	Lester	K.J.H.
NX.7255	Gnr	Lee	D.C.
NX.51933	Gnr	Mitchell	B.R.
NX.68110	W.O.	Maurer	H.O.
NX.68346	Gnr	Mearns	W.J.
NX.20559	Gnr	McNamara	R.
NX.4684	Gnr	McLean	E.L.
NX.25206	Gnr	Owen	J.G.
NX.34184	Gnr	Pearson	A.?
NX.24068	Gnr	Ryan	F.
NX.47055	Lt	Shearer	J.A.
NX.68347	Gnr	Scott	A.C.
NX.4232	Gnr	Sexton	E.A.
NX.32931	Gnr	Waters	A.B.
NX.13688	Bdr	Wall	I.S.
NX.8458	Gnr	Williams	F.C.
NX.35492	Sgt	Brown	W.C.

(V.C. OCM-MM)

Died at various camps whilst a POW

Changi

NX.53124	Gnr	Buffet	J.H.
NX.24592	Gnr	Bagot	L.T.
NX.4701	L/Bd	Bedford	?A.
NX.37929	Gr	Chapman	K.
NX.26796	Gnr	Derry	E.S.C.
NX.52298	Gnr	McLean	B.F.
NX.24944	Gnr	Rolfe	J.B.
NX.19981	Bd.	Starsmand (?)	S.T.
NX.23556	Gnr	Searle	G.D.
NX.37280	Gnr	Stewart	W.
NX.18235	Gnr	Winsor	L.

Sumatra

NX.45920	Sgt	Jones	C.B.
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A Force

NX.24088	Gnr	Aird	F.S.
NX.27649	Gnr	Belton	A.
NX.38221	Gnr	Baker	F.I.
NX.26725	Gnr	Binder	R.W.
NX.50429	Gnr	Collins	R.
NX.28551	Gnr	Chiddy	H.
NX.31953	Gnr	Carter	V.G
NX.57167	Gnr	Dickinson	K.
NX.33075	Gnr	Field	L.D.
NX.28052	Gnr	Gunn	F.O.
NX.13262	Gnr	Kallen	D.B.
NX.34499	Gnr	Links	S.T.
NX.20006	Gnr	Ludlow	N.S.
NX.5652	Gnr	Langley	J.P.
NX.10786	Gnr	Lennox	J.P.
NX.38181	L.Sgt.	Noble	A.J.
NX.30861	Gnr	Page	F.W.
NX.30918	Gnr	Reynolds	G.K.
NX.30163	Gnr	Stonehill	G.A.
NX.34591	Gnr	Scorer	J.H.
NX.33258	Gnr	Smith	L.O.
NX.38761	Gnr	Singleton	J.
NX.21999	Gnr	Slater	H.E..
NX.73062	Gnr	Tobin	J.T.
NX.7317	Gnr	Whitecombe	P.
NX.48120	Gnr	Zichlke	G.A.
NX.66058	S/Sgt	Lynch	A.
NX.56598	Gnr	Miller	A.
NX.30173	Gnr	Peck.	
		McMahon	

D Force

NX.13938	Sgt	Ahern	T.S.
NX.34107	Gnr	Blue	H.D.
NX.31465	Sgt	Blackall	W.A
NX.26900	Bdr	Barlow	R.S.
NX.30336	Gnr	Conquest	J.A.
NX.31398	Sgt	Clark	J.B.A.
NX.32146	L/Sgt	Crane	J.K.
NX.48012	Gnr	Collins	J.J.
NX.50058	Gnr	Cassidy	M.R.
NX.19273	Gnr	Dudley	R.S.
NX.30468	Gnr	Farmer	A.B.H.
NX.5799	Gnr	Francis	J.J.
NX.24066	L/Bd	Grimwood	S.
NX.26382	Sgt	Gittoes	T.H.
NX.47208	Gnr	Hynes	H.P.
NX.46814	Gnr	Jarrett	B.A.
NX.7350	Gnr	Kennedy	L.
NX.31153	Gnr	Loudoun	J.
NX.29786	Gnr	Martin	R.W.
NX.53482	Gnr	Mullens	J.M.S.
QX.17188	Gnr	Manusa	I.J.
NX.31290	Gnr	Moir	J.
NX.27936	Gnr	Martin	J.E.
NX.26491	Gnr	MacDougall	A,
NX.34558	Gnr	MacCallum	J.R.
NX.10899	Gnr	Pitchford	A.J.
NX.34196	Gnr	Ross	J.M.
NX.33345	Bde	Sykes	J.
VX.56624	Gnr	Schultz	R.A.
NN. 34481	Bd	Thompson	J.R.
NX.49859	Gnr	Hughes	L.I.
NX.23408	Sgt	West	R.E.

NX.26694	Gnr	Williams	H.
NX.6570	Gnr	Ward	A.
NX.33848	Gnr	Ward	H.J.
NX.24487	Gnr	Buchanan	L.
NX.46568	Gnr	Williams	D.
		Veekner	
	Bd	Main	J.

H Force

QX.19361	Gnr	Burns	J.E.
NX.27836	Sgt	Byrnes	H.A.
NX.46217	Gnr	Bagby	A.
QX.18729	Gnr	Buckley	L.
NX.27784	Gnr	Connelly	F.
NX.30610	Gnr	Cooper	B.F.
NX.5699	Gnr	Dobell	I.C.
NX.27286	Sgt	Fowler	J.J.
NX.27100	Gnr	Hammond	J.R.
NX.27941	Gnr	Hawkins	C.
NX.29052	Gnr	Holmes	I.
NX.27516	Gnr	Hopkins	S, J,
NX.26604	Bdr	Johnston	S.
NX.10443	Gnr	Lane	H.j.
NX.37330	Gnr	Magee	L.J.
NX.30194	L/Bde	Price	N.
NX.26070	Gnr	Robinson	R.S.
NX.23803	Bde	Rosenberg	A.
NX.19965	WOII	Shaw	A.A.
NX.27784	Gnr	Thew	A.A.
NX.20542	Gnr	Tindal	R.I.
NX.49211	Gnr	Turner	R.A.
NX.26685	Gnr	Wood	K.R.
NX.37422	Gnr	Williamson	W.
	Gnr	Crane	J.
	Gnr	Crane	D.

(The following pages written on the back of letters from Mae and Jack's mum)

2/4/44

Very bad attack Malaria BT 5+, hallucinations, taken to hospital, felt very sick, cannot eat.

3/4/44

Still unable to eat and pretty sick.

23/4/44

Feel OK. Malaria finished, transferred to surgical ward for Hemorrhoid operation.

24/4/44

Operated on with spinal injection. Dr. Ferrer of Newcastle anesthetist and Dr. Nairn surgeon, both wonderful men. Good birthday present.

25/4/45

Very painful, have not been able to pass water.

26/4/44

Still unable to pass water. Unbearable.

27/4/44

Thank God, able to relieve the flood, saved a painful treatment. Feel much better but still very sore and sorry.

28/4/44 to 15/5/44

In hospital. Still very sore.

16/5/44

More up-country arrived back. Two chaps, one on either side of me, died last night. A horrible death from Pellagra, they virtually died a slow death from strangulation.

17/5/44

Discharged from hospital, still very sore, asked to be discharged, must report to doctor twice a week.

18/5/44

Dysentery rife in our camp area.

19/5/44

Diarrohea already giving me double hell.

20/5/44 to 24/5/44

Just another P.O.W.'s day with the trots.

25/5/44

Moved to Changi Civil Gaol. Quartered in store room similar to dungeon. Cannot stand up straight.

26/5/45

Very ... (*torn and missing*) ... the gaol but how the women and children could put up with it for 2 years and more is beyond me. They had a rough deal.

27/5/44

The trots on and off all the time.

28/5/44

Hospital shifted from Selarang to woodland (Kurangi) near the causeway, also portion to gaol area.

29/5/44 to 31/7/44

Odd jobs around the place when able which is not too frequent. Health not the best, trots very bad.

1/8/44

Admitted to hospital with a tropical disease calendar: dysentery, Beri Beri, Anemia and serotum [scrotum?] dermatitis.

2/8/44 to 18/11/44

In and out of hospital but for periods never more than a week at a time; had numerous complaints including many recurrent, malaria, beri beri and dysentery. During this period have had two trips to Karangi where I am present domiciled, but anxious to get back. Food has been very scarce, particularly here. I am continually hungry and the little food (rice mostly, about 2 pints per day) is not doing me any good, turning to water and causing my beri beri to swell me up like a jelly fish, necessitating about 20 trips per night. Must at least get rid of 3 gallons water per night, feel like a wet rag well wrung out. On the 5/11/44 first sight of our air force, 50 planes. They dropped a few sticks, one of the AA unexploded shells came through the roof of the hut I am living in and buried itself 15 foot in the ground. No one hurt. 3 more planes on 8/11/44. Recce.

19/11/44

8 Indian guards have been tied up to trees for the last two nights and days, poor souls. They look more dead than alive. They are paying the penalty for talking and trading with some of our chaps. Also three of our chaps are in the Nip guard house receiving ¼ pint rice spoon salt and water three times a day. They were caught trading and received terrible bashings. Two A.I.F. buried today, I think that brings the total to 15 since I have been out here and many more are not expected to live much longer. Their life is just a living death, mostly consumpts, ulcerations of the stomach and general deficiencies. Siren went this morning, doubtful if the planes were over, although some say bombs were dropped.

20/11/44

Indians (3 of them) still tied to trees. Saw Eye Specialist, eyes aching but possibly due to heavy cold and probable blood pressure. Food worse, dogs and cats dare not put their foot into the camp, just suicide for them, the Yanks and Tommies relish them. One of the lunies was found to be missing, a search party later found him in a cess pit (this pit is used for slops and pan emptyings). He evidently took the lid off and jumped down into it, a matter of about 15 foot. He had been down there about 1¾

hours and during this period it rained cats and dogs, did he smell? But he was not hurt and did not seem to care much and after being brought to the surface calmly walked away humming to himself. No accounting for taste.

21/11/44

One of our big bombers over late yesterday evening dropped a few bombs. The mental case that dived into the cesspit yesterday said he saw people running (they were running to get out of the rain and he thought it was an air raid). He was very lucky he did not drown as all that could be seen of him was his face. The pit is 20 foot deep and luckily he is 6' tall. The pit contained mostly bed pan emptyings from the wards, especially the dysentery ward. What little that can be bought from the canteen is an impossible price, tobacco \$2.05 per ounce, nearly 2 month's patient's pay, 5 cents per day; sugar \$10 lb; salt 23 cents per ounce; coffee (ground peanuts and burnt rice); cigars as big as my little finger, 26 cents each.

22/11/44

Another day.

23/11/44

Still another.

24/11/44

Epidemic of fits in our ward. Three different people in two days, none of them ever having taken fits before. The Nips have the idea that sick men don't need as much food as well and also do not need tobacco, therefore hospital rations are less than the fit. Buried another A.I.F. today. Had a local operation to the nose today, both nostrils pierced and washed out and drained, seems to have eased my headache.

25/11/44

One of the mental patients kicked up hell's delight last night. It appears he imagines he has killed his sisters and brothers and has gone on a hunger strike. They have to put him in a straight jacket, gag his mouth open and forcibly feed him. It is very hard to stop myself from swallowing and rushing at food like a starving dog, the inclination is very strong. I just hate to think what we might unknowingly degenerate to, we know we have but I don't think we appreciate to what extent.

26/11/44

Rained all day.

27/11/44

Two air alarms, but didn't see any of our planes. Up to now everybody more or less have controlled their tempers, but the last week or so it has been very noticeable that tempers are becoming short and arguments frequent. Today two patients came to blows, not much damage was done as they were both just bags of bones and were unable to do any harm to each other. We let them go for a minute to see if it would clear the air. Had my nose done again, feel better for it.

28/11/44

Here is a rather interesting comparison of food issued to civil prisoners under British rule and our issue under Jap. The Civil Prisoners rations I have taken from a daily ration sheet dated 3/3/40, and ours for today.

CIVIL PRISONERS 3/3/40

CHANGI GAOL

	RICE	FISH	VEGs	OIL	MUTTON	POTATO	SALT	FLOUR	PORK
TEA									
EUROPEANS	4ozs		6ozs			4ozs	½ ozs	1lb 2oz	½ lb ¼ ozs
CHINESE	16ozs	3ozs	12ozs	2½ ozs			1 ozs	¼ lb	¼ lb ¼ ozs
MALAYS	16ozs	3ozs	12ozs	1½ ozs	¼ lb		1 ozs	¼ lb	¼ ozs
TAMILS	16ozs	3ozs	12ozs	1½ ozs	¼ lb		1 ozs	¼ lb	¼ ozs
JAPANESE	16ozs	3ozs	12ozs				1 ozs	¼ lb	¼ ozs
PATHAN	10ozs	3ozs	12ozs	1½ ozs	¼ lb		1 ozs	10 ozs	¼ ozs
SIKHS	10ozs	3ozs	12ozs	1½ ozs	¼ lb		1 ozs	10 ozs	¼ lb ¼ ozs
BRAHMIN	12ozs	3ozs	12ozs	1¾ ozs			1 ozs	14 ozs	¼ ozs
	BEEF	MILK	JAM	BUTTER	CHEESE	SUGAR	LARD	EGGS	COCOA
EUROPEANS	½ lb	2ozs (sick 1 pint)	2ozs	½ ozs	6ozs (week)	1ozs	1ozs	1 (sick 2)	¼ ozs
CHINESE									
MALAYS									
TAMILS									
JAPANESE	¼ ozs					½ ozs	½ ozs	2	
PATHAN									
SIKHS									
BRAHMIN		½ pint							

P.O.W.s: SINGAPORE 28/11/44

	RICE	FISH	VEGs	SALT	SUGAR	TEA	
HOSPITAL	12 ozs	1.4ozs	5ozs	¼ ozs	½ ozs	¼ ozs	
KRANGI		(not every day)	(over age)				
POWS	<hr/>						Total ozs = 19½ ozs
EUROPEAN CIVILIANS (Peace Time Prisoners)	<hr/>						Total ozs = 79 + eggs & milk
JAP	<hr/>						Total ozs = 38½ + 2 eggs

Received 3 letters, 1 from Mae, 2 from Mum, they were over a year old. I have been very lucky as regards receiving mail, although they were old when received. Have been, and am, very worried about Dad since receiving the earlier message from Mum in September last. Rained most of day, [we] are experiencing the wet season.

29/11/44

Just a day spent on my back.

30/11/44

Had blood pressure taken. Very high and my arteries are silting up. Have to stay on my bed and have no exertion. Plenty of greens in tonight's meal, more than we have had altogether for the last week. Changi Exchange Day tomorrow, naturally now am not going back, but will be a tryer next trip which will be 10 days time. There are three Exchange days per month. Had a good yarn to Major (Dr.) Ferrer of Newcastle today, he asked about Dad, he said the Croft family are a full blooded lot.

1/12/44

Moved to medical ward, dysentery not now active. New lot in from Changi, no news from there of any importance. Still a hell of a lot of thieving going on. This life is bringing out the worst in men from all angles.

2/12/44

Nothing.

3/12/44

Three deaths reported at Changi Hospital. Rumoured that the Indians camped at Neesoon are dying like flies. Chillies \$100 per lb and pork \$3000 per pig, \$50 for pork chop. God help the poor boongs. I believe dog meat also runs to an exorbitant price. Rumours regarding food relief ship for P.O.W.s.

4/12/44

In this country I have seen thousands of beautiful sunsets but tonight's effort makes all the others shabby by comparison. It was that beautiful one could feel it and the urge to go out into the open to bath in the glory of it was just irresistible. It caused all the natural colours to stand out vividly yet strangely enough not harshly but soft like velvet. The atmosphere seemed to have a velvet clinging touch one could feel. For hours the surroundings were bathed in a light of golden rose reminding me very much of the colour only seen in the Talisman rose. This light seemed to flow like a halo around an object. It was most affecting and truly, if one was religious, a sign of Christmas.

5/12/44

I was hoping for a repetition of yesterday's sunset but although it was beautiful there was no comparison. Yesterday's was a once in a lifetime show. Saw my old Marmon Harrington tractor pulling a trailer of logs yesterday. It still has its battle scars and the bullet holes in the ironwork (made by 1/2" machine bullets) can be still easily seen. It brought back memories. The word freedom is ... (*unreadable*) ... and not nearly adequate to describe its meaning. I wonder just how much we have all degenerated, we cannot realise and I suppose it will be drastically amplified when we get back to civilisation amongst those who know us. It scares me even to think. We, although no doubt there are exceptions, would not level up to the natives in thoughts and pride and morals (not sexual at the present time, sex is far from our thoughts).

6/12/44

Much ado regarding 30 chunkles missing from the garden, but I think this time a swift one has been put over us by the greatest racketeers in the world. I will admit that the ... (*unreadable*) ... would pinch the eye out of the needle if possible, but they at present only consider thieving from their mates. God I feel sick when I think of the mean contemptible actions I know of, not only actions of Other Ranks. Selfishness, greed and anything lowdown and filthy seems to be the goal of the majority. I admit we are hungry but not solely from the cause of the quantity of rations issued by the Japs but by the distribution from our comrades, the weakest and the lowest (by military standards) goes to the wall, we are fighting for democracy and our greatest enemy against it is the army, it's pathetic and laughable if it weren't so serious. It has been rumoured often that the officers were to be segregated from the Other Ranks and shifted to another camp. It has its debatable points, but I will reserve my

opinions (necessity knows no choice) even our thoughts and souls are not our own. There is a saying (and is some cases a very true one) which has been coined here, but strictly forbidden, but will keep. For our own Australian Commander Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher I have the greatest regard and respect, also for many of our officers, but! . . .

7/12/44

Hatred between the English troops, and Aussie, Dutch, yanks and Scotties is rife. The last four can, and do, pull together but even the Malay Volunteers (mostly English and Scotch) are very bitter towards the English troops, their type and methods. I would not be surprised if there is not a lot of trouble come out of this increasing hatred. Our ward overlooks the Singapore, Jahore Baru main road and much traffic and interesting things pass along, how I envy the freedom of movement, even the old Chink to a certain extent enjoys that.

8/12/44

Three years today our hosts started something that has not yet finished. Thought we might see an air raid but no such luck. Opposite our ward on the other side of the road Chinese men and women, also children, are used for some type of construction. When they knock off they usually bring firewood with them and stack it in the truck which conveys them home. The Sikh guard took objection to their taking the wood so he tried to make them throw it out. Word threats and bashes had no avail and the Chows just sat there with their usual contempt. It took him about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour to do the job himself but his sense of humour prevailed and he bullied the Chinese women into picking it up and carrying it back. Just what is going to happen to the Sikh guards someday only the Chinese know. I would not care to witness the events. Drought on. No rain for 5 or 6 days.

9/12/44

A Tommy was buried today – he died of consumption. Once, and sometimes twice a week a party goes out with a trailer and collects palm fronds at a place about 6 miles away, it is pretty hard going pushing the trailer. The party consisted mostly of officers and for their pains they are allowed to collect coconuts, which they keep for themselves, coconuts being a great luxury now and unprocurable. They usually bring back about four apiece. Today another party went out consisting of Other Ranks and one officer (interpreter, necessary) when this party arrived back all coconuts were taken from them and given to the Q store, even some that were broken and carried in pieces in their pockets (a great joke and typical). The hospital is under English administration. It was impossible to get on this party before unless you were one of the favoured few, or an officer. I'm afraid from here on it will be a case of detailing the party.

10/12/44

Had storm during night and intermittent rain during the day. The drought of six days has broken. Found about a dozen snails, they taste pretty good, would have tasted better if had oil to fry them in after boiling. One of the chaps passed a remark regarding our tea, which I thought very apt, "water bewitched and tea begrudged". I don't know whether it was original, it definitely fitted. Very hungry and craving for a smoke.

