

HODGSON ALEC WX7637 LANCE SERGEANT 2/6 FIELD PARK (RAE)

'OBEY, PRAY AND HOPE'

The diary (titled "Obey, Pray and Hope") of Alec Hodgson was first made available to me by his daughter Kathleen Hancock around 2008 when I (the website owner Lt Col (Retired) Peter Winstanley) was visiting the Royal Australian Air Force Association Retirement Estate at Bullcreek, Western Australia.

The diary had actually been typed by Alec Hodgson's grand-daughter Kate Dawson of Esperance in 1990.

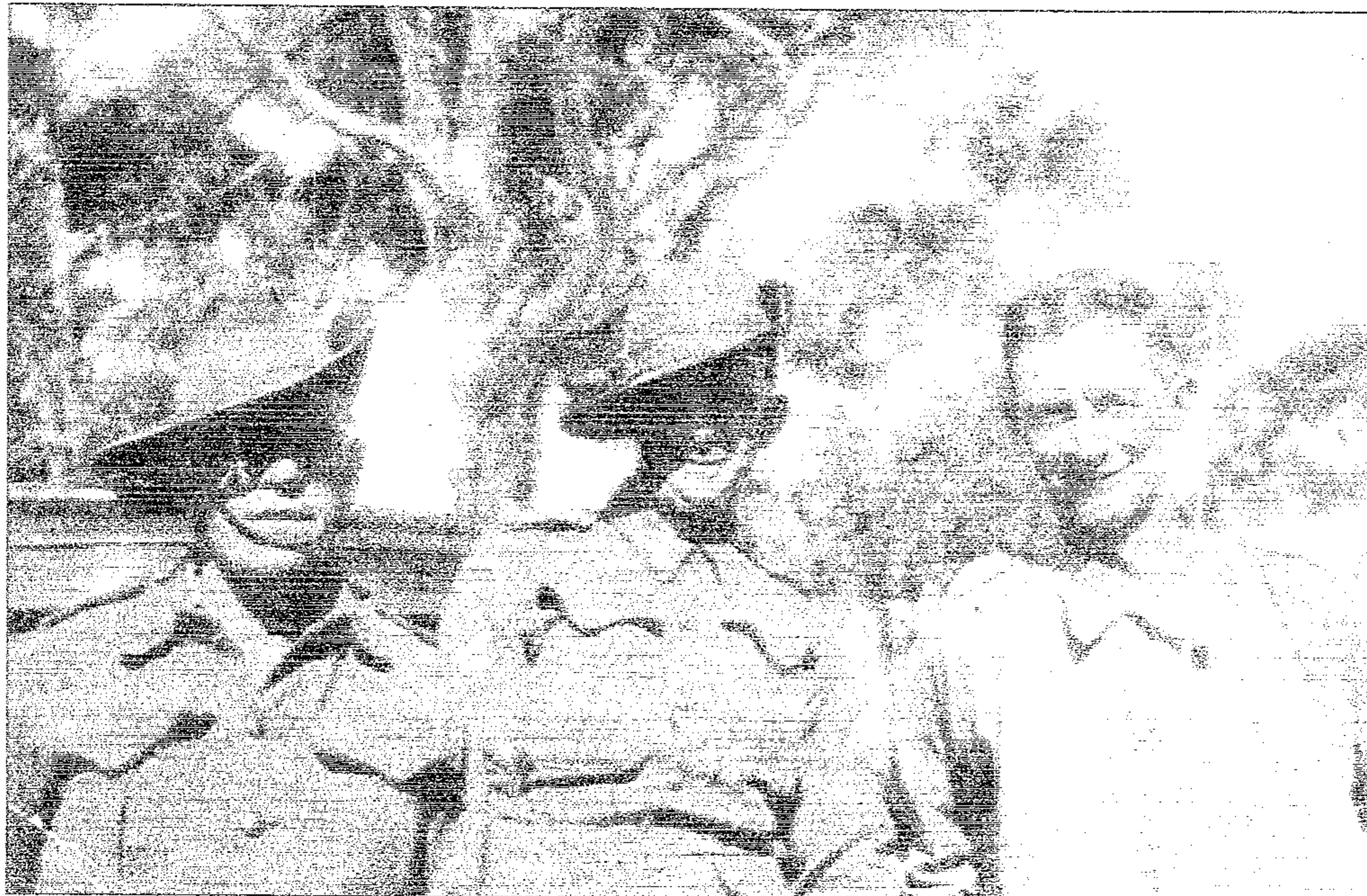
In 2010 Peter Winstanley sought permission to publish the diary on his website [www.pows-of-japan.net](http://www.pows-of-japan.net). This was concurred with by Alec Hodgson's son John and his daughter Kathleen Hancock and by his grand daughter Kate Dawson.

The diary is an incredible record of Alec Hodgson's experiences as a Prisoner of War (POW) of the Japanese over the period 1942 to 1945. His diary is peppered with mentions of many of his fellow POWs.

The following photo (right to left) is of

- Lance Sergeant Alec Hodgson                      WX7637
- Sapper Henry (Harry) Marsh                      WX8794
- Sergeant Sydney Cupitt                      QX9586

They were all members of the 2/6 Field Park Company Royal Australian Engineers (RAE).



Further into the diary readers will see a Water Colour Painting of Victoria Point the first POW Camp they entered in Burma in May 1942. A map showing the location of the POW camps which Alec Hodgson was in is also included elsewhere.



**OBEY, PRAY**

**AND**

**HOPE**

THE P.O.W. DIARY OF SGT. ALEC HODGSON

2/6 FIELD PARK CO. R.A.E.