11/12/44

Changi Exchange party arrived. No one that I know and no mail for me, some received letters written in June this year. Few lily roots with our rations ... (*unreadable*) ... and few more vegetables than usual. Tommies put on a concert, not a bad show, they made some disparaging remarks about how the breed of Australian was evolved, but from the remarks from the crowd (Australian portion) the tables were turned. I remember one, the statement was 'that an Englishman arrived in Australia, married a black harlot and so propagated the race'. A voice from the crowd said 'and thereby down to the Englishman's level, but with that disadvantage the progeny still was a great improvement on the sire'. Some of the A.I.F. concert party in Changi were caught trying to sell drugs, about the filthiest thing possible. It is a pity because they have done a wonderful job and worked hard. I believe they were sentenced to 90 days solitary confinement by our people. That, in my opinion, is much too easy a penalty. I consider the charge should be attempted murder, or at least manslaughter.

12/12/44

Another burial. I think a Tommy. Made a glutton of myself today, received some leggi (more in Malayan) also some oil, made a hash and fried it. I ate it like a hungry dog, naturally I was violently sick.

13/12/44

Spent day reading my poetry book. If Heinrich Heine has no objection (he died in 1856) I give my sweetheart Mae this (with a little alteration). The years they come and go, the races drop in the grave, yet nearer the love doth so which here in my heart I have = Could I see thee every day, and sink down so on my knee, and mean every word that I say, "Lady, I love but thee!"

14/12/44

Visited the Eye Specialist. Very pleased the hemorrhage behind my eye has begun to clear away. Spent last night and today on the run, afraid aftermath of my greed the other day. Air raid siren went last night, but there was nothing doing as far as we could see. Growing a mustache.

15/12/44

A goodly supply of greens for today's meals. I was not concerned as food and I are not at present on friendly terms, still trotting around 20 to 25 times per day.

16/12/44

Back on my muckram but still trotting, although they are easing up. Very strong rumour regarding Red Cross supplies, sincerely hope it is true, not so much from the food point of view, (although we badly need it), but from the medical point of view as regards drugs etc. Still again food is also a major health problem and a dire necessity to most bad cases. Believe the concert party is putting on a pantomime for Christmas.

17/12/44

Buried another Tommy today. His complaint was not identified. Would eat very heartily if I only had the food to eat, very light rations today. Trots practically back to normal, a very short relapse, thought I was in for a long run.

Told one of the chaps off this afternoon. He is a nasty type, “one of those types who frequent pub corners nipping for drinks etc.” He has only been out of clink a few days, where he served a sentence for stealing his mate’s clothes and flogging (selling) them. He sarcastically refers to me as ‘Pal’. Pal this and Pal that, and well, Pal to me is a pretty sacred word with a very definite meaning and to have him prostituting it so frequently just got on my nerves and I did not go behind his back, or spare his feelings telling him so. I also told him “If he wanted to address me my name is Jack, but I would not fire away if he did not address me at all.” I suppose I’m a bit cranky but I just couldn’t stand any more of it. Needless to say he is not too popular with the majority. He reminds me of one of Edgar Wallace’s characters, the Ferret or Weasel.

18/12/44

The issue of greens much more than usual, and tea tonight received backup. Learnt my lesson the other day and took things quietly and ate more like a human being. Rained most of the day. No sign of Red Cross stuff and rumours have died down.

19/12/44

Collected some mushrooms. The mushrooms here are what we would term toadstools back home, and would not consider eating. Here we eat them, and like them, with no detrimental results. I’m now sure that practically all toadstools can be eaten and I know that the Chinese cook and eat Puff Balls, which they consider a great delicacy. Our Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Wright, gave a talk on his experiences and reminiscences whilst in the Australian Air Force ... (*unreadable*) ... The talk was very interesting and entertaining. He is a very modest and spoke always as we, and never I, although his is an O.F.I. man. The more I see of him the more I like him and I see quite a bit of him here, if I don’t go and visit him he comes and visits me at least twice a week.

20/12/44

My consistent headaches have today increased to such a pitch that I feel I want to scream or I will go crazy. It is a hundred times worse than the worst fever headache I have ever experienced. Air raid siren has gone but up to now have not seen or heard any of our planes.

21/12/44

Thank God! My headache abated considerably this morning. I’m sure I could not have stood it much longer. Changi Exchange Day today, also mail day, if any! Nothing eventuated from the air raid warning of yesterday. Rained like hell all night, plenty of mushrooms (toadstools) this morning. Grilled up in their own water, adds a little flavour to the rice, in fact, if I had some salt to put with them they would be delicious. Salt is very scarce and our food is more often without than with it, and then hardly noticeable. My ferret friend is going back to Changi. I don’t think any of us will burst into tears.

22/12/44

No letters for me, very disappointed. Some of the chaps received letters and by these standards current ones, only six months old. Changi Exchange arrived, there being six for this ward. Last week a Jap fighter tried to land on the next drome during a bad rain storm. The machine crashed and went

up in flames, so did the pilot. Also a bomber got into difficulties but was much luckier and landed on Roberts Road, nobody hurt. Rumoured that more working parties to go to an unknown destination as required by the Japs and are to be known as 'K' and 'L' parties. Believe the boys back in Changi have made some marvellous toys for the Internees and their children, some being works of art and very ingenious. God I feel for those poor women and children, merely barbarism. We are all guessing what our hosts are going to present us with for Christmas. Rumour has 2 packets of cigarettes; 4 ozs extra rice or bottle of brandy between 200 (for flavouring purposes I should imagine, but what to flavour?) I have no doubt that the Jap General and Officer-in-Charge of us will do their best as they have already shown us numerous kindnesses and privileges within their powers. Three very bad cases were brought in from a working party from "Pasta Punjang", they were injured in a motor smash, two are fractured skull cases and have not recovered consciousness. They are A.I.F. chaps.

Read a story by Gustave Flaubert entitled "The Legend of Saint Julian", so now I know where the name originated. He was a French Saint who at one time was a very cruel hunter killing anything that moved, for the love of slaughter. He was very attached to his Mother and Father and accidentally, through his blood lust, he killed them. Overwhelmed with grief he became a beggar and hermit, forgoing all his wealth etc., and established himself as a "grates" ferryman, ferrying a heavy boat across raging torrents as a penance. He died doing so and was admitted to heaven. He was called St. Julian the "Hospitaller".

23/4/44

With the going of the Ferret I thought we would be free of wit in the ward, but I'm sorry to say his substitute is even worse. He is of the know-all arrogant type that one takes an instant dislike to. His looks are not deceiving as he started trying to bully and air his knowledge in the first hour. He is a well known character up North, having the stigma of being the first man to receive a flogging from our own people for his thieving and general rottenness. The flogging was ordered by an Australian Medical Officer, Major Hunt, and from what I can gather, thoroughly deserved it, and the feelings of the rest of the P.O.W.s were unanimous against him. So it looks like trouble ahead. He is big and well made and I believe takes advantage of his physics. I don't think his heart will be as big as his body.

The Italian officers put on a show at Changi. When the Jap Officer-in-Charge went to their hut to remonstrate with them for not blacking out their lights during an air raid warning they refused to stand up and salute him. They are now spending their time in close confinement in the gaol tower.

Coconuts in the canteen, but no money to buy, they are only for the officers and racketeers who are the only people with money. It is a case here of not "Crime does not pay" but "Honesty does not pay". Therefore the unlawful keep their condition and the honest men grow thin.

24/12/44

Pay Day! I drew mine and rushed to the canteen and bought ½oz tobacco. It cost me my whole pay, 30 days pay. Received 4oz of whitebait from the Unit for Christmas, fried them and had one dam (*sic*) good feed (I said fried, I meant grilled or burnt them). New Year's Eve I wonder! In fact I spent

most of the night last night visualizing and wondering and trying to capture the atmosphere back home. Next year I hope to be able to participate, God, the Nips, and our Army willing.

Well! I haven't hung my stocking up yet and the presents have started to arrive. So far Father Christmas, being our hosts: 1st, 2ozs cheese (very high, but very acceptable); 2nd, 2 ozs tobacco, not Virginian, but to me the breath of angels. I would not believe how excited I am. This shows just how much our sense of appreciation has developed under these circumstances. I imagine my feelings are akin to Julian's. How I must be missing the essence of Fatherhood. My imagination is always running riot on this angle. Also the life of a respectable, married, middle aged man.

25/12/44

Christmas Day: Last night a Tommy received death as his present. He died of TB and was buried today. Received 5 good cigars from Stan Beadman, one of our gunners in Changi who had made plenty of money on a working party. Also Major Ferrer of Newcastle gave me two cigars. He did the same with all the Newcastle boys out here. He is one of the most popular Doctors in the hospital, sympathetic and conscientious. Does a marvellous job. The Menu: Breakfast; tea without sugar, a cup of rice pap sweetened with ... (*unreadable*) ... biscuit (unfortunately ... (*unreadable*) ...) fried whitebait. Morning Tea, ½ cup sweetened. Dinner, sweetened tea, ½ pint green stew, ½ cup rice, spoon whitebait, veg turnover, and a rice biscuit (still sour). Afternoon, ½ cup sweetened tea. Tea, or perhaps Christmas Dinner; ½ cup rice, ½ pint vegetable soup, and 10 dourers, including 2 sweet ones. For supper, ½ cup sweetened tea and a rock cake. All very nice. The Sergeants and Staff Sergeants had that much that quite a number were violently ill and were giving their stuff away. All told, everybody had plenty to eat and a good Christmas was had by all.

26/12/44

Boxing Day but still another P.O.W. day and another Christmas has passed on with the New Year hard on its tracks.

27/12/44

Another present of six cigars per man from the Japanese Commander, Lieutenant Tasaharshe. Today is the first day for many days that it has not rained. The present Jap guards here are being replaced some time this week, for better or worse is yet to be seen. Actually the present guards have not been too bad as far as we are concerned.

28/12/44

Choomies put on a fairly good (*unreadable – pantomime??*). It was kind of a mixture of satire of Red Riding Hood, Dick Whittington, Alice in Wonderland and others. The appointments were excellent: one scene of snowing and another of moths around a candle were exceptional and would have compared with the legitimate stage settings. Food is back to normal and belts are again being tightened.

29/12/44

Not very much concerned about food today. Have started on the trots again and am flat out. Feel very feverish and aching and sore all over. Every minute or two I feel as if someone punches me in

the stomach and snatches my wind and no matter how much I try to stop myself from emitting a sound like Oh!, I still involuntarily make it.

30/12/44

Still trotting. Am on a gruel diet, consisting of ground rice and water. So far have not tasted any sugar, in fact it is tasteless. New Japanese Guards arrived today.

Changi Exchange Day. Changi News: A.I.F. chap fell from a coconut tree, fractured his skull, broke both legs and broke his back. He lingered for two days before he died. A Tommy tried to cut his throat but did not make a success of it. Three hundred mixed troops, A.I.F., English and Dutch standing by for working party. Talk also of other working parties. All had more than enough to eat for Christmas. Rumoured that 'A' and 'D' Force have moved from Singapore again, it is said by boat. Don't fancy that kind of transport myself.

31/12/44

Last day of a very long and weary year – here's hoping! They say the Tamil language can be the most obscene and expressive. I quite believe it after listening for about 2 hours to a domestic quarrel outside our camp during the early hours of this morning. I can't understand Tamil, but believe me I could feel the thickness of it and I bet it would have made the worst of the obscene books that this country is flooded with (and obscene is too mild a word for some of them) read like Anderson's Fairy Tales for children. Off my food and don't feel as if I will want to eat again. Today we were issued with two bananas and two Ramatans, took me all my time to eat them. A few days ago I would have marched 10 miles for them.

1945

(These next pages written on backs of letters)

1/1/45

Great to-do amongst the Nips: Public Holiday, and like horses (the only difference being the horse's birthday is August) all Japanese have their birthday today. Our hosts did the right thing and gave us a little extra muckin, this gesture at the present time does not interest me and I am losing weight fast, although the trots have eased considerably. I hope this year is not as long as the last unless it is under entirely different circumstances. I am past the stage of wishing and hoping and just say to myself "Roll on Time", only time will tell.

2/1/45

Started to eat a little, feel very weak and sore. Weighed myself and find myself back to the weight 8.10 lbs. I think I would be about 16 years old when I was last that weight. This dysentery certainly knocks one about. 10 stone has been my heaviest for a long time. When I arrived in the country I was 14.9 lbs, nearly 6 stone heavier than I am now. The Hospital staff put all the Medical Officers under the shower yesterday. Our Medical Officers took it in the right spirit but when they started on the Tommy MOs and officers it was a different proposition, and they made all kinds of threats. Nevertheless they put them under (the Tommy staff withdrawing and leaving it to the Aussies) and the outcome was that the alleged ringleaders were put under close arrest in the guardhouse. They were

released this morning but whether they will be tried is problematic “Very degrading and typical of larrikin colonials”.

3/1/45

The sequel to the shower episode. The ringleader was fined 14 days pay. He was tried by the Camp Commanding Officer, and also one of the partakers of the shower. I am told that the Aussie Doctors did not hide their feelings for their fellow English officers and Doctors and quite a few remarks were bandied about the mess, also one of the Aussies invited one of the Tommies outside. He did not accept. Once more the Colonial larrikin and the GENTLEMEN. Most of our Medical Officers are specialists at home and most of the Tommies are Regimental Army Doctors, so maybe its just Class Distinction that would not allow him to accept the challenge. Don't feel the best.

4/1/45

Tommy died last night of dysentery. There were three deaths at Changi last week. Still off my food and feeling pretty bad.

5/1/45 to 7/1/45

Too sick.

8/1/45

Feeling a little better. Air raid today, or at least our planes were over and heard many explosions. TB cases have been shifted from the hospital. This has been a source of agitation for some time as the atmosphere here is very damp. No doubt due to the rubber trees. Another death in Changi the day before yesterday, an Aussie. Still not eating very much. The guards over working parties seem to have been increased judging by those that pass along the road past our ward. Maybe there is a reason.

9/1/45 to 10/1/45

Did not feel like bothering.

11/1/45

Very small air raids yesterday and the day before. But today they (us) turned it on properly and were over here for an hour or more, there were quite a few planes and I think (judging from the columns of smoke) they did a lot of damage. One of our planes was hit by AA fire which blew off its wing. It then caught fire and blew up. I think a few parachutes dropped from it, one being on fire, poor soul. Two Japanese planes appeared to be shot down. It was very exciting. I don't know whether it was the excitement or not but later I had five blackouts within two hours, only for seconds but a nasty sensation. Have not told the Doctor yet. Don't feel too bad just now, in fact I am beginning to feel a bit peckish. Changi Exchange Day. Will hear all the gossip tomorrow. Yesterday 5 truck loads of troops from Changi, 100 A.I.F., 100 Tommies, and 100 Dutch, passed here going North. They could not have gone very far as the truck returned about 10 hours later. We judge they would possibly have gone to Kulang. The three chaps (A.I.F.) who were brought in unconscious from a working party are now doing OK but still on the D.I. list.

12/1/45 to 22/1/45

Dysentery, Malaria, Jaundice and my constant companion, Beri Beri. Air Raid Practice this period, but not interested at time. Feeling better, dysentery eased up a little and receiving treatment for Malaria and Beri Beri and Jaundice. Well over the worst of them. A Dutchman alleged to be a Guerrilla was taken back to Singapore Civil Gaol today by the Nips. He was out here with both wrists broken. He received these injuries from the Nips in Sumatra. What his fate will be only the Nips know, but I would not care to be in his boots. Mum's birthday on 20th. I did not forget.

23/1/45 to 24/1/45

Changi news: A Scotty made a break from Changi, he was recaptured in Singapore. The Nips reacted by ordering all personnel who had been temporarily released from Outram Gaol on account of sickness to be returned to that Gaol. What a price for one man's freedom, a living death and a lingering one for some twenty-odd men. Also six Javanese Guerrillas who had also been temporarily released on account of sickness were taken from Changi and rumour has it they were taken down to the beach and shot.

Another story was that an A.I.F. cove broke camp and stole a wireless set and a bottle of whisky from a crashed Jap plane which the body of the pilot was still in and a guard had been posted over it. This chap drank the whisky and got drunk and made his way to the Jap quarters in Selarang where he was apprehended and he was also taken to Outram Gaol.

25/1/45

Malayan Volunteer Officer died at Changi (Major). He was about the 5th Officer to die since Capitulation. When one consider that out of about 2,000 officers only about five have died, it makes one wonder. I think we appreciate the reason.

26/1/45

Air raid warning about 3am this morning but nothing as far as we could see or hear. Anniversary Day. Another air raid warning during the day. One of our planes was sighted. A Nip plane came to grief whilst doing his acrobatic stuff this morning, the wings came off the machine and naturally he crashed. Did not see the pilot leave the plane. Air Raid Practice exercise on today and tonight, funny. Feeling pretty fit again. Had a blood count and Reg 73%, not good but not serious.

27/1/45 to 28/1/45

Back on my food again and can't get enough. Looked like an underfed greyhound. Today I look like an overfed schoolboy, stomach and legs and face puffed up with Beri Beri, skin very tight and shining like a newly scrubbed tomato.

2/2/45

Heavy air raid, about 100 super heavies, did lot of damage, great loss of doors, mostly curtains. This place very hot spot, spent shells and shell fragmentations fell all over the area. Eight dud shells dug up. No one here injured although there were a lot of near misses. Believe the working parties not so lucky, some casualties but few deaths at Changi and one here from sickness.

3/2/45

Recce plane over today, rumour has it that there was also a raid made on a Civil Aerodrome doing considerable damage, expect large raid tomorrow. Feel pretty fit. Beri Beri still worrying me a little but these days Beri Beri to us is negligible. Feeling hungry again.

(No pages missing – just no entries here)

11/2/45

One or more of our planes over every day this week, mostly singly or in twos. One of the mental patients escaped and has not yet been found. Much movement on the road. Feel pretty well again. Rations are to be cut 50% from today, going to be some very empty stomachs, including yours truly. Very good musical concert. Two Malay Volunteers caught selling drugs. Two Tommies in trouble with Nip guard, believe one struck back. They are in the Jap guard house. Going out to work in garden 1 hour per day. Got feed of mushrooms twice during the week, they were delightful. Good feeling in the air. Nearly used up my poetry book for cigarette papers, sacrilege but necessary, paper unobtainable. During air raids I am in charge of the salvage party of our hut which necessitates my staying in the hut instead of going to the slit trenches which is not very comfortable when all the scrap iron is flying about but I have come to the conclusion if a piece has my name on it it will get me anyway, so why worry. Wal Jones (late of "Dainty Dell", Newcastle) came into some money and very kindly presented me with some tobacco. We are pretty good cobbers. He lives at Mark's Point, has a pretty bad spin with dysentery.

18/2/45

No big raids, but one or more planes still come over every day. Escaped mental patient was found near Singapore after four days. He only had a loin cloth on but was in fair condition. Norm Richardson, one of our Regiment, died in Changi, he was a 2 Bonsa, only a young lad. Food very light, continually hungry, eating rubber nuts. Changi party report things just as bad as regards food in Changi, but probably a little better. Picking of mushrooms prohibited, they now put them in the extra stew that the all day gardeners receive, the sick don't need food. In our fourth year as P.O.W.s. When? Big possibility of going back to Changi next Thursday. (Dr.) Major Ferrer, Andy Summersvale (Newcastle), Wal Jones and myself had afternoon coffee together on Sunday. Wal Jones very kindly and ably provided, must have cost him some dollars. Food situation very drastic, lost 8lbs this week. Continually hungry. Sparrows are at a premium and getting very wily. Had no luck myself.

25/2/45

9 stone but feeling pretty well. Got a bad attack of Rigors and then the bug during the week. Still under treatment. 700 Tommies died during this period. Planes still coming over. On Saturday very heavy raid by over 100 supers causing much damage and starting some colossal fires. Changi swap party cancelled last week, big party supposed to go back on the 1st month. I'm one so far. Major (Dr.) Ferrer gave six of his Newcastle chaps afternoon tea today. I did the cooking, Wal Jones not feeling too good; Young Jack Smith, son of Mr Smith, late Wickham Council Works overseer, was one of the party, he is in the same ward as me and a nice young chap. Got a few mushrooms during the week and very acceptable as rations are now extremely light, about 6ozs per day we actually receive plus a

small (very) quantity of vegetables, some dehydrated, water is plentiful and the cooks appreciate the fact, it hides a multitude of sins. They are a robbing, filthy lot; but cooks, provost and sirs can do no wrong.

4/3/45

Rumoured that a Red Cross food ship is in Singapore. Back to Changi. The first day back, Friday, was celebrated with an extra heavy air raid. Had a good view of the planes. Some explosive bullets fell in our area and five casualties (only slight) was the result. One chap, Sergeant Smith, 2/10th Field Regiment, came back from Kurangi with one, he received a large wound in the rump. He was playing chess in our Convalescent Depot, where we are billeted. Kurangi would probably receive more than their share of stuff too, I should imagine. The Gaol looks to be the only safe place. Japanese two engine fighter bomber crashed on the drome here, it burst into flames, the crew were able to get out. Two A.I.F. coves robbed and seriously injured a Tamil, it happened at the Drome. They are of the criminal type and I believe they spent most of the Civil life in Gaol back home. They are to be tried by a civil court. If the Tamil dies I don't give them much chance of coming out of it alive and they certainly deserve all they get, even the worst would be too good for them. Asked that I join the Regiment and tonight permission was granted and I left hospital for the gaol. It is many months since I left there and I feel very pleased with myself.

Monday 5/3/45

Got a job in the I.J.A. gardens. The surroundings are very nice, right on the waterfront. Food much better in the lines, but big cuts in rations are expected.

Tuesday 6/3/45

Trots started again last night and had a very bad night, feel very weak, they troubled me all day. It seems that as soon as I start to do any work this chronic complaint comes on. I think also climbing the four flights of stairs has something to do with it.

Wed 7/3/45

Half day: trots getting worse. Have not seen any of our planes since the last raid. Red Cross ship definitely in harbour and unloading party on job.

Thursday 8/3/45

Tried a day off but still no better. Seems there is very little food stuff on ship, mostly medical supplies for which we are very grateful for (*sic*). The food in only luxury lines and very little of that.

Friday 9/3/45

Big cut in rations, only two meals per day and then only 7ozs dry rice, equal to about 21ozs when cooked, vegetables practically nil. We are not the only ones to suffer as the Korean guards have a cut of 250 grams. Still trotting and going faster and more frequent.

Sat 10/3/45

Tried another job, the road we are building on the drome. Did not do any work, rained most of the day and was back at the goal by 3pm. Was able to resurrect something of mine but found practically useless owing to exposure. Still going very strong, beri beri also making itself felt.

Sun 11/3/45

Very bad night, trying another day off, afraid I will have to report to the Medical Officer if things don't show signs of improving. I do not want to go back into hospital, but it seems that I will have to. Feel too sick to be hungry, but all the other chaps are doing a starve. Still no planes as far as we can see, although the sirens went yesterday. Two Jap planes crashed on the drome yesterday.

Monday 12/3/45

Trots eased considerably, feel much better. Worked on the road, felt starved about midday so another chap and myself collected some roots, pig weed and about a dozen snails and made a stew, it was delicious, especially the snails, which tasted like fowl's giblets. Fair sized raid on this morning, very overcast and could not see too much. Speaking of snails they are now a luxury and much sought after and together with frogs and getting very scarce. Had a pint of what we call sludge for tea, rice and water with a few greens but mostly water, hungry as hell after an hour. Red Cross stuff has not yet arrived, hope the Nips are not as hungry as us or there will not be much chance of us every seeing it. I believe their rations have also received drastic cuts.

Tuesday 13/3/45

Rumoured that a Tommy and an Indian lost their leg in yesterday's raid. Still working on drome road, only caught six snails today and three of us shared them with a soup made of wild passionfruit vine and amaranthus (Prince of Wales Feather) leaves. Was a good feed. We sat for hours, just talking about meals we have had and meals we are going to have.

Wed 14/3/45

Nothing of any importance. Still working on roadway and trots eased considerably. Hungry for over 3 years now but still not used to it.

Thursday 15/3/45

Feel pretty good, enjoyed working today, had a job of interest and no Nips to worry me. The job is supposed to finish as far as we are concerned on Saturday, due, I believe, to the drastic cut in rations. Chinese men, women and children are also working on the job and poor devils look more than half starved. Modesty does not exist as regards call of nature, there is no privacy and the Chinese do not take any notice of us and we don't take any notice of them, it is just part of an existence. No air raid alarms. Jim Callow went into hospital with a fissure, has been causing him considerable trouble, will be operated on tomorrow. No smokes, no money. Coconuts for sale at \$2.40. I can remember back in the dim past when they were only 5 cents and we thought them dear.

Friday 16/3/45

29th Battalion boy buried today. Natives must be hungry, they are combing the fields for any kind of weeds or edible roots. Kiddies from about 5 years upwards amongst them. They all have plenty of Jap money, but nothing to buy with it. The people in the cities must be in a terrible state. Chap (A.I.F.) brought in from Outram Road Gaol last night. He said they are being treated much better and are now being allowed to work on the gardens. He stated there were about 40 American Air Force people there, some only recently shot down. It appears there are also some of our chaps from Borneo who tried to escape, so did actually escape and left behind them a trail of bloodshed hundreds as [of?] natives etc. being executed for helping in their getaway. If they had have known the cost I'm sure they would not have made the attempt. Jim Callow very sore and sorry. Was operated on this afternoon. He had a spinal injection and I can sympathise with him.

Sat 17/3/45

Road job finished. In a way I'm glad but I sure will miss my snails. Terrific rain storm and received a good ducking. Expect Red Cross supplies a week today. Saw a dead Tamil lying on the side of the roadway, appears as if he was just pulled off the road and left there. Soap issue today and about time, have not had any for over three weeks. There is only about one wash in the issue.

Sun 18/3/45

Yasma (Rest) Day, don't like it, too much time to think of food, makes one much more hungry. I have invited Jim Kalberfell, Jim Callow, and Keith Thompson to spend a week at the lake when we get back and that and what we are going to cook is our main topic now and we spend hours kidding ourselves. I have collected about 400 foreign and unusual recipes and we go through them and pick our fancies. Some chaps are paying (100s) as much as 1 Pound Australian for \$1½ Jap from the chaps who have been in the rackets and made money. Even at this ridiculous price money is hard to buy and an oz of tobacco costs 2 Pounds Australian, a cigar 10/-, coconut 1 Pound 10/-. What a spirit of comradeship. The funny part of the whole business is that the chaps who have the money here, never owned a brass farthing in civil life and would be the first to squeal about Jewish interest at home. They get around with cigars stuck in the corner of their mouths like big American financiers and gangsters, the latters they would definitely put to shame. It is quite easy to pick them by their arrogant makeup. The officers of course toady to them and give them a superior outlook and elevate them in their own minds much above the common herd. The day will come when they will have to come back to earth as mere mortals and I have no doubt they will try the same rackets back home, and once more find themselves behind bars. They will not be able to help themselves. Rations now down to 6ozs rice per man, vegetables 5ozs.

Monday 19/3/45: on our Noticeboard and very true:

The Meal Queue Strategists

Have you ever stopped to wonder when you draw your Pap or Stew
Why some jokers keep on jitterbugging in and out the queue?
Is it courtesy that prompts these guys to push you in their place –
Do they want to see you draw your grub because they like your face?
If you're hugging that delusion you can disabuse your mind,
For the meal queue stratagarians are too cunning to be kind.
And their idea is not, I fear, to help you draw your grub,
But to wait until the Pap or Stew that's ladled from the tub

Is just the right consistency, flavoured to their taste –
They seem to think the orderlies have all day long to waste:
And they'll hang around the servicing point for half an hour or more
Till their analytic system let's 'em know its time to draw
For you'll never hurt their feelings and you'll never pierce their skin
As they sit and yap till the stew or pap is drawn from the "Better" bin.

[Jules – there is a drawing of Jack's just after this poem]

Worked on the garden, puffed up like a poisoned pup with Beri Beri. Short rations are starting to show results, eight men collapsed at work and forty Dutchmen were unable to work. There are one-armed and one-legged chaps working on the garden which I think is a rotten shame, especially as there are about 2,000 officers doing nothing and receiving their share of the produce. I just heard that some, only some, do work in a portion of the garden, but when they like.

Tuesday 20/3/45

Jim Kalberfell and I made a stew for dinner, pigweed and snails with a few frog legs ... (*unreadable*) ... the berries. Snails, frogs are at a premium and very hard to find. Too many would-be Frenchmen about. Beri Beri down considerably and trots finished, feel pretty good but like everybody very weary, find it very hard to keep working, shovel about three shovelfuls and want to sit down and have a spell then don't feel like starting again. We work right on the water and at low tide we see hundreds of natives combing the beaches and raking the mud for anything that is alive or can be eaten, they look a poor wretched lot (I suppose we do too) and even the smallest child has to more or less grub for their existence, although the children look much more robust and healthy than the older people. No doubt the older folks are feeding their children first and find very little for themselves.

Wed 21/3/45

Allowed to send letter card. More men collapsed at work and had to be brought home. Able to scrounge a few mushrooms. One of our Regiment, Heck Fryer, received 28 days in cells and 28 days restrictions for pinching a cucumber off the Nip Ration truck. Have a piece of rosin, if I can get some oil I will try and make some bird lime. Have not seen or heard of our planes the last few days. Boots gone, now using Changi-made sandals. These are made from crude rubber sheets and get very slippery when wet. Bugs still bad, the gaol is lousy with them, they will have to put the whole place down to rid the place of them.

Thursday 22/3/45

Rumoured, and I'm afraid more than a rumour, to the effect that 3,200 Other Ranks and 1% officers are to go on a working party at the end of the month. Dutchmen (including Eurasians) are cracking up pretty fast on the present rations, don't seem to possess any stamina and just can't take it. I think we, the A.I.F., seem to be able to stand much more than the other armies here are, and therefore receiving more than our fair share of the work. Of course the up-country parties also proved it beyond doubt. One lone recce plane over this morning. Believe Wally Jones has gone into the cigarette trade at Karangi and doing pretty well, don't know where he is getting the paper. Tobacco is procurable there most of the time, but here only about once per month and then limited to 1oz per person. Wal sent me a little tobacco for which I am extremely grateful.

Friday 23/3/45

Gave Keith Thompson and Bruce Abbott their first taste of snail, they are now confirmed snail eaters if procurable. Getting more wearier every day, takes me, also most of the others, all our time to climb the stairs to our quarters. If we are to go on the working party, I hope there are no stairs where we go to. I always wanted a stairway in my home if I built one, I'm afraid I will be browned off them by the time I've finished here. In fact I am now. We make salt out of sea water and the garden and it is very acceptable, moreso if we had more to put it with. What now for some of the meals I have forced myself to try and eat after a night out back home. I often visualize some of them and they are vivid.

Sat 24/3/45

Five deaths at Karangi this month. Drome party making soup out of seaweed. Captain Burnett (Test Cricketer) received a bash from a Nip guard last night. The guard went up a bit and slapped the face of Major Deck [?] (Medical Officer A.I.F) for supposedly having a sneering look on his face. I saw him this morning and the marks were still plainly visible on his face. Rained like hell this afternoon, received a thorough soaking, still feel cold, blood must be very thin. Rumour that a further reduction in rations shortly. God.

Sunday 25/3/45

Very heavy rain last night and this morning. Too wet to work. Rumoured another food ship has arrived in harbour. Have not had any results from the previous one yet. Possibly waiting until anticipated working parties have settled down to their respective destinations. Believe they go to five different camps, each camp to hold 1,000 personnel. At least I am sure that at least one boat has arrived as I have myself seen numerous Japs wearing brand new Army light heavy boots, definitely not Japanese issue.

Monday 26/43/45

Saw what I would say is the smallest bird in Malaya, it is the size of my first thumb joint and its call is what one would expect from a bird around the size of a crow. Its plumage was very drab on the breast, but its back and wings were of a vivid scarlet and green. I found its nest which was built between an ordinary size leaf which had been doubled over. The nest contained 4 eggs about the size of $\frac{3}{4}$ of my little finger nail. Outside the humming bird I would imagine it to be one of the tiniest birds in the world. This species must be very scarce as it is the first of its kind I have seen.

Tuesday 27/3/45

Feel exceptionally tired tonight, with 24 others pulled a trailer weighing about 3 tons and carrying another 2 tons wood 12 miles. Where we picked up the wood were some magnificent Kapok trees easily the biggest I have seen in Malaya. They have wonderful foliage and the Kapok fruit bursting was a wonderful glorious sight. The natives look horribly poor, undernourished and drab, all the gorgeous colours of pre-war are missing and throws a gloomy atmosphere around the place. Quite a few dromies (drome workers) have been violently ill from eating seaweed. The stuff is not poisonous but their stomachs are unable to take it. Feel the best I have felt for many a day. Lone Recce plane over this morning. It looked like a silver cross floating on a blue sea. It was a glorious day, hardly a cloud in the sky and visibility must have been perfect for him.

Wed 28/3/45

Acted the horse for another 12 miles, feel pretty fit but hungry. The first working party left 500 strong. Nip bashed and kicked dromie. Saw lone recce plane. Thirty of our Regiment standing by to go on party, up to present I am not on list. Taken over Quartermaster for Company, don't fancy it much, would rather be outside working.

Thursday 29/3/45

Real fireworks last night, our planes swooping from seeming nowhere and the air looked like cracker night. Very lousy day on the Q. job, flat out until 11pm. Working party still standing by but on 24 hours notice. Bought some Blatchan (pay day), this stuff is made of fish offal that has been buried for 2 years. The odour from it, pre-war days, would have turned even the hardest of our stomachs, but now, well, we could eat – anything and like little Oliver, ask for more. Rations lighter than usual, dreaming of food.

Good Friday 30/3/45

Another night raid last night, big fires around Singapore. Gruel for breakfast, had to be watered (more) to go around. Tobacco in canteen \$2.50 ounce. Believe that portion Red Cross supplies have arrived here – maybe we might get a meal for Eastertide.

31/3/45

Party still standing by, they made a move as far as the road, searched by Nips but later returned. So far no improvement as far as holiday food. Very busy for me both yesterday and today, never off my feet and Beri Beri is up like a balloon.

1/4/45

Party both R.A.A. and Signals left this morning after another search, they do not anticipate leaving the Island. Breakfast improved slightly by the insertion of a couple of raisins in pap and a fish cake (very small). Lunch vegetable stew (mostly water) and a salmon rissole (very small). Tea veg stew (good) meat turnover (must have forgotten what meat tastes like: it was mixed with rice filling); salmon rissole (so we were told, we would not have known otherwise); and last but not least, a caramel cup; delightful. I nearly forgot the sweet coffee. These delicacies came from Red Cross rations and worked out at 20 men to a small parcel, originally it was to be 5, but I believe somebody rep. a certain power fancied our taste in civilized foods so it does not look as if we are going to derive much, if any, benefit from the balance of the parcels which have not yet arrived. Much easier day and didn't I need it. Two Tommies caught trying to sell two revolvers to the guards (nice men). No more air activity, fires still burning. Over 400 have arrived from Karangi, including our Commanding Officer and four Other Ranks, looks like general movement all around.

2/4/45 to 4/4/45

Wal Jones in from Karangi, now in dysentery ward at hospital; no raids. Still very busy, continually changing personnel, now 2/15th, 2/10th and A/Art combined. Les Shearer and Grant Gobel are making trousers and I never go short of a smoke thanks to them; they have been exceptionally good to me.

Jim Callow still in hospital. Jim Kalbfell now in charge Tamuri Gardens. More parties standing by. Heard from other parties, doing well and much more rations there. Dave Goodwin late of the concert party which has been abandoned, Nip orders, is now sharing our Keith Thompson's army cell. He is one of our Signal Sergeants, and good cove, excellent sax player. He has rigged up and constructing an ingenious cooker which would come in handy if we only had something to cook, must make some bird lime. Beri Beri still giving me trouble and I wake up frequently during the night with terrific cramps in my legs. Second dysentery inoculation very blunt needle.

5/4/45

Exceptional busy day. Boat going down, struck, apparently, a mine, possibly laid a few nights ago when planes were over. They towed it back, about 7,000 tons. Everybody here showing results from poor rations, all look like starved crows, my bones are very prominent, if something does not happen in the very near future there will be no future for quite a lot. Few more deaths at Karangi, two chaps who were in the same ward as me. Wal Jones blames orderlies for their neglect, also I am inclined to agree with him from my observations back there. Although one was known to be dying, he was left to die without anyone watching him and he was in horrible pain.

6/4/45

Three loads of Red Cross parcels arrived and I believe cigarettes are amongst the good things. Undoubtedly this stuff helps a little, but there is no quantity and no bulky stuff. All delicacies, as one would pack a parcel which they really are meant for individuals to supplement their food, and naturally not much good to hungry men. In fact the contents only serve to work the gastric juices overtime and aggravate the appetite; still it's something. I believe about 1,200 parcels all told between about 20,000 or more men. No clothes have yet arrived and believe me we are no Beau Brummels, a big percent (excluding officers) are wearing anything we can make up, but naturally there are some weird and original pieces. Footwear is being made up into sandals from crude rubber, but not all have been fortunate to receive them, nevertheless they do not last, doing only a matter of a few days when being worn to work. Still they are quite easily repaired. Looks very much like us shifting our quarters to another portion of the gaol. Its a b _____ this shifting about and also means much more work for me.

7/4/45

Bit of trouble on P. Party, one of the new chaps on the party stole some tapioca root. He would not own up so all P. Party had to stand holding up an ammunition box for ½ hour, eventually they gave the chap up after a few had received beltings. He got a belting from the Nips and deserved one from the boys, and they did not arrive back from work until 10pm. It also cost them a few privileges. Parties about to leave here indefinitely postponed. Supposed to be cigarette issue (Red Cross) today. 5 per man. The Nips stopped the issue.

8/4/45

Murray Smith, Sergeant 2/10, died last night. He was hit by a piece of our ... (*unreadable*) ... shell a week or so back. Hold myself a little responsible. Another chap from 20th Battalion also died. Red

Cross food mixed with our ordinary issue for today, but very little and hardly noticeable as far as taste.

Sunday 9/4/45

Last night I made a decision and a contract which I expect to be of major importance in my future. I shook hands on a partnership with a man whom I have seriously studied for many months and I feel and am sure that the partnership will be both friendly and lucrative. The man is Wal Jones of Newcastle, a man whom I now consider as one of my greatest friends. This decision was not arrived at hurriedly but after months of thought, deliberation and assessment, and I am sure the venture is going to be a very successful one. I will probably find difficulty in producing my portion of the Capital but will if it means the nose to the grindstone for a while. It will be more than worth it. I did this without discussing the matter with my wife who will also feel the possible hardship regarding the results. She will have to trust to my judgment as I have already honorably committed myself. Now that we have honorably bound ourselves there is a lot of work to do and problems to consider and we hope to get down to business as quickly as possible. Wal has already outlined the scheme, gone thoroughly into the spadework (this he had been doing for the last 3 years, so much thought and work has been already put into the venture). His knowledge of this class of business is very extensive and he knows every angle of the game. He is definitely confident and I have the greatest faith in his ability and fully appreciate the work, time and thought which he has given, also his worth. "KISMET".

10/4/45 to 12/4/45

Plenty of work and moving about. Now in new quarters with a new move staring us in the face within a few days. Another work party has been formed. Had about 1oz cheese, and 1oz meat, 1oz butter, out of the Red Cross in last week. New quarters under stairs and much noise and very little sleep. Nothing of importance, only there are going to be some very wealthy men after the show and I think at the cost of many lives and wrecked men.

13/4 to 15/4/45

Nothing around the place seems to be static. Everything and everyone seems to be moving about but not getting anywhere. One minute the Nips take the Red Cross stuff from us, the next minute they say it's a mistake, give it to us back, but won't let us use it. They want the Camp Commander to sign for over 700 tons not received, actually the whole business is a farce. They have not yet issued us with medical supplies, and they fully appreciate the urgent need for them, the whole show is just one big Nip Racket. Working parties moving out and working parties moving back; the party which arrived back yesterday have been away for about 9 months, they seem as if they did alright as they are easily picked out from the rest of the crowd here, they look like prime beef (or cooks), amongst a herd of very poor stores cattle. A suspected case of Cholera came in last night. The Medical Officer looks very worried – an epidemic of that would be the end. Tobacco situation bad, together with very hungry, has made us all cranky.

(These next pages written in History book)

Monday 16/4/45

Pulled out at midnight for Check Parade and kept on parade about an hour. Believe it was thought by our hosts that one of the P.O.W.s had made a break. The 2IC (Second in Command) of the camp, a Scotch Major, was cleaned up by one of the Korean Guards. It appears that one of the A.I.F. and this guard became great friends and used to meet each night. This Major saw them, had the A.I.F. cove arrested and put in the cells for 14 days for consorting. When his term expired he told the Korean where he had been and the Korean gave the officer a beating and told him why. Had a little Red Cross ration today but as previous too little to appreciate and practically know it, no commodity works out more and usually less than an oz per man and the aggregate would be about 24ozs and then only twice a week, usually Sunday and Wednesday. Today was in lieu of last Sunday.

Tuesday to Wednesday 17/4/45-18/4/45

More changing of quarters and general mucking about. Now jammed like sardines in a tin. 250 in one hall with 2 feet between each man. Received some shaving cream out of the Red Cross packets, each man received some article. There was tooth powder, tooth brush, pencil, safety razor, razor blade, roll sanitary paper (no good for a cigarette paper) boot polish and shaving cream. We drew for the choice, naturally the sanitary paper went last. Tobacco situation very acute now. Wal Jones and I have gone into partnership with the cigarette making business but we are unable to buy cigars or tobacco to mix with the other concoctions which we have in stock. Also paper is a problem. When we have the supply there is plenty of demand and no trouble to sell as fast as we can make. He is an ingenious cove this Wal and great performer, he certainly gets some ideas and all practical and I am very anxious to get out of this and be able to link up with Wal in our contemplated venture. Wal collected a dose of malaria today and is still pretty sick with his amoebic dysentery.

Thursday 19/4/45

Red Cross food tonight, but not enough to mention though. It is ridiculous how one goes into raptures over a mouthful, and only a modest mouthful of what would be considered in our ordinary lives just trash, such as half cooked dough which we consider now the greatest of luxuries. Another Check Parade at 11pm last night, kept us about 3 hours whilst they searched for a missing man. He was not located but his towel was found near a bore hole and that was the only article of clothing he was wearing when last seen.

Friday 20/4/45

The missing man has now been located. He was found with his body head first in a bore hole and it seems as if it was a case of suicide. I believe he was not normal when last seen and there is very little doubt about it. His death must have been a horrible one. I saw them recover the body and it was not a nice sight and under ordinary life would have affected me very much in the stomach. Now, well it was just another death in a horrible way. These bore holes are used by us as lavatories and are about 18" in diameter and about 30 to 40 feet deep. The chap, a young chap around 26, and a nice lad. I knew him in the hospital. He came from Queensland and belongs to 16th Battalion. He once told me that he wore boots for the first time in his life when he joined the Army and had never left where he

was born until that time. The first time he had leave from the Army he took off his boots and walked some 20-odd miles to where he lived. Jap holiday: I believe Hitler's birthday.

Saturday 21/4/45

What a day! The air is full of beautiful aromas shrieking of civilization – Virginian cigarettes. I'm smoking one with delirium as I write. Five cigarettes per man were issued "Old Gold" just as mellow. There is no trouble to sell them for \$2 each but I prefer to smoke mine. It is a memorial day – cigarettes first then a wireless message from Mae dated 22/2/45. My mind is much more at ease especially as I know that all is well at home and that Dad is OK. I have been very worried about him since I received the last message in October 44, he was then not the best and I despaired of ever receiving any more news. Wal Jones is very sick, suffering badly from amoebic dysentery which has enlarged his liver and is a very dangerous complaint. On top of this today he contracted a very bad dose of fever. Another load of 750 Red Cross parcels arrived, admittedly not much amongst 8,000 Other Ranks and 1,300 Officers. Tomorrow, 1,000 men have been detailed to dig a trench 6'x8' around our area, for what reason only our hosts know. I don't know whether it is to keep us in or somebody else out. It is to be wired on the outside. I have not heard anything about filling it with water and making a moat of it. I'm sure it would look much more picturesque and could also be used for the Officer's ducks. The Other Ranks have their bugs for pets and should be satisfied.

Sunday 22/4/45

Once more our generous hosts forcibly show their policy regarding sick men unable to do hard work. It is very evident by the good rations being received by the working parties that recently left here and by the poor rations being meted out to the sick and ailing who were left behind. The working parties are receiving at least 4 times the quantity of a sick man and naturally when they become sick they have very little chance of becoming near well again, a most shortsighted policy on the Nips part which will naturally lead to, at some point, no-one unless officer, cook or Provo, being able to carry on. This law of the rich and the poor is very evident here and I'm afraid the alleged democracy we were supposed to be fighting for does not have a semblance of existence since I have been in the Army or a P.O.W. It's just so much _____ and will never again wash with me and every other Other Rank. This feeling is not one of jealousy but pure unadulterous contempt. 4ozs Red Cross stuff per man today.

Monday 23/4/45

Food poisoning is rife. Everywhere there are coves vomiting and the opposite, some looking very sick. I have a slight colic pain and the trots but not bad. Wal Jones had a bad day again today. Jim Callow back in hospital with the bug. Malaria both MJ and BJ is running through the camp like wild fire. It is believed that the mosquito (anopheles) has a breeding ground in an old fish pond about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the gaol and as this pond is a forbidden area we are not allowed to neutralise it and the Japs are certainly not doing anything about it, although repeated requests have been made to them. Grant Gobel and Les Shearer (the Glamour spuds) went to Singapore with others for entertainment purposes for the Nips. They were taken to the Botanical Gardens where they sang "Roll out the Barrell" all

day, never altering the song. They estimated they sang this song easily 1,000 times. Motion pictures were taken of them.

Tuesday 24/4/45

There is no jubilation, celebration or holiday today. Evidently our hosts did not realise that 41 years ago I was born and if I had not been they would be one P.O.W. less they could skite about. Evidently if they do know, they cannot consider me as important as Adolf Hitler – they gave a holiday on his birthday and I am very hurt and might refuse to eat my rice: like hell!! If I was home today this is the dinner I would like to sit down to: Firstly a few to clear the throat. Then tomato cream soup, Mae's special baked oysters, then her special hash, followed by roast lamb with all trimmings, especially Mrs Champ's wonderful baked spuds (I dream of these) and not forgetting the mint sauce. For sweets a large slice, or better, a whole apple tart that mum makes, smothered in cream. Then a chocolate ice cream, nuts: salty for the purpose, then to the old chair, quaffing Champion's famous concoctions with perhaps a few of Mrs C ___'s special prawn sandwiches. Wasn't it grand, or where those days just pipe dreams back in the dim ages of the past? I hope Rod's birthday is a much happier one, he is just coming in as I am fading out and I pray this waste of life time, art and civilization does not go on long enough to get him in its unsated hunger. Thank God Julian is the age he is and I am not sorry that he is late in my life which will give him at least a few more years and in the meantime humanity and civilization and common sense might turn and swallow greed, hate and power and make a world fit for him to reach his manhood, make his mark (if he wants to), and then live a normal and natural life that should be man's heritage. I think I must be going a bit "Geelah", too much real food, about 4ozs on Sunday.

Wednesday 25/4/45

Cause of food poisoning has been traced to a type of root vegetables supplied for rations which at a certain stage of growth has a very high poisonous content. This was once when our hosts become generous and shared they also suffered. Malaria (mostly primary cases) and diarrhoea is sweeping through the camp and reaching alarming proportions. My chronic beri-beri and dysentery is also on the move again, but I'm doing my utmost to keep out of the hospital. It struck me very forcibly yesterday when I was visiting Jim Callow and Wal Jones under what appalling conditions all these people in hospital live under. To us it is just the conditions we have adapted ourselves to, but if someone were to walk in from the outside world and see hundreds of men, some very sick, with all types of diseases and sicknesses, just lying on boards, packed together like sardines, with any type of covering from blankets to old corn bags over them, and then watch the difficulties the Medical Officers work under, the lack of sanitation, hygiene and sterilization, the poorness of quantity and quality of food, utterly useless most of it as patients' foods, they would be horrified and it would be classed with the major atrocities of the war. As I say, we don't realise these things unless the thing strikes us and we give it a thought. When one starts to think deeply and analyse our existence only then do we fully appreciate what man can become used to and take for granted. The human body can adapt itself to unbelievable conditions and hardships, if taken gradually, and it is just as well or there would be very few of us left to tell the tale and only the officers, cooks and provost would be here to see the finish.

Job has eased down considerably, and developed into a real bludge. Wal Jones was much better yesterday and we had a good couple of hours drafting out a contemplated trip which, with our wives, we would make after this show is over and before we gird on our harness and made the assured fortune. The trip could have a two fold purpose of pleasure and business. These plans are, of course, subject to our wives' approval. Am I looking forward to those days.

Thursday 26/4/45

Wal Jones had bad day again. Some mail has arrived, have great hopes of being one of the lucky ones and am looking forward to a photo. The letters with the 25 words are naturally acceptable and longed for, but they are very disappointing. I would give anything for a good long one with all the news of home and family. Would very much like to receive photos of everybody, especially Mae, Julian, Mum and Dad. Eight living skeletons arrived here from Outram Road Jail. God those poor souls in there must be praying and hoping for their early release from what must be hell, or a living death. No one seems to know just how many of our people are there but there must be, or was, a considerable number. No doubt quite a lot have died who we don't know about. So far I have refrained from buying money from the sharks, thanks to Wal Jones, but it looks as if I will have to if he does not improve and even then he will require some building up and I owe it to him. The exorbitant cost of money for which you can buy very little, is \$2 for the Pound, and I would say at present buying value the \$ would be worth about 1½d or 2d. What a spirit of comradeship these low filthy shylocks show. It's amazing for they consist of the type that would not give a penny in civil life, of course a ... (*unreadable*) ... both house and home but here it is profitable.

Friday 27/4/45

Wal Jones much improved. Issue of Red Cross boots, 6 pairs between 86 of our chaps. The American boots are excellent, the other, Brazilian, nice and light, but do not look as if they will stand up to much work. Five more Virginian (Old Gold) cigarettes – smoked the lot and day-dreamed of home. We now smoke the stalks of tobacco leaf, after the leaf has been stripped from them they require quite an amount of hard work flattening and cutting them and have very little taste – but a smoke. Rice full of gravel and playing hell with our teeth, mine are crumbling and big pieces coming out of them, worst luck the front ones, and nothing can be done about them. Looks like I will have to lose them, so will probably arrive home with a graveyard smile, if I can get my face muscles to function as a smile again.

Saturday 28/4/45

Pay day, the first full pay I have drawn for over 12 months. Even then it is only enough to buy 3 coconuts (a month's pay) if there were any coconuts to buy. Some of the chaps, the capitalists, were able to buy Ver Hitchin onions, at \$1.50 ounce, that is 15/- per rate of change for the \$ from the shylocks. Imagine ½ cup of onions costing 3 Pounds. That is what it means and a coconut 1 Pound 10/-. Now and then we are able to buy blatchan, it's a kind of paste made from offal and buried for 3 years. More pieces breaking out of my teeth. Very annoying and a horrible feeling. Dysentery or diarrhoea stopped again but beri-beri still much in evidence, also a kind of Barcoo Rot is breaking out where there is any kind of sore or scratch, it forms like an ulcer and becomes quite painful. Jap plane

caught fire overhead this afternoon; he was able to land but was well alight. Don't know whether the occupants escaped untouched. I'm certain they would be pretty warm. Few Red Cross clothes today, not enough for 2½% of us.

Sunday 29/4/45

Received a pair of 4th hand ... (*unreadable*) ... time as I am at present suffering with a cold and running nose. ½ pint coffee for tea. Chap from 18th Battalion buried yesterday; he was drowned at Blackang Matu and how is apparently a bit of a mystery. Patient in the hospital also tried to drown himself in a dam used for Reserve water supply. Quite a time since we heard from our Air Force. Yesterday two Fortresses showed themselves, I think it was only a recce; have not heard of any bombings although it is rumoured that a raid was made on Singapore one night last week. Towgay on sale at Canteen \$40 a lb: Soya Sauce \$9 lb. Even at these prices they are snapped up by the Officers and the wealthy. Some of these chaps with the money will pay up to \$20 for a coconut, rackets certainly do pay. It's going to be very interesting the reaction of these chaps who mostly will go back to breadline (as before they joined the army) when they return to Civil life. They are getting it much too easy now but I'm afraid the law back home won't view their efforts in the same manner as here.

Monday 30/4/45

End of another month in another year. Wal Jones very much improved and we are once again able to discuss our business props and arrange our programme. He definitely has everything at his fingertips and has arranged his dope in such a manner that we could practically go on with the arrangement the moment of our return. The more I see this dope and hear analysis the more I am anxious to avail myself of what I consider a lifetime opportunity. I know I can fit in with the job required of me and I have not even the least of doubts as regards his ability. I realise it is a hell of a big step I am contemplating and naturally there must be some kind of risk but I am prepared to (if everything is OK back home) leave the Board and make the venture. As I have mentioned before I have considered the step from all angles and fully appreciate what I am doing. Maybe there are some unforeseen circumstances that may prevent my doing so but I sincerely hope not as I have set my heart on this opportunity. Jim Callow out of hospital but looks a bit seedy. The fevers now seem to strike harder than previously, no doubt due to the lack of energy and the condition that most of us are now in. I myself am not much over the 8 stone mark and look very scraggy and haggard. I admire gentlemanly virtues but they also can become very boring and irritating and poor Keith Thomspson cannot help being everything a gentleman should be, therefore at times very trying and irritating, which proves that one can become very tired of the best of things and I have come to the conclusion that a wife must become very bored and tired of an over virtuous husband. Funny thought at a funny time.

Received a letter dated July 1944 from Mum. Dad was still sick and I'm pleased I received the cable of a later date, which has eased my mind considerably. I still feel worried regarding him, but I know at least he was still OK in February, and that only two months back.

Tuesday 1/5/45

Rained like blazes all day, everyone out working came home soaked so expect quite a bit of fever and flu from the results. Influx of \$100 bills in the camp, where they are coming from only the people

who have them know; I believe about five times the amount paid as wages to the P.O.W.s for the month was spent at the Canteen, no doubt our guardians also wonder how. The proposed VJ Mann Products Pty. Ltd. came in for more discussion and Wal Jones has always something fresh to offer as regards suggestions, etc. He sure gives it some thought between our meetings. I do also, but I have not the knowledge of the particular methods which can be used in this type of business that he has and therefore lack the foresight. Jap Command has warned us to expect another 1,000 very fit men to be billeted with us, who they are or what nationality, no idea was given; evidently from his remarks they have not been P.O.W.s of long duration. No doubt this will also make the food problem more acute so I imagine they will not be fit men for any length of time.

Wednesday 2/5/45

A glorious day for Mae's birthday "May the Next One be a Happier One". I kept a cigar for the occasion and after tea smoked her health. Once more I leave Julian to do my honours, maybe next one I will be able to carry out my duty personally. As I anticipated quite a number are down with the flu, brought about by yesterday's soaking. We feel the cold very badly and I'm afraid our first winter is going to be a trying one, no matter how mild it may seem. Speaking to Colonel Gallagher today, he looks much improved in health from the last time I saw him. He visited Wal Jones who, of course, belongs to his unit. The old fellow has had a very trying time, always at loggerheads with the Nips. They received no change from him, and that is why the Jap Camp Commander cashiered him from Commanding Officer P.O.W. and put another Malay Volunteer, Lieutenant Colonel Newey, in his stead. Regarding this cove there is lot to say for him and against him, but I think he would balance up alright.

Thursday 3 May 1945

I would like to sit down and eat hundreds of cream and jam cakes, that's my night's craving. My cravings vary considerably, every day something different, except the one uppermost and always there for Home and all it means, and believe me, it means plenty. Have not received any more letters. Looks like I might be one of the unlucky ones. Few more deaths around the place. Tom Irvine, one of our boys who left with the last working party, is on the 'Seriously Ill' List. I hope he pulls through. He has a wife and three bonny kids.

Friday 4 May 1945

Issue of 5 more Virginian cigarettes. I don't muck about with them but do the right thing by them with the greatest satisfaction. Can all but taste those cream and jam cakes and all the other things I crave for. Spectacular searchlight display last night, the many clouds creating a good show, that is all that I noticed in their beams. Perak tobacco, 1oz per man \$3.80 came in today, so on the whole smokers had a Red Letter Day. Speaking of letters, seems as if it is going to be my share; still I suppose I'm lucky to even get one, but I would like some more photos. Drew a piece of washing soap in the Red Cross raffle, don't know whether to eat it or place it somewhere I can have a look at it when I feel like it. Or perhaps I will finally steel myself to use it. It is like lingering over the last spoonful of rice. Feet must have shrunk. Wore a pair of 6 today, did wear 8½ boots during my short Army career. First pair of boots I have worn for over 12 months. They were borrowed.

Saturday 5 May 45

The "Maker of Heavenly Trousers", Les Shearer, gave me a present of ½oz of Perak weed. No doubt both he and Grant Gobel have been very good to me and I hope someday in the very near future to return some of the kindnesses they sometimes embarrass me with their generosity.

Able to produce proof of what was causing quite an amount of speculation. The pap for breakfast had a foreign taste: theories were rife until I (being the Quartermaster and last to receive my meal) found the answer in my pap: to wit: not one, but two prune seeds, and after close observation we definitely proved that in the very close past these seeds had been covered by a prune and in all possibilities the actual covering had become mixed in the pap. I myself was sure that the taste did not come from a cockroach, as was suggested by man; as I am in a position of being an authority on their taste having found half a cockroach in my rice last night, the other half I can still taste. A taste possibly one could become used to in case of emergency or extreme hunger. A number of Red Cross books have arrived and have been placed in our library, which by the way is an excellent one. Some of the books are very childish but judging from the pages missing from them had token qualities.

Sunday 6 May 45

Received another letter from Mum dated August 44. I wish she would think to put in a few snaps of everybody. Started our cigarette producing plant, sold out as fast as we could make them. Paper is our main trouble, even yet we may become honest Changi magnates, and rich, but all we need is enough to keep us in smokes with an occasional coconut etc. when available. Had, and still have, one of my terrific headaches. Reading a book on P.O.W. life in Turkey, 1st war. Their life was a picnic compared to ours and one can fully appreciate the difference between Civilization and Semi-Civilization and Barbarism. The book was written by an officer and knowing what I know I have not the slightest doubt that the Other Ranks were nearly as well off. Another very big item is the Comforts they received and the comforts we did not receive. They ate in a day what has to do us for a week, that is bulk, but for quality well the word has lost all meaning as far as we are concerned.

Monday 7 May 45

Visit from a Jap Major General, much running around. Two deaths today. I saw one of the chaps die whilst I was visiting the hospital. He died of dysentery and diphtheria. Had prawns for tea, they mostly consisted of heads and I would compute their leaving their native elements about three weeks ago. We are now all at the stage of eating heads, skin, tails, eyes, in fact anything that becomes mixed with them, even to the maggots. One just does not look and the smell means nothing. It makes me boil and even hate the cooks when I see them rolling about like overfed grossly fat greasy seals, full of arrogance and self importance, whilst everybody else looks like bony scarecrows and hungry dogs. I suppose if we had their opportunities we would be and look the same and it is mostly my jealous hate which is universal. The same thing, I suppose, applies to the Sirs and Provos.

Tuesday 8/5/45

The scene from Dickens "A Tale of Two Cities" was reenacted here today, but instead of red wine flowing in the gutters, it was Gold Red Palm Oil and the crowd milling and fighting did not comprise

women and children but hungry and greedy P.O.W.s. Over 1,000 gallons of oil flowed down the drains when a tank used for its storage collapsed and burst. Many fights ensued and some of the coves were covered from head to feet with truck oil, but they were oblivious to it all. Oil was their goal and oil they were getting, more than the individual could ever use, but that did not matter as long as they could get it themselves and keep others from getting it. Typical of the spirit that has taken hold of the majority. Naturally it is going to have disastrous results to us all as it was our supply for the kitchens and as it is hard to procure at ordinary times it doesn't augur well for the replacement of the loss. Letters received lately have been drastically censored and mutilated, apparently the censors are not going to take any risks on what they cannot clearly define. Heard that vegetables are now being flown from Sumatra so that is another commodity that is becoming scarcer every day for us, the Nips, and definitely the civilian population. I believe money is of no value to these people and that one of our chaps was even offered \$450 for a shirt (a new Red Cross one) and \$500 for a new pair of Red Cross boots.

Keith Thomspen brought back ---- (*unreadable*) dozen snails already cooked with which we supplemented our night's meal, by the way the best meal we have had for some time and near satisfying. It was a real celebration. Another letter from Mum, no date. For a lad that at one time we feared would be a cripple John has certainly shown his prowess in the athletic line. I think he would be a pretty thorough----- (*unreadable*) boy. We all have a lot to be thankful for regarding John's remarkable recovery. He definitely shows a lot of willpower on his part, although it might not have been obvious to us at the time.

Wed 9/4/45

I know it is Mrs Champion's birthday in May, but I can't remember the date, so I will wish her a happy birthday today. I know when the correct day arrives my son and heir will do his dad's and his own duty and give her a big kiss and a hug from us both. I will do it myself I hope very shortly. We both owe her plenty and will be in her debt for life. That also applies to "the Champ" and I will show my appreciation when possible in a much more masculine way, in the good old way. Food today was also a big improvement, once more feel nearly satisfied, admit our bellies can't hold too much and ½ hour after we feel hungry again and go to bed with our prayer (the P.O.W. one) on our lips, to wit "Roll on Pap", and "Der Fag".

Thursday 10/5/45

Big Jap bomber cracked up on the drome yesterday, made a good job of it, don't know how the occupants fared. Another couple of deaths. There is still plenty of us left, especially when I look at our sleeping quarters with about 4" between the sleepers. If there is ever a serious epidemic, God help us. The Japs some time back took objection to a couple of turns put over by the concert party and had the party split up and abandoned. Two of these chaps, Sergeant Frank Wood and Sergeant Jack Geoghegan sleep next to me. They are great coves and good fun and entertainment. They are both cabaret entertainers in civil life. Frank Wood especially is an excellent artist and a very clever chap. He had a very poor education and a pretty hard life as a youngster, notwithstanding that he has taught himself (with the help of others) Latin, French and Italian, and speaks them all very well. He

also has studied medicine since becoming a P.O.W. and is described by the Medical Officers as a brilliant man. If he had had the opportunities in his early life there is no doubt he would have been very successful. Even now he is an outstanding character actor and is at home with heavy stuff and light comedy. In fact, I would say he is the most versatile and outstanding artist in the camp.

Friday 11/5/45

Horrible accident the day before yesterday resulting in one killed, 1 seriously injured and 5 injured. They belonged to an A.I.F. working party who were constructing a tunnel at Johore Baru. The chap killed was from (*unreadable*). One of the boys from 20th Battalion was sentenced by our Camp Commander Lieutenant Dewey to ½ hour saluting a wall for failing to salute him whilst on his rounds of inspection. Usually the chap (Commanding Officer) is anything but military minded. He is a Malay Volunteer and has something to do with the Postal Department in his civil life, but it appears they all like their little bit of kudos. Wal Jones doing extra well now. I have never seen him look better able to start on the cigarette production in a small way. I have been doing the selling, which so far has not been too hard to do, although I have increased the price 50% now 15c each. Lieutenant Colonel Glen White (A.I.F.) the Camp Director of Medical Health is making a special individual classification for every man here, which means English, Dutch, Italian, Yanks and Aussies. I believe they are also on the lookout for possible pellagra cases which I understand is seasonable like most of these diseases.

Saturday 18/5/45

One law for the rich and another for the poor is lately illustrated here. The Other Ranks are not allowed to do any private cooking, no matter what they scrounge or where they scrounge it. The penalty is very bad. Also nothing is sold in our canteen that can be cooked. With the Sirs it is a different matter, they can buy flour, tapioca, tapioca root and other things and it is a penalty to give any to the Other Ranks. As for cooking, they are allowed their private fires and their individual cooking. Today a fatigue of Other Ranks who work on what is known as the StandBy Party (their function being for any emergency job such as carrying rice or stores etc.) were detailed this afternoon to go to the officers' line and chop wood for their private cooking. Some of them were lucky enough to get some veggies, but I consider it a damned imposition and rubbing it in. I don't begrudge any man anything regarding extra food if he can get it but I do think it an injustice to make this demarcation, whether Sirs or Other Ranks they can all get hungry, although I am sure the Chokos cannot be as hungry as the Other Ranks. Once more the air has that "Great to be Alive" aroma and our cigarette issue of five per man is being wafted away in the tropical air. We have to make the most of these five as they are the last of the Red Cross issue. I am sure sorry, as the Yank said, as the issue was something to look forward to, although they only lasted a night. Both Jim Callow and Wal Jones have the bug again. It is only about 2 weeks since they had their last dose. Nine lorry loads of vegetables arrived in last night (late), the most that has ever arrived in one lump. There must be catch somewhere and I have no doubt some of it will be transferred to some other quarter before it hits our kitchen. Malaria still rife, four of our boys went to hospital with it yesterday. To us now it is no worse, or not even as bad, as a cold. In the last fortnight my hacking cough has come back on me

with a vengeance. I had thought I had thrown it for good and have not had it since the first couple of months In Malaya, many, many ages ago, or so it seems.

Ninety days cells without trial. That was the sentence passed by Colonel Dewey on one of the A.I.F. Signals for being caught in the gardens trying to flog (sell) tago tubes and Red Cross soap. In fact, the sentence was waiting for him before he arrived back at the Camp area, smart work, but certainly not British justice. Not that I am in agreement with the selling of clothes etc. The clothes are mostly officers' stuff (and that's not being vindictive). Horrible sensation, made me feel quite squeamish, last night. I have a sore on my head which every morning I find bleeding and thought I must pick at it during the night. Last night I solved the matter. I woke up feeling the sore being picked, put my hand on my head and found two or three cockroaches having a feed. It gave me a fright for a start and then a feeling of repulsiveness. The place is teeming with the loathsome pests and they find their way into anything that is not tightly covered. When I take my shirt out and shake it there are always at least a couple of them in it, that applies to everybody.

Sunday 13 May 45

Mother's Day. Good Luck. Good Health and I hope this year will make it up for all the unhappiness and heartbreaks that most mothers have gone through in the last few years. All mothers now deserve a peaceful and contented life and if there is such a thing as equity they should have it for the rest of their lives. I hope to be able to play my part and help make this possible in the very near future, fate willing. Mae has had her share as a wife. God spare her the anxiety of a soldier's mother. A Father also has these anxieties etc. but he also feels a certain amount of glory in having a son do his share, at least I think that would be my feelings, which I sincerely hope and pray will never be brought to the test and that this unnecessary slaughter and greed of power and money has overstepped itself and wiped from the world [war?] as part of human nature's makeup and existence, surely every human being must now see the utter uselessness and futility of it all and crave for a peaceful existence for themselves and the generations to come.

Monday 14/5/45

Food improved slightly, but still much to be desired. Informed that recent parties that left the gaol are doing very well in the food line and all have averaged putting on weight to around 7lbs. Speaking of our Commanding Officer, Colonel Wright, he is very optimistic regarding things in general. He himself looks much better since his return from Karangi. The Sirs are visiting the sick much more frequently these last few days. In fact the sick saw very little of them before, possibly a reason as this is also noticeable amongst other units. Cramps seem to be a chronic complaint of mine, never a night goes past that I don't have at least two attacks and I can always depend on a few during the day. The night being the worst. The complaint is fairly common around the place. I have found a part of Wal Jones' makeup which, unless overlooked, would make him hard to get on with. His criticism always seem to have a breath of personalities. I'm sure it is unconscious but nevertheless one feels there is a certain amount of antagonism creeps into his discussions and a mutual understanding and appreciation is necessary to keep harmony.

Tuesday 15/5/45

A young chap named Wilson has been killed on one of the working parties, another cove in one of the tunnels they are building. Full information has not been received. Seven Chinese were caught stealing drums near the Singapore railway. They were badly beaten up, \$18,000 taken from them, they were then tied up to an iron fence and there they have been for the past three days without food or drink, exposed to the rain and heat and there is not much doubt as to their fate. The day has been a long while coming for the Chinese, perhaps even longer for them than us and that is saying something. I often try to visualize the reaction of these unfortunates when their day does arrive. Tommy Warrant Officer dropped dead in the gaol last night. Rations drop 2ozs as from tomorrow, only 2ozs, sounds very little but to us it is a great deal and makes an appreciable difference (rice).

Wednesday 16/5/45

Trouble again with our hosts and have to label the Ordnance produced and the cause. Result stopping of Red Cross supplies (they only want an excuse for this type of punishment). It is a very marked fact there and I suppose in other Divisions that the personnel of Ordnance consists of a big majority of what we would call at home 'street-corner lairs', usually of a good physical appearance, flash and full of conceit. Their greatest trouble is their hearts are in the wrong place and they pick on this unit to join because there is very little risk under ordinary circumstances, practically nil, plenty of scope for their vanity and lairism without the dangers. This does not stop them from receiving their Returned Soldiers badge. Here they did hear a couple of shells and bombs – I doubt if they saw any, but they still do most of the talking about it and I hate to think of their stories when they get back home. Here we can shut them up pretty quickly, as we all know just where and what they did (mostly, although other things possible) but back home they will be flat out ... (*unreadable*) ... their ... (*unreadable*) ... as cases from shells etc. three or four mile away, naturally these will become yards. Just can't help hating this type that have been more trouble before, during action and after than any fifth columnisation.

Thursday 17/5/45

Just the 17th May and another P.O.W. day.

Friday 18/5/45

After two years and more the drome has been completed and all P.O.W.s ceased work on it today. The native labour is still being kept there for cleaning up etc. We smiled those many moons ago, when they told us we would build a drome which would take the largest bombers possible and take a year to build. To us, a year here as P.O.W.s was a great joke, but that is well over two years ago, the drome is finished and been in use for some time and we are still here awaiting our next job. I don't think we will smile outwardly or inwardly any more. We did that too frequently. First at Bukit Timah shrine, the roadways, in fact all jobs, in our hearts we never expected to be here that long to even benefit from our gardens but our judgment was sadly astray and our gardens gave many crops, although we were sure every time we replanted, that we would never crop the produce. Played the horse this afternoon, helped pull a trailer stacked with logs about 8 miles, my legs finished up like the logs (beri beri) and nearly as heavy to lift at the finish. It was an outing and I enjoyed it and considered the trip

worth the inconvenience of the results. What a blow! Word has just been received that the drome workers will go to work as usual tomorrow. These people are impossible and just a paradox.

Saturday 19/5/45

Dromies say that today the Nips turned on the heat at the drome, one of their worst days, bashings flying everywhere, quite a contrast to the expected Yasmay (holiday) as was expected. An epidemic of recipe collecting seems to be going on. I have the bug also and have already collected over 600 on old bits of paper. They are mostly unusual dishes of different nations, also native dishes. There is no doubt this disease is due to our food consciousness and possibly after our first good feed the collections will be forgotten and scrapped. At the present time the writing and the thoughts of some of these dishes give a great deal of pleasure and no doubt taste. I can taste every dish I write and thereby gain a certain amount of satisfaction. They cannot make me any more hungry than I am, food and home being our paramount thoughts.

Sunday 20/5/45

Some people are never satisfied. Here is Wal Jones – had practically every disease in the Calendar except M.J. malaria, and today when I arrived at the hospital I find him receiving treatment for M.J. As I say, there are some you can't satisfy. There is more M.J. malaria about now than B.J. and some of these cases are very bad, verging on cerebral malaria and believe me that takes some getting over. Even if they do get better they are mentally never the same. Long time since our Air Force has shown itself over here, we sure miss them, they made us feel that we were still remembered. Ten cooks per day are being replaced by the worst conditioned chaps in the Gaol. Of course, the Key Cooks will be kept on, but their off-siders come back to the lines and from there they will graduate to the Drome and such like. They are big enough to take it but will give the Japs the impression that we are being overfed. They are all grossly and filthily fat. Of course that won't last long on ordinary rations and a bit of work.

Monday 21/5/45

Wal Jones doing OK. Smokes scarce. Jim Callow making arrangements to sell the gold out of his false teeth, should get at least \$200. Having a torrid time at night with the Star Boarders of the gaol, the bugs, bees, cockroaches and rats. They are all doing well and multiplying at a terrific rate, their birth rate also increasing rapidly and mortality dropping. God how I will appreciate clean sheets and a bed. Another thing that it is many years since I can remember having and that is a hot meal. Our food is always cold, that mostly applies to the tea (or coloured water, even the colouring is weak). Fourteen days in the cells for eating a piece of tapioca alleged to have been found on the roadway having dropped from the officers' trailer. That is the penalty one of the Other Ranks received today.

Tuesday 22/5/45

Chows have a funny sense of humour and to me an expensive one. When they are paid for working on the drome, i.e. quite a few of them, grin, look at the Nip Paymaster, then show their contempt for the money (they only work for the rice and rations dished out to them) they throw it to the four winds and walk off. Others wait until they go through some village and do the same. Money to them is worthless and they have more than they know what to do with, food and clothes being their

requirements and they cannot be bought. Yet, notwithstanding this, our shylocks still want the 1 Pound Australian for \$2 which means about 4 cigars or 2/3 of a coconut.

Wednesday 23/5/45

We are in the money – Jim Callow received \$375 for the gold out of his teeth, all we want now is something to buy. Little Red Cross food tonight, even less than before, not really worth eating, no benefit only irritating and less of our basic food, rice and greens. I believe on our ration issue at the present time we have enough stored to last us until February 1946 so actually until then we won't starve but it is still a long time to be hungry. One of our planes over this afternoon, alleged to have dropped something, but what? Is very conflicting. Some say incendiary bombs, some say pamphlets, but no one knows for sure. Was not the usual type of plane that comes over. Some very good books came in the last Red Cross, educational, fiction and general. My eyes are bad again and I find it practically impossible to read.

Thursday 24/5/45

Empire Day and Cracker Night, but so far no crackers. Feel disappointed. Had a feeling and a beautiful full moon. Days are very hot and rain scarce. Hospital has reached its peak as far as patients, the greatest number at one time and by the rate the chaps are going down with Malaria (big % of M.J.) it looks as if in a short time the camp will be all hospital and the P.O.W.s all patients. This Island, as far as anti-malarial precautions are concerned, has slipped back over 50 years, and experts consider it will take almost 30 years to eradicate the source. It was free before the show started.

Friday 25/5/45

Nips turned the hate on at the drome yesterday, gave a few of the boys a bashing, nothing serious, just showed their mood. Since Jim Callow received his money there has not been anything to buy, not even a smoke. The more I know of Wal Jones the more admiration I have for him, and his shortcomings, which are considerable, are more than compensated for by his loyalty, guts and straightforwardness, not forgetting his generosity. If he doesn't make a success of his life and name for himself it will only be because of something very drastic and beyond his control, from his methods and balance I predict a very big future for him.

Saturday 26/5/45

A crowd of 550 Dutchmen and Javans arrived here from Palamban (Sumatra). They are a scarecrow lot, very much the worst for wear. Another batch of 1,000 are expected tomorrow, which includes British and A.I.F. The death rate has been averaging 5 per day, 3 Dutchmen and one British. The crowd that arrived today are supposed to be the fittest. I can't imagine what the unfit will look like. At least 50 of these chaps were admitted to the hospital, the balance distributed through the gaol, and when the balance arrive it will be necessary to use hydraulic jack and shoe-horns to fit them in. We are crowded to capacity now, but it is marvellous as to what can be done in this direction: The Nips showed us a thing or two as regards cramming. They could always get 80 in a truck that we would not consider putting 20 in. I admit they have no respect for feelings or comfort and are typical army in as "there it is – do it". Most of the clothes worn by the Dutchmen are made of old bags and many

have no footwear. As regards footwear I'm in the same boat and I'm not Robinson Crusoe in that respect here either; it is not the outside man that worries us but the inside at the present time.

Sunday 27/5/45

Balance of party from Sumatra have not yet arrived. Wal Jones has improved to the extent of being transferred to the Convalescent Depot. A little tobacco on sale at \$10 per ounce and even then practically impossible to procure. Blood evidently in bad condition, every little scratch becomes a festering sore and hard to clear up, a Barcoo Rot more or less. Recce plane over late this afternoon, only had a looksee and cleared out. A little Red Cross rations today, ¼oz meat paste; ¼oz butter (rank but delightful) and ¼oz jam. The jam and butter were put in a rice tart about 2" diameter. The meat paste on rice biscuit about 3". I nearly forgot. We also had a cup of coffee for breakfast and I don't know whether it was my imagination or not but it bordered on being sweet. Am I going to lap up the good things in civilized life when I get out of here?

Monday 28/5/45

Just a long drawn out P.O.W. day. Sleeping very badly at nights and feel worn out. Very easy job; still Quartermaster for the squad, but little to do at present. Will possibly lose the job when the shifting starts again. Eleven hundred mixed P.O.W.s expected here tomorrow. Payday but nothing to spend it on other than ½ pint issue per man at \$1.10 of Palm Oil, horribly tasting of Mobile Oil or kerosene and practically useless for consumption. Still plenty of stuff coming into the Sirs canteen but OUT OF BOUNDS to Other Ranks, what is the thing, cause, name or fable, Democracy? Another chap received 42 days cells and 42 days chasing the bilge after completing his detention and barred from receiving any Red Cross issue for selling his Red Cross issue of shaving soap and shirt. His name is Payne from Ordnance. Another chap named Townsend got 14 days both ways for having his Red Cross comforts on his person whilst going to work, surmised for the purpose of sale.

Tuesday 29/5/45

Balance of Sumatra party has not yet arrived. More titbits of Red Cross food tonight. God it is moreish and tantalising. FOOD FOOD FOOD, the continuous topic, thought and wish. I'm afraid a new race of Gourmands is going to evolve from this P.O.W. business, what otherwise rational man will do for an extra spoonful does not bear thinking of: Blatchan and cigars came into the canteen today, also Gula Malacca. The blatchan ran out at about ½ oz per man @ 90 cents ounce; cigars, 16 per man (about the size of a cigarette) 25 cents each, (both reasonable as prices go). Gula Malacca \$16 per pound, two years ago it was 25 cents. 6400% increase. Takes about ¼lb to sweeten our gruel and of course is only for the Changi Millionaires (Black Marketeers); which naturally encourages same. I nearly forgot. A very poor quality boong tobacco also arrived at \$7.50 packet, little over an ounce, much too rich for the common working herd.

Jim Callow back in hospital with Malaria, he definitely is getting more than his share of the bug. Mind, chaotic. Cannot keep anything in it for more than a few seconds, also cannot think distinctly and find brain and movement does not coordinate. Those complaints are common to most Other Ranks. There are 120 Lieutenant Colonels in this camp; one to every 10 other officers. There are approx. 6,000 Other Ranks, so that makes 1 Sir to every 6 ORs. No doubt at the finish the average

will be altered considerable. Only ORs seem to die, most amazing. Here is a saying: much barred by a certain element, but very much alive amongst another section. It was phrased up North, I believe, and attached to a suitable drawing (confiscated and destroyed) but it will never die and later, I'm sure, will become historical "THEY DIED THAT WE MIGHT LIVE!" How true, only they can truly appreciate.

Wednesday 30/5/45

Over 1,100 Dutch, British, American and Aussies arrived this evening. Many pitiful and sick men amongst them. They have been travelling for 4 days and all looked extremely worn out and weary. A cup of tea was all they received for their meal so I imagine they feel also very hungry. The other 800 are expected tomorrow. The influx of these people means that this camp will be reorganised and more working parties sent from here to different centres, that also applies to unfit group. A reclassification parade was held this morning with this in view. It was a very perfunctory one and if you stated you felt OK, it was taken for granted. I don't know my fate yet. I am not tempting it and will go where I am blown. So far I am available for one of the parties and may possibly move on Friday. The other party moves next week. If I go it will be the splitting of the Jim Callow and Croft combination, which has been of long standing. Also I will be separated from Wal Jones. Nevertheless, I am not, as I said before, tempting fate and trying to alter any arrangements as regards my movements. I have never yet done so and am not going to at this juncture. Sirens blared for a few minutes yesterday. It has been many a day since they played their tune: a couple of planes were sighted, presumably ours, they were very high. They never made themselves felt and just passed on.

Thursday 31/5/45

Julian's birthday, 4 years old and those four years probably the most interesting as far as parents are concerned, and here is his father (and here he has been for the past 3¾ years), missing what is a parent's heritage, many thousand miles away, hoping every birthday that fate will be kind and allow him to be with his boy for his next, and as this one passes it is still his fervent wish and hope. Who knows? At least the day brought some very acceptable news to me: the working parties have been postponed. Another plane over this morning, siren spoke again which is usually an indication that something is being bombed. Here rumour has it that drome on the mainland and only a few miles from here "Kota Tingh" was the target. Yesterday it was claimed that Kuala Lumpur drome received a blasting. Only rumours, but encouraging and naturally readily believed.

Heard news of the chaps from our Regiment are P.O.W.s in Sumatra: apparently they were all alive when last heard of. Hal Richards it seems is still "Putting it over" in his usual manner, some people forget what they want to easily and can convince themselves.

Tommy Doctor buried yesterday, only a young Medical Officer, also, I believe, the first Yank to be buried here. Death still steadily reaps its harvest from the camp and I imagine many more will go now these new parties have arrived. Prospects of a new pair of shorts locally made from trouser bottoms. I need them. Plague of very tiny ants, they crawl all over me at night and make sleep hard to come by. I now mean I share my bed (a blanket spread on two forms) with the permanent

inhabitants, bugs, lice, cockroaches, now along come the casuals (I hope) who I trust are only on a short visit.

Friday 1/6/45

The start of another month and the canteen excelled itself, plenty tobacco (Perak) strong as Black Jack @ \$4.40 ounce. Blatchan much stronger, even the flies have more respect for themselves to even light on it @90 cents oz; curry powder (mostly pepper and nutmeg) at 90 cents oz, Gula Malacca (very little, only what the Sirs did not require) at \$16.60 an ounce. At least Jim Callow's money is buying something (Gula barred). Numbers in hospital increasing rapidly every day, breaking all records. This is due mostly to the new arrivals. Malaria and under-nourishment being the greatest offenders. Thanks to the migrating habits of this peculiar type of ants, they disappeared during the night, although they gave a moving and intimate farewell. Working parties move still left in abeyance, no one is very much heartbroken.

Saturday 2/6/45

An uninteresting day.

Sunday 3/6/45

Stomach soured and doing a fair amount of trotting, don't know what did it, but the thing I'm sure about, that it was not brought about by overloading the stomach. Jim Callow out of hospital. Quinine is that scarce now that the fever treatment is cut down to 5 days. The other necessary drugs like Plasiquin etc., are only used on exceptionally bad cases. The Dutchmen that arrived here last week may possibly be shifted on, where to unknown, still in the Rumour stages. I would much prefer them to go instead of us. They are reputed to have over 200,000 guilders between them which they cannot use here, being Javanese Japanese money. I think the guilder is worth (if any of it is worth the paper it is printed on) more than the Malayan Japanese dollar. Still plenty of tobacco about at a price, also a few dried prawns @ \$28 per lb, actually it is composed of 99% tails, heads and skins.

Monday 4/6/45

Severe attack of trots and violent pains. To give idea of exorbitant prices at Canteen, although there has been very little to purchase with the exception of the Officers' Canteen, the amount which has passed through these canteens during the past 12 months has been well over \$200,000, and over \$100,000 profit. Reports from Johore Baru Working Party very good, plenty of food (six times our quantity), good conditions and plenty fruit, etc. can be brought at reasonable prices.

Tuesday 5/6/45

Trots still keeping me moving. Estimate I have lost over ½ stone in the last couple of days. Am doing my best to keep out of the hospital. Luckily my job keeps me inside and I have the advantage of being able to rest, which is about all the hospital can offer.

Reading autobiography of Ben Franklin, undoubtedly he was an exceptionally self-disciplined strong-willed, good man. Maybe from his point of view he got a lot out of life, but from my point of view he

was too much of an extremist and taskmaster unto himself. I think, with a few alterations if possible, I will still be just plain Jack Croft and keep some of my faults.

Wednesday 6/6/45

Five long ill-afforded years since I was a free citizen and eight of my past life. Five years that I will have to cram back into my remaining (which looking ahead seems very few) years. Not only must I cram back those years with work, but with the pleasures and happiness I owe my wife and son and replay the large debts of kindness etc. my wife and baby have received and which naturally affects me, possibly more than they, to know and be sure of the love, help and kindness they have and are receiving from my pals and comrades. Mrs and Mr Champion; I call them pals and comrades for me those two words are sacred, although they may be prostituted by some people, especially the filthy class who use them for their own advantage. My dear Mum and Dad, well they are Father and Mother in all sense of the words, and therefore my pals and comrades, although at times in the past I never fully appreciated their full worth and gave them many causes for unhappiness and worry and heartbreaks. To them I am in debt to the end of my life and I also know and am sure that the love and kindness that I have always received from them, they would give to Mae and Julian.

Dutch Medical Officer committed suicide today or last night, cut both his wrists and throat, no reason given. A.I.F. chap (Amoebic dysentery patient) also died. Don't hear much of the chaps that die now unless it is an unusual case, or unusual circumstances. The cemetery is quietly filling.

Trots eased somewhat, have broken out in a nervous itch and rash and very uncomfortable. Look as if I have lost about a stone since I started the trots, will find it very hard to pick up. Got them at a bad time. Jim Callow was able to buy some prawns and a coconut. He curried the prawns and mixed the coconut in our rice. It was a marvellous meal, so he and Keith said. I, unfortunately, was too sick to eat mine.

Thursday 7/6/45

Rumours once more regarding large movement of P.O.W.s from here to unknown destination. The 15th of the month is the date mentioned for the first batch to move. This batch is supposed to be made up of Dutchmen to the number of 1,500, then 1,500 mixed British, Australian, etc. Told that the Dutch Medical Officer who committed suicide had lately been struck off as a Medical Officer and was also awaiting trial here and would later (after the war) be tried by a Dutch Tribunal for the crime of trading in very scarce and necessary medical supplies, including very valuable drugs. It was anticipated that the Dutch Tribunal would have passed a sentence of death on him, which in my opinion is a just sentence, and anyone that traffics in this filthy and most heinous of crimes deserves no quarter. Many a P.O.W. have lost their lives due to the criminal selfishness and greed of these inhuman scum, and believe me, there are many of them.

Friday 8/6/45

Latest addition to Sirs' Canteen is whitebait, they sure do themselves well. Yesterday 3,000 lbs of tapioca root went to their canteen, they receive it about 3 times a week, which works out over 2½ lbs per man, per day; more than we receive in three days rations (all included) to exist on. No wonder the

Other Ranks are bitter and full of resentment. They can also purchase, amongst many other things, sago flour, sago chips, maize flower, Gula Malacca, prawns, whitebait, coconuts, blatchan. They all look fit and well. At least they will get them back. Bugs gave me merry hell last night, killed a few thousand this morning and some as large as cockroaches. Although the big ones smell like blazes, it is the very small hungry fellows that do the irritating and most of the biting that causes the itch. Have now developed scabies, not badly. They mean nothing here – common complaint.

Saturday 7/6/45

Bit worried. Passing much mucous and blood, will have to do something about it, feel horribly weak and squeamish. Has its points as I am not hungry. Two deaths reported from working parties in Singapore, and a few deaths here during the last couple of days, mostly dysentery. Nice gesture from the Sirs, they have more tapioca root than they require at the present time and as it is going bad on them, they generously allowed what they do not require to be sold through our canteen, and at the same price as they would buy it. Truly magnanimous. Most of the new Dutch (not British) arrivals are to move out on Monday. They still have their 500,000 Guilders which has not been changed into Malay money, so they will be unable to skin us out of what little there is to buy.

Sunday 10/6/45

A present for our Anniversary. Informed that I would be allowed to answer the wireless message received from my wife last February. A very acceptable present. Five years: five years today. It seems fifty-five years ago and of that five years I have hardly had that many weeks of what should have been the happiest days of my life and what little I did have were certainly beautiful and happy and I have no doubts that when the tremendous day of our reunion arrives (God knows what the reaction will be) the balance of our lives will be just, if not more so, as pleasant, happy and beautiful. I have had plenty of time to think and analyse myself and will endeavour to rectify the faults, which are numerous, that I have found in my makeup and I am sure my appreciation has developed a hundredfold and I hope likewise my consideration. Come quickly that day.

Trying very hard to keep out of hospital, but I'm afraid tomorrow I will have to see a Doctor. I'm slipping back and showing no improvement and I may be doing myself a grave injury which might rebound later on. Some Red Cross food for tea, better than usual. Unluckily I could not eat much of mine, had to give it away. When one is well it is beyond understanding that food holds no attractions when one is sick. Wal Jones collected another bout of fever but not very severe. We still discuss our project and both feel very confident and anxious to get started. Bought home Tapioca, unable to cook it as it is against orders. Got some boiling water, scraped the root and poured boiling water over it, made a gluey mess. I could not eat it. Tried but made me sick.

Monday 11/6/45

Heard many good reports regarding one of the A.I.F. officers (Captain Stahl) who is in charge of a working party in Singapore. This working party is constructing tunnels and numerous accidents have happened resulting in death and serious injury of some of the P.O.W.s, due entirely to the Jap negligence. This Captain, after the last serious accident, flatly refused to allow the P.O.W.s to work on the job unless the supervision was carried out by A.I.F. Engineers, and that work left entirely in

their hands. Great threats were made by the Nips, including the extreme one, lopping his lollie (the Officer's), an expression we use for beheading. The threats were to no avail and this Captain still stood his ground even after suffering many humiliations from our hosts. He was eventually paraded to Jap Headquarters where he again was threatened and suffered more humiliation, but still insisted on his original decision. The Nips eventually acceded to his request and the work is now entirely under A.I.F. Engineers' supervision. Congratulations to this man. I wish there were more of his kind with the same determination and spirit then there would be much more faith in the leadership and human mankind, unluckily his type are very much in the minority.

Tuesday 12/6/45

Wal Jones back in hospital with dysentery and M.T. malaria. Feeling much better myself, have developed a fistula, stool test did not show any signs of dysentery, acute diarrhoea. Very pleased, able to talk the doctor from sending me to hospital, at least so far, have to see him again tomorrow. Nip guards pretty drunk tonight, kicking up quite a row and walking about in pairs carrying big sticks. They are receiving plenty of room to walk about, no one is crowding them. Heard a very interesting lecture "Two Survived", by a Scottie officer who told a harrowing story of being torpedoed, twenty-four of them clung to the boat; one by one they died from thirst, exposure, and hunger, some went mad and just disappeared. After fourteen days only two were left, this chap and a Chinese girl (Secret Service Agent). Her courage and fortitude were magnificent. They were both saved.

Wednesday 13/6/45

Noticed two funerals this morning, one British and one A.I.F. Little Red Cross food tonight, very Kitchic (*sic*) but tasty, a turnover with what at home we would call ham paste inside.

Talking to a R.A.F. Sergeant from Sumatra last night. He absolutely despises the Dutch and I found that hatred and bitterness towards the Dutch is very pronounced with both British and A.I.F. who were in Sumatra and Java. I heard one very eloquent R.A.F. cove slate them, tell them and the world in general what low, cowardly, greedy and contemptible mongrels they were and stated what he personally had seen of their conduct both during the blue and after (to them there was never a war as they never fired a shot). He excepted their Air Force and Navy and spoke just of their Army and civil population. His bed was surrounded by Dutchmen. In fact, the ward consisted of over 80% Dutch, not one of them defended themselves and just took it like curs with their tails between their legs and looking very much guilty of all he told them.

Thursday 14/6/45

Warned that big movement of 9,000 expected any minute. The movement includes all A.I.F., destination unknown, personally I think we will be used for construction of defence positions on the Island. Trots finished and feeling pretty well, still weak and a bit sore with the fistula which with reasonable care should heal. Trying my hand at making a rough freehand drawing of my ideal home. Some of the lads were able to swipe a little sugar whilst they were unloading Nip's rations consisting of oatmeal, sugar, jam, all packed in Australia. Reading the unabridged copy of Swift's "Gulliver's Travels", which includes a "Tale of a Tub" and "The Battle of the Books". As a satirist this man,

Jonathan Swift, I should imagine, or I should say my modest layman's opinion, is outstanding. I have not enjoyed a book more and will definitely buy for my library and read it under better circumstances.

Friday 15/6/45

Sumatra Dutchmen have all moved out and party of A.I.F. standing ready. Rumoured that ship carrying P.O.W.s was sunk with all hands. I think the story originated from a Jap guard. Some of our Regiment were in Sumatra, hope they were not amongst the unfortunates. Many P.O.W.s have already been lost this way. Yesterday some of our boys were able to speak with some of the women and children internees thanks to a Nip guard who conveniently found a fault with the motor and tinkered about with it in front of the Internee's camp. They state they are being treated very well, enough food and clothing and are all in general good health. It is very pleasing to hear this as theirs has been a much harder lot to bear than ours, rearing children under these conditions. Also rumoured that 500 A.I.F. cables have arrived at Jap Headquarters.

Saturday 16/6/45

Indians have been relieved from guard duties and placed, like ourselves, behind wires. Maybe it is a good sign. Vegetables very scarce, stew practically just water. Receiving a percentage of corn in lieu of rice, some people are allergic to corn and cannot eat it, personally could eat, well anything. More Dutchmen to leave tomorrow including the only Dutchman I have made a friend of, Chris (Christoffersen). He is much different from the usual run, having spent quite a time in England and different British possessions, in fact, he deplures being a Dutchmen after their exhibition during and after the show and after the war is going to some British possession and become a naturalised Britisher Australia or Africa being his choice. Four cooks caught stealing rations, received the sack and sentenced to 14 days cells and 14 days restrictions. Not quarter enough.

Sunday 17/6/45

Two hundred from our Company to leave on the 19th. Jim Callow is on the list. So far I am not. Last of the Red Cross food today, we had very little. A comparison of breakfast: we Other Ranks; ½ pint pap, 1 small maize biscuit. Others, ¾ pint pap, 1½ measures of milk, fried veg and whitebait and three rice cakes or dooners. The comparison of tea was about the same, we got two dooners, they five. Had a sulphur wash for my scabies; fistula giving me a little trouble. Four hundred very sick P.O.W.s arrived from Kepple Harbour today, they originally came from Palabam, Sumatra. General weeding out from hospital area into the gaol, hence I think the quick movement to working parties. The very little nice things tonight have sharpened my hunger even (though I did not think possible) to a greater extent than usual.

Monday 18/6/45

Party of 2/26th Battalion left today, another 1000 A.I.F. are to be made ready to move, this party of 1000 smells like a sea trip (not anxious). The names of all P.O.W.s who have had Amoebic Dysentery at any time have been recorded, why? I don't know, but hoping no go. Urging Jim Callow's fever on so he won't have to go on the next draft, but these things never happen when wanted. All these parties who are to leave have been promised extra rations by the Nips. The old, old saying about pie crusts is applicable to their promises usually. North 2 years ago was to be a land of milk and honey, it

turned out disease and death for most and the rest permanent disabilities. Just struggled through my tea tonight, not from being satisfied, but we were issued with about 1¼ oz of blatchan. I put it all in my rice and made myself sick. It was only half-cooked and smelt and tasted putrid and believe me my stomach can stand most things, especially after all my experiences in the dysentery ward, where you continually eat smells with every meal.

Tuesday 19/7/45

Twelve bags of mail have arrived and are being censored by the Nips. I believe quite an amount is Australian. The censorship appears to be much more exact now and therefore takes more time before we receive them. I wonder if I'm going to be one of the lucky, if so I'm looking very much or some photos and will be horribly disappointed if I miss out. No parties left today and no talk of any tomorrow, so far. Jim Callow bought some tap root (2lbs) and we are having it for supper. He has arranged for the cooking which, of course, is illegal. Naturally there is always someone breaking the laws, hence the correction cells are always full to overflowing, and those chasing the bugle, when they line up every ½ hour, dressed in their best, which is laughable. I mean their best looks like a ragamuffin battalion on parade for a comic picture, but nevertheless they spring to it and there's no fooling and the slightest deviation means extra days chasing the bugle and that is considered by the culprits very seriously, even the hardest of them are worn down by the bugle chasing.

Wednesday 20/6/45

Went to bed full and plenty with half-cooked tapioca root. Had the nightmare. Went home, couldn't find Mae. I followed her everywhere but she just managed to elude me. I would catch a glimpse of her but never able to speak. The bugs drove me out into the courtyard to sleep and at about 3am the rain drove me back to the bugs and also ended the nightmare. I hope I can catch up with her tonight and find out what it was all about. Parties postponed for 5 days, maybe ten. Jim Callow (the crony) has malaria and goes into hospital gain. When I hoped he would get it so he would be off the party it did not eventuate, but as soon as the party was postponed, bang, he goes and gets it. In all possibility his treatment will be finished before the party goes and he will be again eligible. Nip guards had a few too many tonight, very jubilant, and some of them are playing a-ring-a-ring-a-rosy. They play so nicely. Reading 'Marco Polo', very interesting and most entertaining and instructional.

Thursday 21/6/45

Well, these people, if I can use that noun, are the most inconsistent, they can even put our Army to shame in this respect, and believe me that's saying something. Late last night the party to go were told they would be going today. This morning this move was cancelled indefinitely. Later they were to move tomorrow morning. Later at night that was cancelled and they are now standing by with no idea when they are going. Jim Callow went to hospital this afternoon, Wal Jones arranged for him to occupy the next bed, I mean, bare boards, to him. Wal got hold of some Tapioca Root, we saved our pap and he made a great supper out of practically nothing, although that nothing cost him \$40, which he had won at cards.

God, how I wish something would happen, and as regards that I'm not on my own. Everybody is completely browned off and I think we are all becoming 'No Hoppers'!

Friday 22/6/45

Mail starting to come in, none for me so far: great hopes. Those that have arrived are dated December 44/January 45, only 6 months old. Party still standing by: no movement order as yet. Grant Gobel and Les Shearer are on the party. Rumoured that Korean guards are to be replaced by Japanese. The Indians were taken from the guard some time back, but are again being used, possibly relieving some of the Koreans until the Nips arrive. No Cho-Kos (officers) are going on the party; Warrant Officers being the senior ranks. We are now smoking the stems of the tobacco leaf. These stems are left after the cigar manufacturer have stripped off the leaf. They take some processing before being used. They have to be soaked, then scraped to thin pieces which are then chopped up and dried. The result is very weak tobacco which burns the mouth and lips. An ounce of this stalk costs us 25 cents and looks like becoming dearer. Using boiled sea water for salt, a fairly good substitute but ... (*unreadable*) ... owing to the quantity necessary to give taste. Still blown up like a poisoned pup with the Beri Beri, especially around the feet, tummy and eyes. The morning I look like a bony nag, by 3 o'clock in the day I'm up like a balloon again. As long as the water is got rid of there is not much danger of any very serious complications. I move in my sleep and don't suffer much inconvenience. This division is full of Crofts from all over Australia, met another one last night from West Australia. That makes about 8 N.S.W., 6 Victoria, 4 Queensland, and 1 W. Australia, that I know of. Think a few have also died or been killed in action. A few cigars came into the canteen at 70 cents, the same size cigars we could buy 2½ years ago for 1 cent. Before the war they were 5 cents for 20. Have still gone this far without borrowing.

Saturday 23/6/45

God, everybody is cranky and long in the tooth, it has to be a very good joke to bring a smile these days; all completely fed up and tempers very short. I think being continually hungry and no satisfying smokes are the main cause, of course our patience has exhausted and the strain is becoming unbearable. X8 party (that is the party that affects us) has been postponed again for 5 days and probably more. Still no mail, does not help my feelings. Both Jim and Wal were very cranky last night, no trouble to raise an argument. Hunger was their main reason together with being horribly fed up. Tapioca Chips (mostly dried skin cut fine and dried) were on sale at the canteen for \$9.60 per lb.

Sunday 24/6/45

Still no mail. Party rumoured to be going tomorrow, no confirmation. Indian P.O.W.s being brought in large numbers from Singapore and quartered behind walls in the gaol. It is said that these Indians put on a bit of a show in Singapore and ran foul of the Nips. Miss the little Red Cross dainties even if they did tantalise the hunger, they or it was something to look forward to. (FOR MEN ONLY) This is a true story. Yesterday, whilst at the bore holds (pits used as lavatories) a Dutchman took up his position in the usual squat manner. They are adapted to this method of squatting which to say the most of looks humorous and embarrassing at any time. A fowl belonging to the hospital was rooting and scratching around this area for grubs (nicely put for maggots) which are in great numbers. The Dutchman had his back to the bird and whether the bird's eyesight was not the best, or whether its ambitions were large, I don't know. Anyhow when within a couple of paces from the Dutchman it

flapped its wings and dived at what apparently to it was something of magnitude in the type of food it was collecting. The Dutchman let out a scream, jumped about 5 feet in the air and came down, half falling in the hole. He got that much of a shock he was the colour of death and could not speak for some time. I imagine the fowl went back to its friends with the old, old story of the one that got away.

The Cho-Kos wanted some wood, so decided to cut down a tree, which they did, a large one. Jap Commander happened along before they had time to trim or lop it. He was very annoyed, gave the officers concerned a good ear bashing, told them that even a Japanese General would not take it upon himself to cut down a tree without permission. He then ordered them to carry the tree holus bolus, branches and all up to the Jap Guard House. It took about 80 officers to do the job. Later the same Commander right-crossed an officer A.I.F. for not standing correctly to attention whilst being addressed by him. I believe he swings a wicked punch with good results. Les Shearer gave me a good wire bed which I kept outside in the courtyard, where I now sleep. Some foul b_____ thieved it last night before I arrived out and once again I am sleeping on the ground.

Monday 25/6/45

Wal Jones bought some Tapioca chips with money he won at poker. Usually they are tasteless things but he concocted a kind of baked pie with bits from usual meal and it was wonderful the difference it made. It was satisfying and delightful. I suppose under ordinary civil life the same concoction would have been followed with heartburn and indigestion for weeks after but here I think our stomachs have shrunk so much and the food so small in quantity (there is no quality) that there is never enough inside us to cause complaints. These last few months time seems to have dragged much slower than previous. Every day now the light seems further away and yet that can't be, but that is the feeling now. A.I.F. funeral went past and I heard it was a chap from 2/30 Battalion. Actually the deaths now are not as many as I expected with the influx of the Sumatra people.

Tuesday 26/6/45

Devoid of interest.

Wednesday 27/6/45

Heard from some of the working parties. Plenty of sick, but doing much better than us as far as quantity of rations, receiving in addition oatmeal, jam and other extras plus more usual rations such as rice and root vegs. Jim Callow back from hospital. There is no doubt the place is getting us down, the three of us, Keith, Jim and myself, just sit and say nothing for hours at a time, all cranky and ready to fly off the handle at the least excuse. Even Jim Kalbfell and I nearly had words today, due only to the tone that has unconsciously crept into our voices and a lot of imagination on one or the other's part. We realised this very quickly and a row was averted; both of us feeling bad about it.

Thursday 28/6/45

Sideboard of the lorry carrying P. Party to work fell open yesterday, spewing the Party all over the roadway. About 20 in all received injuries, only a few were serious, the others were bad but nothing broken.

X8 and X10 parties are on again, these have been warned that the move will be on Saturday. Jim Callow is on X10, so far I am still a stayer and there is no guarantee about Jim's Party going.

Reading a book yesterday and every blank page had a full day's menu written on it, starting from 7.30am Coffee and Toast; Breakfast 9; Morning Tea 11; Lunch 1pm; After Tea 4; Dinner 7; Supper 10.30. Whoever wrote them in was making sure of not being hungry.

Friday 29/6/45

Four more deaths reported from Karangi. Did not know any of them. New Jap Commander has taken over the administration of the Gaol. His start was a bad one and possible an ill-timed one for us. A chap from Ordnance decided he would make a break after having received, as we all have, a warning from our own Command that the repercussions from any attempt to escape would be severe for those left, and therefore appealed to not make the attempt, which in itself would be practically suicide. He went off during the night leaving a note. No mail for the day, maybe it's started. Wal Jones lucky at poker (good player too) and winning a few dollars which would be handy if anything to buy.

Sat 30/6/45

X10 party move out tomorrow. Jim Callow going with them. I will miss him very much, he is a solid type and a real good fellow. Well I can't understand my hunger, must have ravenous worms inside me. Tonight I ate 1½ pints rice, 1 pint stew, 1 pint whitebait and tapioca stew, 2ozs fruit whitebait and a small dourer. About 4 times my usual meal. I ate the lot and still feel hungry. In fact, I think I feel hungrier than usual after having my meal: nevertheless I think if I ate much more I would be ill. Perhaps the hungry feeling is just plain habit (it's sure a nasty one). Smoking a real problem again, two cigars per man yesterday, at \$11.40; week ago they were 40 cents.

Had game of poker this afternoon, my luck is still bad and Wal Jones' deserted him also, we both had a bad day.

A Dutchman has gone stark mad and he screams and cries (like a child) never ceases and can be heard all over the area. It's pitiful and there is nothing they can do about it. Chap that escaped still at large, so far no reprisals unless it's the mail which seems to have stopped.

Sunday 1 July 1945

Well X10 Party moved and have gone into No.2 camp which adjoins the Gaol. It is actually in the same grounds, only wire between the areas. Communication is strictly forbidden, Nothing further of interest.

Monday 2/7/45

Still no mail. Escapee as far as known is still at large. Another day in a different month.

Tuesday 3/7/45

Tomorrow X8 Party definitely move so they were told. Les Shearer went into hospital with Malaria. This means that another combination of long standing will be split. Grant Gobel and Les. Grant is going away on X8. Wal Jones has left hospital and is now domiciled in the Gaol four floors up. He

has my sympathy regarding the stairs and I'm sure they won't do him any good. Miss old Jim Callow. Actually he is about 10 years my junior but I always think of him as Old Jim due to his solidness and caution. After all these parties have gone (rumoured there is another to go) there will be very few A.I.F. left here with the exception of Cho-Kos and I have no doubt all (including all nations) left, hospital excepted, will move into the Gaol.

Wednesday 4/7/45

X8 have left and the Nips expected more men in the party. It took a lot of explaining to stop them taking some P.O.W.s working on the gardens in the vicinity of their Forming Up Place. If they want a certain number it is no trouble for them to just grab anybody in sight. The party is working at Bukit Timah: funny our destination on our first working party for the Japs, I hope it is the last. I'm afraid I, and everybody else, have worn their hope and faith pretty threadbare. I have often heard it said that the tropics spoil one's tastes, being a gradual process over a few years. I am sure this must happen, although we have had little to taste.

Thursday 5/7/45

The new Japanese Camp Commander has already made drastic alterations. He has supplanted the Commander P.O.W.s (Lieutenant Colonel Newey) with Lieutenant Colonel Dillon. This Lieutenant Colonel Dillon is a British Officer and a very capable man. I don't know the feelings of these two men regarding one another but I'm inclined to think it is not the friendliest and perhaps a few things may hit back on Colonel Newey. Personally I did not see eye to eye with his policy in everything but the man must be given credit for his attitude in some respects and did quite an amount of good. He is a slave to his own conviction and is strong enough to abide by them, even under very critical circumstances, and in some instances he took upon himself responsibilities which could have severe repercussions later when we are free men.

Poor old Wal Jones, only out of the hospital two days when, bang, he gets a treble dose of M.T. Malaria. He was taken back to the hospital on a stretcher and is a very sick man, suffering also from hallucinations. I don't know of anyone who has had a rougher spin than Wal and it's only sheer determination that keeps him from throwing in the sponge.

Friday 6/7/45

Wal Jones still very sick but normal in his mind, was afraid he might develop cerebral malaria. Once more we have reorganised our Company and naturally the Quartermasters have been fairly busy, Messing arrangements taking a good deal of worrying out and organising. I don't mind, keeps my mind off other depressing thoughts. Still no mail for me. Keith Thompson received two letters. Heard that the Nip Command are tearing up letters enclosed in envelopes but I don't think it is altogether right as both Keith's letters were enclosed; although the majority of letters coming through are just open cards. Able to purchase 1 cigar per man at \$1.40 each. They are very small and only cut about four cigarettes. Smoking is a problem, stalks being the only tobacco available.

Saturday 7/7/45

Wal Jones much better, lost fair amount of weight, now beginning to feel hungry. Able to sneak him out a bit of food. There's a very rigid law regarding the taking of food between Gaol and Hospital and a heavy sentence if caught, irrespective of what good you are doing with it and who you are taking it to. Of course this is one of our own laws, not the Japanese; to me this is very drastic and I can't see any good in it. Quite a lot of good could be done by allowing chaps to take whatever they can spare or get to their sick cobbles, some requiring more food than can be given them and I think it's one of the major excuses of their being unable to get reasonably well. Have had a bad cold for a few days, also the trots. Cannot shake the cold and feel stiff and sore all over, cough until I vomit every night and seems to affect me more at tea time.

Sunday 8/7/45

A Real Letter Day – 5, four from Mum and one from Mae. Dated Mae 22/1/44 – Mum's 2/9/43, 16/10/43, 2/11/43 and 19/11/43. Very thankful to receive them, but still can't understand why no photos. Pleased Julian likes the lake, will be a good healthy sport for him. Hope he is able to swim when the great day arrives. Yet I don't know; perhaps I would like to teach him, a good way of knowing one another better. It is going to be very strange, especially from his point, our reunion, and I will have to win his confidence, love and respect. This, I imagine, will take careful handling, especially if he is at all sensitive. Candidly I think it can be a very big problem at his age – although I don't think he would be at the age where I might be on a pedestal in his mind. I hope if I am that I can keep my seat.

The ration problem has not improved any, in fact it is gradually falling away. Plain rice and a little green soup being practically all we are receiving. The fish now issued us is negligible, about 4 little whitebait per man, less than 2 ozs per day. Have not heard or seen anything of our air force for many days: apparently nothing here for them? Next Sunday is the 15th Month, Sunday the 15th has always played a prominent part in our Regiment's destiny, also to some extent the 8th Division. Wal Jones very much improved, sitting up very hungry (hospital fare even worse than ours). He must have a big heart or a super constitution to stand up to the bad spin that he has had, many a man has gone through with less. We are still going our planning and the prospects look better every discussion we have.

Monday 9/7/45

MEAT!! MEAT!! MEAT!! of ... (*unreadable*) ... kind CIVILISED VEGETABLES!! APPLE PIE WITH CREAM, GALLONS OF IT. This is what I just heard proclaimed in a loud voice, bringing the wrath of the listeners upon his head, judging from the remarks thrown at him. Yet we all agree with him and crave with him. Just another hungry day.

Tuesday 10/7/45

Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher gave the Senior N.C.O.s a Pep Talk, very caustic at times in his hidden criticism of previous internal administrations. He told us what to expect from the new one of which he comes back in command of A.I.F. I don't entirely agree with him and I think that goes for quite a number of P.O.W.s. They seem to forget that we all have become hardened men, not physically, but our minds, feelings, morals, in fact everything other than physical. This, no doubt, is due to the length

of time we have been hungry for food and other comforts. Most of the chaps live now only for themselves and every man realises that if he want to get home, well! it is up to himself, that is definitely the attitude and I have no hesitation in saying this originated firstly from the officers.

The late Jap Commander Captain Tackehushe is alleged to have made a remark when he was leaving the Command, to the effect "We P.O.W.s may be home by Christmas" suffixed with "That is those of you who are alive". Encouraging, but the last statement not a very happy one, possibly said just for that purpose. No more letters. When I receive letters I always smell them to see if I can find any associated smells, no doubt the animal instinct, sometimes my imagination finds one but only on rare occasions, they are too long in their transit. What a glorious day it will be when one can smell the familiar odours of his natural life and cleanliness of clothes, sheets, bodies, etc.

Wednesday 11.7.45

Japanese order regarding smoking very severe: cannot smoke whilst on the move, only smoke at certain periods in certain places. First man to break the order had his jaw broken with the rifle butt of a Nip guard. Trying to get Harry Datson to sell his false teeth, the plate is made of gold. I compute he would receive at least \$2,000 for it. If successful will expect a commission. Have him thinking very hard and have teed up a buyer for him.

Thursday 12.7.45

Lieutenant Colonel Gallagher's pep talk to senior N.C.O.s did not have much effect on at least three of them. One Staff Sergeant, Garry Rickwood of 30th Battalion, was caught stealing food from the kitchen. Staff Sergeant Levigaton and Sergeant Reid both caught with garden produce on their persons. Rickwood only received an ear bashing and a severe reprimand, the other two are under close arrest. It is going to be interesting to see what will happen to the other two in view of this lenience being shown to Rickwood. Under the late administration they all would have at least received 60 days cells and chasing the bugle, especially Rickwood, whose crime, in my opinion, is the major of the two. Personally I think they deserve the maximum and the late Command from my point of view had the right idea regarding any type of thieving. Big hearted Harry Datson is going to buy me 2oz tobacco for my trouble in being able to procure \$1,400 for his teeth, truly magnanimous. Anyone else would have paid at least the usual commission, 10% \$140. The tobacco will cost about \$18.

Friday 13/7/45

Bad cold and the trots, with the usual fever. No interest in anything.

Saturday 14/7/45

Still no interest, not even in food. Sick after each meal. Had a malaria slide taken, proved negative.

Sunday 14/7/45 to Monday 23/7/45

Hospital with malaria. Wal Jones came out the day after I went in. Starvation rations for patients, three men's rations for overfed orderlies and staff. Mess serving horrible racket. The whole food

game out there stinks to high hell, all a racket. Medical staff, with exception of Medical Officers who are going a wonderful job, are a filthy lot.

Wal Jones made a curry for my return, delicious. Party moved away to unknown destination and another standing buy. Working party at Johore Baru doing extra well in food line.

Tuesday

Put on a fortnight's treatment of tonic (locally prepared) two doses per day. Had a HG (blood count) found it very low, 71%. The catch is, iron makes an appetite and God knows mine does not require any encouragement. Wal made a curry out of nothing as far as I could gather, but it was delightful. Cards still keeping us supplied with a few dollars, although had a bad spin last night. Wal does the gambling for the partnership, I'm too unlucky. Had one of those horrible dreams again. Where I cannot catch up with Mae and Julian. They elude me and all the time I just glimpse them, much to the amusement of other people. This dream is a very common and frequent one. I can never see their faces and only catch an occasional glimpse of them with everybody encouraging their movement and hindering mine and when I appealed to them they just grin, especially Mrs C., who seems to be there all the time.

Wednesday 25/7/45

Broke again, bad night with the cards. It was a good run while it lasted and gave us a little extra to eat and smoke. Terrific trading of clothes going on, will require very drastic measures to curtail it, naturally a lot of thieving of clothes is prevalent and everybody is searched before leaving the gaol for work. A shirt cannot be worn without a Medical Certificate. A Cloak Room system for the safe keeping of clothes has been inaugurated, but not many take advantage of it. If a person loses an article he is charged with gross negligence with 28 days cells. The idea is that the cloak room with a 24 hours service is at their disposal and there is no excuse for the loss.

Heard that the population of Singapore are pouring off the Island onto the mainland and adjoining islands. Food is extremely scarce in Singapore and impossible for the natives to buy. There is no conveyance for these people and they are just leaving with what can be carried. I'm sure the native population have lost all confidence in the British. Sometimes I feel that way myself.

Thursday 26/7/45

Visit from our Air Force, conflicting numbers seen. I personally only saw one. It was a different type of Air Craft as usually comes over. It may mean something. Suffering from a severe attack of some type of Rheumatics behind the shoulder blades, impossible to sleep lying down, have to try and sleep sitting up. Eases considerably during the day but comes with a vengeance at nights. Les Shearer came tonight with a cigar for him and myself. He has kept them for some time to celebrate his wife's birthday. We smoked her health. We were a month too early as he found out later in the day. He thought this month was August. Hope he can scrounge a couple more for the right date. Wal and I are trying to do a little agency work, if successful should net us a couple hundred dollars. I made fifty last week. Spent that on our food. Korean guard committed suicide by shooting himself at 8.30am today. That makes two guards who have committed suicide here, Indian and Korean.

Friday 27/7/45

Spent a hell of a night, have a handsome attack of shingles which have ringed my body, most uncomfortable, together with my body aches. Sold my silver spoon, received \$60. Just a present, nothing to buy. Order has come out from our Command that no-one is to loan money for less than \$8 to 1 Pound and even that rate is not encouraged. Also legal advice can be obtained regarding money already borrowed at exorbitant rates previous to the order being promulgated. Talk of the Jap Command only allowing canteen purchases to the value of pay received from the Nips. This would mean only 2lbs tap root or 1 oz tobacco per month. Missed out on my rice last night, we were short, and, naturally, being in charge of the Mess I had to go without. No more available: that gives an idea of the quantity of rations, when it is impossible to get even $\frac{3}{4}$ pint of cooked rice.

Saturday 28/7/45

Shingles giving me an uncomfortable go. Can't sleep or lie in the one position, they seem to be getting worse. Present illnesses: shingles, probable stomach ulcerations, fistula and beri beri, have not had an ingrown toenail as yet. Nothing to buy with our \$60. Plain rice and very little these days with big possibilities of the food position becoming worse. Instructed by the Nips to pull down the concert hall which we built and made very attractive. Concerts and entertainments have been barred for a considerable time and this looks like the swan song. I am thoroughly fed up of this existence and often wonder just what is being done to relieve us. I am inclined to think that outside our families we are just forgotten men with very little chance of succor until the whole rotten business is over and if that takes much longer there will be very few of us alive, or if alive, fit for anything requiring mental and physical energy.

Wednesday 1/8/45

See what this month will bring. Jap Command made a rather upsetting statement to the effect that all P.O.s here must take care of their clothes as they will be necessary in a colder climate. Smells a bit like a proposed move but where if a change of climate I can't make out. Tobacco and blatchan procurable only $\frac{1}{2}$ oz tobacco per man at \$9 per oz, a month's pay for the worker and 6 month's pay for the sick. One lives now for the day and does not think of the tomorrow with regards eating and smoking. Give anything for a good night's sleep. The lack of it certainly weakens. Another party of 150 left this morning, rumoured to Johore Baru. They seem to do much better there than any of the other camps.

Thursday 2/8/45. Nothing.

Friday 3/8/45

Heard that six Tommies were killed on one of the working parties, particulars not available. Three Indians were also killed yesterday. A big oil container broke loose off the lorry and squashed them to death. Wal Jones has malaria again, B.T., goes into hospital tomorrow. Dutch officer caught by some A.I.F. stealing the produce from their gardens, apparently he and other Dutch officers have been doing it for some time. Few cables arrived today, not a lucky one this time, still I can't complain. I've done very well with letters and cables during my vacation in the EAST.

Saturday 4/8/45

Seven of our Lightning Fighters gave us and the Japs a great display this morning, they came down very low and became very cheeky. No attempt was made to drive them off. It was an uplifting sight. New (P.O.W.) Camp Commander has decided that seeing the officers received a considerable amount of pay above the Other Ranks, it has been decided that their canteen will receive at least twice as much as the Other Ranks. Another pill. It is illegal for an O.R. to sell his watch or other personal property and anyone owning some had to register them and hand them into the Command Office for safe keeping, or they could hand them to any officer who would wear them and keep them in order. This suited the officers as they were then able to sell their own, getting large sums, of which they loaned at exorbitant rates. Now the Other Ranks have been asked to sell their watches etc., to the Jap Command officer so that money can be raised on them for the purpose of buying food for the whole camp (officers not to participate) and they will be compensated at a future date. It means this: a watch worth, say, Ten Pounds, will probably be compensated to that amount. The person that sold this privately would receive for that Ten Pound watch about 2,000 Jap Dollars, even if he loaned those dollars at 5 per Pound (usually about 2) he received 400 Pounds for him, against the possible Ten Pounds. Also the person with the dollars would have been able to buy what food was offering and sideshow much more than a handsome profit. The whole P.O.W. business stinks like high hell and it will be an exceedingly happy day for me and others when one can wipe the whole of the rotten business out of his mind and forget all these rackets of food, money and anything that is filthy and try to settle down and win back the self respect that has been screwed out of him. Hungry again.

Sunday 5/8/45

Had most beautiful dream last night. Dreamt I arrived home. Julian was in his bed. I went to him and said 'Do you know me?' he just said 'Daddy' and placed his arms about my neck and kissed me. He then snuggled up to me and all night I felt him in my arms and can yet feel him. It was a glorious feeling which I crave more and more of. God what penalties a man is paying for 20 faults of his own. One of the trailer parties that carry grass to the garden have been allowed by the Nip guard to buy food stuffs and oil from the Kampongs. This has been going on for a few days. The party consists of Other Ranks. Today another trailer party was put on the job. The party consisting of officers. I'm afraid a little food will not come the OR's way from now on. Wal Jones pretty sick today. Had a most interesting yarn to a chap from ... (*unreadable*) ... who lived with the Chinese on the Island for 6 months after Capitulation. His experiences were unique and interesting.

Monday 6/8/45

Some of the chaps have become experts at splitting paper. They make cigarette paper from any kind of paper, splitting it as much as three times. They also use cardboard for the same purpose. So far I don't know of any splitting of bank notes but I have no doubt that would be quite simple to them. It is many years now since I have tasted fruit and at present I have a real craving for them, that is our own types. This applies also to any civilised food and meat is a continuous craving. How we will enjoy these things, when now we grasp at any type of food, food that previously would make us violently ill, from smell, look and taste. In fact, the food such as blatchan and that type only the lowliest of

coolies would eat at one time. I'm sure we must exude the most horrible smell from our bodies, everything we eat has a corpse smell with the exception of rice and at times that is not the freshest.

Tuesday 7/8/45

Snails 25 for \$3. Frogs 10 for \$5 (large ones). That is the current market price and a rise is expected shortly, demand greater than supply. Only a few men are in a position to obtain them. Reports from outside working parties to the effect that their treatment is getting harsher and their rations less. Some still are doing OK and one party is even allowed to fish. Spoonful of fish with tonight's tea; first for considerable time and was appreciated (only a dessertspoon), every little helps. Tapioca chips, tobacco, tobacco stalk and blatchan arrived in today. The tobacco stalk went to the Other Ranks canteen, at least some of it. The other stuff went in another direction, also some tapioca root. There was very little class distinction with the late Camp administration (our own) but it looks as if there will be much in the future. Everybody gives me the feeling they are hanging by a string and they don't give a dam (*sic*) where it breaks. Horribly fed up.

Wednesday 8/8/45

Caught a rat in a bucket of water last night. Quite a few have considered it from the food point of view, personally I'm not that hungry, yet although Wal Jones and I have been trying to make friends with a very wary cat for the last week; but I fancy its instinct divines our intentions. The Dutchmen make short work of the rats that come their way, they also favour the maggots that come from the boreholes. This is definitely the truth, they claim that these maggots are the answer to Beri Beri, but I personally think they are used as food and not for medicinal value. A young Architect who is lying beside Wal in the Malaria ward is drafting a plan for Wal and I. We told him the type of place we fancied, shown by rough sketches of our own, both being entirely different, Wal's modern and mine English with a touch of the East, and I think ideal for the New Lambton situation.

Thursday 9/8/45

Col. Gallagher is supposed to have told the officers that after 5 days enquiries, he has found that the Other Ranks hold no respect for the officers. Peculiar that he should only notice it at this juncture as it has been glaringly obvious for the last 3½ years, especially after the Burma Thailand parties arrived back. I think his cure is a little late for the complaint, it's more than just a curable disease, it is an incurable cancerous growth with its roots empregnantly established. Wal and I are still getting a few dollars here and there and were able to buy a ¼ pound Sago which we cooked and devoured (we don't just eat now) with relish. It was plain Sago, no sugar or sweetening but to us it was manna. In less than a month over \$80,000 have been spent through the grass trailer party. Becoming a real dealer looking for something to sell all the time.

(Jules no pages missing here – just no entries between 9/8/45 and 12/8/45)

Sunday 12/8/45

A terrible long night and day, the time waiting is going to be the most trying of our existence as P.O.W.s. Everybody very sober, just seem to be waiting for the catch. Did not sleep a wink last night,

broke out in a nervous itch. I think later the reactions will be severe. Nip guards drunk for the last 24 hours, couple of bashings handed out and our hands are still tied, but _____!

Four bodies of P.O.W.s brought in for burial here, three British and one Dutch. Poor devils, especially at this stage.

Monday 13/8/45 – Wednesday 15/8/45

The 15th of the month is once more prominent in our lives. After many sleepless hours and anxiously spent days, the long awaited word has arrived, although our hosts have not yet committed themselves and work etc. goes on as usual, even to the building of bomb-proof shelters for the Nips. The whole business for the last few days has been a great nervous strain on us and 90% of us are suffering from nervous stomachs causing vomiting and diarrhoea and colic. The mental strain has been terrific, rumours rife but unconfirmed. The nips keeping up their pretence of ignorance of any happenings. The Jap officers certainly showed signs of extreme worry but otherwise gave no indication. Over \$50,000 dollars was spent in the Kampongs by the grass collecting party in the last two days. Cases of the use of dollar bills as toilet paper are very common. Although our rations have not yet been increased many people have more than they can eat and are giving their food away. This is due, of course, to their nervous system affecting their stomachs. We (Wal and I) have exactly 10 cents left, so we timed it pretty close. I sincerely hope the next move will come quickly and relieve the tension of uncertainty, if it does not I'm afraid there will be a lot more illness resulting. The day is still young and anything can still happen.

Thursday 16/8/45

Chap died last night, he was admitted with B.J. Malaria, but undernourishment coupled with excitement killed him. I'm afraid if something does not happen shortly there will be far more follow him. I can't understand our Command (not the Nips). Here we are every man of us hungry, on the same rations as usual, with the stores full of rice and other commodities, including fish (dried) and dehydrated vegetables, and our people have not the guts to help themselves to it without the Japanese permission, just that Jap Happy. The Jap Commander has not yet shown his hand and until he does we just continue to starve and die. Naturally the people (ours) who could do something about it have never been hungry and have been well supplied. This applies to all the officers and their present condition shows it only too clearly. They are true to the last.

Friday 17/8/45 to Wednesday 22/8/45

Long days but much longer nights. A lot of moving about and shifting. We have shifted outside Gaol area into huts. Very little improvement in food receiving. 20th (after the cooks have had their share) of a Red Cross parcel per man, not enough to appreciate. Issued with one packet of cigarettes which I smoked on the day of issue. Truck loads of stuff coming in from Nips, but our people think it is just on view. Quite a few deaths in the Camp. Dutchmen (filthy bas___s) are coming in from everywhere. God how we now despise them and their greedy and personally filthy habits, they are the lowest of the low.

Practically all our working parties are back, some looking well, others looking bad. Crowded to over capacity. Nips still on the job, told us we could have as much rice as 700 grams per day but our people say 300 grams will do, although we, the Other Ranks, could easily account for at least 500. Officers coming into their own. Take over tomorrow, mores the pity. Very little showing jubilation from P.O.W.s, all seem to just take it as a matter of course, inwardly they no doubt feel the reaction. I know I do and it is not doing me much good. Jim Callow back, had a tough time, he looks sick and is sick, both mentally and physically. Repatriation Parade on today, just something to do as we already have ... (*unreadable*) ... anything for parade.

Thursday 23/8/45 to Saturday 25/8/45

Japs inundating us with supplies, making a very late run. Doctors recommend very slight increases in our rations and making it a gradual building up. Cigarettes now also coming in and feel more contented. Had Embarkation Parade, luck was against me as my Beri Beri was at its worst and I was classified to go by Hospital Ship. Hoping to be better by time we embark which seems to be a long way off. No sign yet of any of our people. Nips still in charge, but working parties have ceased, still hungry as hell, this gradual process might, and I dare say is, the right thing, but I sure could do with some real food and plenty of it. It would now appear that my early criticism of our Command was unwarranted as they no doubt had received and acted on the medical advice. Have not averaged more than 2 hours sleep a night for the last fortnight or so, am just a nervous wreck, takes me all my time to hold a pencil, the strain of this waiting is terrific and will do a lot of damage. The hospitals are overflowing and the reactive nervousness coupled with other complaints seems to be the main causes. Many nervous breakdowns are expected. At Karangi Hospital I believe this is much worse than here and many are in a bad way. I think that the cigarette issue will help considerably to ease the nervous tension. The most exciting periods are still to come.

Sunday 26/8/45 to Wednesday 29/8/45

Still impatiently waiting but much improved circumstances. Food is improving gradually which we all appreciate must be a gradual process for our own benefit. Have had ¼ lb butter (Australian), ¼ lb cheese, 4 ounces of meat and the rations are coming much more generously. Plane flew low over us yesterday, dropped pamphlets, both in Japanese and English, informing us the war was over and to wait patiently for our release which will come as soon as possible. Hospital packed to capacity and overflowing. Malaria is treated in the lines. I have just finished a course of treatment. Still short of drugs and necessary food for the sick, expect some to be dropped from our planes. Receiving the news both morning and night. In fact we have ever since becoming P.O.W.s had some source of news, mostly from hidden wirelesses.

Putting on weight, same applies to most everybody. Anxiously awaiting news from home, should receive letters and photos in very near future and should be able to send letters ourselves. Will find the first one very hard to write, often think about it but don't know how to begin. Will finish with diary when this is possible. Jim Callow and Wal Jones back in hospital. Already having Regimental Parades, the Sirs have come out of their hibernation dens full of life, food and Regimental complexes.

Still sleeping very badly, mind working overtime, especially as regards what is happening at home and the reactions. Mind more or less blank during the day but dreams very active during night.

Thursday 30/8/45

Just received word that 40 P.O.W.s have died at Karangi the last few days. Included in the names was Tommy Irvine, one of our boys. Tom was on a working party and was left at Karangi hospital when the party returned to Changi. He definitely had a presentiment that he might not get through as he called me into his cell before going on the working party and asked me to promise if anything happened to him I would contact his wife, deliver a message to her and do anything possible for his family. He had four beautiful children, one he has not seen. Deaths are also mounting up here. Two or our Regiment being on the D.I. list, one being old Jim Oliver who has up till now been in exceptional good health. I think he has stomach troubles and suffering from acute shock. Plane over today dropped Med. supplies etc. The first one came at daybreak and they came at intervals during the day. The first paratroop to land was a 6' 4" about 15 stone with rosy cheeks. Seven paras, five doctors and two orderlies came in the first plane. So after they arrived at the gaol the Nip guards packed up and left their guard house. The tables were then turned and our people turned and started giving orders to the Jap Commander instead of receiving them. The new arrivals sure showed their contempt for the Nips and gave them a little of what the Japs used to give us. Things are moving!

Friday 31/8/45

Flying Fortresses over all day dropping supplies. Everybody putting on weight, can see a very marked difference. Myself I hate to think how much I have put on, and what I will put on before I'm finished gorging myself. For the first time I saw food being given away by the more or less normal man, a few days ago this would have been unbelievable. Personally I'm still able to get through what is placed before me. We are getting very little civilised food just yet, but plenty of other stuff. What will happen when we get meat, bread and potatoes does not bear thinking of. At present I am bedded down with Beri Beri and dermatitis. Supply of cigarettes being kept up to us, very acceptable.

Saturday 1/9/45

Still the planes come and supplies mounting up. Beri Beri getting worse, can hardly walk about, appetite not affected. Hell of lot of rackets with Red Cross food going off in the kitchen, which is inevitable. The cooks will soon reach a point where they cannot absorb any more and, providing they don't start feeding their hangers-on, things will settle down OK. Cigarette supply still holding good. Chris, my Dutch friend, comes over every night and brings me a cigarette and usually a sweet cup. Dutchmen don't like sweet foods. Well over 2,000 in hospital and twice that many suffering with something or other still in the lines.

Sunday 2/9/45

Planes still coming with their loads. Informed that the war is officially over, everything being now signed. Did not seem to affect us openwardly much but I'm sure inside we feel it. I know I do. Ordered onto my back again for another 5 days and receiving extra treatment. Legs like trunks of trees and belly and face like a well-inflated balloon. Pork, about 2 oz man, arrived today, 1 tin jam

between 12 – 1½ spoonful, 1 spoonful of sugar extra issue, and tin pineapple between two (small tins). Believe are to receive an issue of cheese and 1 tin pineapple per man tonight.

Monday 3/9/45

Much quieter day as regards air activity. Only one Flying Fortress which dropped supplies. Issue of two Craven A cigarettes in addition to our usual issue of 1 packet Japanese cigarettes, there is as much difference as chalk and cheese. Waiting for the day they drop some mail from home. Just found I was one of the lucky ones to draw a Red Cross parcel (Australian). There are only a limited number and they are drawn for. The contents are: 1 toothbrush and paste (badly needed), 3 packets chewing gum, 1 washer, 3 handkerchiefs, a comb, razor, blades, shaving stick and brush, pencil, air mail paper and envelopes, housewife, soap, washing and toilet. A nice compact little parcel. The tobacco and papers, if any, had been taken out. The British, American and Netherlands flags were broken over the goal this morning during a fanfare of trumpets. Beri Beri much worse, just able to move about on my legs for necessary purposes.

Tuesday 4/9/45

Very quiet day, nothing of interest. Jim Callow back from hospital. Food still fair with a large proportion of Boong food bringing us back to normal in a gradual process. All seem to be putting on weight and have big rice bellies like a horse just come in from the paddock. It is nearly a month since we heard the good news and we have been living on expectations. Actually, other than working parties being out and better food, we are still P.O.W.s and time drags much more under these conditions, although we have a series of news broadcasts from installed loudspeakers from a wireless. Jim Oliver is off the D.I. list and another of our chaps, Jerry Pine, was placed on the Seriously Ill List today with Beri Beri. I'm a bit concerned about my own. Get some nasty reactions at times, have not told the Medical Officer as I want to keep out of the hospital.

Wednesday 5/9/45

Have not been told officially but I believe Allied Troops have landed in Singapore. There was no indication or excitement out here, I don't think anything would register to any great extent of excitement to us. I can't understand our attitude, we just take everything for granted and without much feeling, death, sickness, release. Food, so far, about the only thing that seems to register any degree of enthusiasm. No sign of the occupation troops out here at present, but just heard their disembarkation confirmed. They are supposed to have disarmed the Nips as they moved along the streets, etc. Two Nips went through our camp throwing salutes everywhere. No one took much notice of them. I wonder what tomorrow will bring forth? Home is all I am concerned much about.

Thursday 6/9/45

Yanks don't waste any time. Today a plane arrived and took a load of Yanks to Calcutta where they will continue by air to Europe and then across the Atlantic, Home to America. Our position is now known. Beri Beri worse – am now a Hospital patient being treated in lines. Two Australian Red Cross girls arrived today, one very good looking one. The peacocks are spending most of their time preening themselves. The mirrors are working overtime. Not much change around the area, this place seems to be the backwater. Fine type of English, Brig. General, casually arrived. He would not

be 30 years of age, looks very capable and sure of himself. Also few war correspondents, three Aussies included with them, only young chaps. Plenty of food about, but still has to be rationed for health purposes.

Friday 7/9/45

Allowed to write one letter home, many restrictions and strict censorship. Found it very hard to write: also was very sick, vomiting and scouring, which did not help with my writing effort. Afraid Mae will think I am crazy when she receives my letter but it was written under extreme difficulties. Had to be handed in by a certain time and between heaving etc., did the writing.

Sirs still preening themselves and acting like irresponsible school boys showing off in front of the Red Cross girls. It is pathetically humorous to watch them. Afraid not in the humour to write.

Saturday 8/9/45

Today was the P.O.W.s first day of actual freedom, they were allowed to go for a walk about in a limited area. They arrived back with ducks, fowls, eggs, fruit, veg and numerous other things. They received them from the Chinese who have already looted the Jap Dumps and have food etc. in abundance. The natives seem to be overwhelmed with happiness and generosity. Unlucky me, I am still bedded down and unable to get about, so missed out on all the good times available. At present I am classified to go home by hospital ship, but I will be flat out trying to place myself on a Troop Transport. It is rather ludicrous, the Officers, very few of whom have ever been sick and look in perfect condition, have all been classified as Hospital Ship and Sea Ambulance cases. The greatest eyewash of all time and extremely laughable to we who can appreciate the move. I don't doubt with a little practice they will all be able to play their part when their ships arrive home, unless they make as bad a job of it as they do with their apeing of the English Gentleman Officer. There are exceptions who retain their own breeding and personality but I'm sorry to say they are well in the minority. No doubt by the time they reach Australia they will have reached their crescendo of their insatiable egotism.

Still nothing definite as regards our moving. We are sometimes given the impression that we will move any minute and in another breath they tell us that different things will be done for us here which will at least take weeks to put into operation. It's a real secret service short of business. THE YANKS HAVE GONE.

Sunday 9/9/45

Lying here and seeing everybody going out, some to Singapore and others where they please, bringing back all kinds of stuff, is just plain torture. Some of the tales the boys bring back are very humorous, and some tragic. I believe the Chinese are getting quite a bit of their own back, bashing the Nips as they pass, and, what is really tragic, killing quite a few Malays. This is going to become very serious as there is a terrific hatred between the Chinese and Malays, the Chinese always come out on top, which they have long since their adoption of this country. The Malay has no chance of competing with them in any degree of life.

Australian Aircraft arrived this afternoon carrying Australian paratroops and Signals. It is rumoured they will backload some Australian P.O.W.s, administrative troops. Still it will be a move in the right direction and anything may happen, anyhow, here's hoping for the best. Few Warrant Officers from the Kaa, together with other Warrant Officers from other units have been invited aboard the H.M.S. Sussex tonight. Pictures are being shown for their benefit.

A batch of Tommies moved out this afternoon.

NO MORE ENTRIES

Back Cover

James, Duke of Monmouth (1649-1685) natural son of Charles II by Lucy Walters, known as James Croft, married 1663 Anne Scott, Countess of Buccleuch. Took name of Scott and was made Duke of Buccleuch. He was executed upon the failure of his attempt to seize the throne in 1685.

Books to Get

Living Things and You: Downing McAtee (Publisher Lyons & Carnahan).

New Educators: (Hammerton)

Fun With The Pencil, by Andrew Loomis. Viking Press. New York.

General Accounting, by Finney (Prince-Hall) New York.