CHANGI AND THE BURMA - THAILAND RAILWAY 1942 - 1945

Transcribed by Kate Dawson

November 1990

Dedication

I dedicate this book to the memory of Alec and Mary Hodgson.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1. John and Ethel Hodgson, Joyce Dawson for their memories.
2. Ron Earl, a fellow P.O.W. of 2/6 Field Park Co., for his memories.
3. Wendy Heatley for typing this transcript.
4. Wal Eastman for helping with army terms and abbreviations.

## Foreword

Towards the end of 'Pop' Hodgson's life, I often had lunch with him and Grandma in their Mt. Lawley home. I had become interested in the "POW experience" and often asked Pop about his war time experiences.

Unfortunately, I've forgotten most of his stories but one story I didn't forget was his recounting of the moment he heard that the war was over, while travelling on a train in Thailand packed with other POW's. Pop cried as he told this story and at that moment I began to get an inkling of the pain and horrors behind those tears. I never asked about the war again.

When he died in 1980, this diary was found in his belongings. He'd never told anyone of its existence, not even his wife, yet he'd kept it for 35 years. It consisted of jottings in 2 notebooks and on scraps of paper, plus poems and other odds and ends (see "Notes on the Diary").

Reading the diary proved to be very difficult due to the tiny, at times indcipherable, pencil writing and the confusing order of entries, so I decided to transcribe it into correct order to make it readable for other members of the family. This proved to be an interesting challenge.

What started as an intention to just type the diary entries in order, came to mean much more to me than just a challenge. I found it an intensely moving experience.

To gain a greater understanding of Pop's experiences, I read diaries and recollections of other POW's and these added perspective, background information and gave valuable insights and understanding.

Pop's "death register" style of writing towards the end must have masked a great deal of emotion. To express it, or even to feel too deeply about what was happening may have jeopardised his own struggle for survival.

Keeping a secret diary for 3 1/2 years, in the most dangerous and trying circumstances, would have come to symbolise more for Pop than recording memories for a later date. It may have helped him survive a nightmare experience. As Ron Earl, fellow POW, remarked "Alec must have had more willpower than most of us. I think most of us started to keep a diary, but in the many searches, the Japs got most of them. What they didn't get, we used for cigarette papers." Pop took the treasured diary home but I doubt if he ever read it.

Work on the diary has made me think a great deal about Pop and Grandma; their lives, their characters, and how this and other experiences would have affected them. I have recalled many memories and understand them now with greater insight. It has been a rewarding, if emotionally draining, experience.

Much has been written about the POW experience in Asia and to dwell on the wrongs of the past is pointless but out of respect for what the POW's endured, we should perhaps heed the advice of the former Bishop of Singapore (himself a POW), "We should forgive but not forget".

K.D.

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Poem

We didn't gain much glory when we lost at Singapore  
 Historians will decide could we do more  
 And in Java and Sumatra, well,  
 the world can judge our worth  
 But, we've earned a place in history during  
 Three years hell on earth

We broiled in blazing sunshine, we toiled in monsoon rain  
 Through mountain pass, through swamp and dense bamboo  
 In steaming tropic jungles where man's foot had never trod  
 We built the Burma - Bangkok Railway with a life for every sod

Through miseries undreamt of, with disease of every kind  
 With charcoal, salt and patience for a cure  
 On rations that were just a tragic joke  
 And drawn out near starvation, helped to swell the awful price  
 Of 20,000 comrades and unnumbered natives lives

So we'll raise our hats in homage and we'll breathe a silent prayer  
 For those who slumber where the railway runs  
 And we trust that in the future  
 when History is writ  
 That this will be their epitaph,  
 "They also did their bit".

Footnote:

I assume this poem was written by Alec as no poet is ascribed to it  
 whereas the other 2 poems in the diary have the poets noted. Also  
 there are alterations etc. (see photocopy of poem).









## Introduction

### 1) Alec Hodgson's Life - a brief outline.

Alec was born on 25 May 1899 in Liscard, Cheshire, England, one of six children. When he was 15 1/2 years old, he put up his age to join the army and went to Africa in W.W.I., but saw very little action. In his words, they "marched around the desert" for most of the time.

Returning to England, he did labouring jobs and worked on the construction of the Blackpool Tower. While in Blackpool, he met Mary Irene Crossley and they were married on 31 October 1925 in Blackpool. They had one child, John, before emigrating to Australia, seeking a better life. They sailed on the "Balranald" and arrived in Fremantle on 8 December 1927.

As a part of the "Group Settlement Scheme", No 126, they settled on their block at Middlesex, 3 1/2 miles west of Pemberton in December 1928, knowing nothing of farming. Joyce, Enid, and Kathleen were born there and Enid died of diphtheria, aged 3.

They struggled on the farm until 1935, before abandoning it and moving into Pemberton. Frank was born that year and Alec worked on the roads in Pemberton and Greenbushes, before they moved to Bunbury in 1936. Alec worked with the Bunbury Roads Board, often working out of town and cycling home for weekends. Their last child, Brian, was born in 1939.

Alec joined the army on 10 August 1940, aged 41. He joined the 2/6 Field Park Co. of the Royal Australian Engineers and was made a sergeant. The headquarters was at Ascot Racecourse in Perth and he remained there until sailing for Singapore on 31 May 1941. Mary remained in Bunbury with the 5 children throughout the war.

After the fall of Singapore, on 15 Feb 1942, Alec was one of thousands of Allied troops taken prisoner. He spent 6 months in Changi and was then shipped to Burma to work on the Burma - Thailand Railway. He remained in railway camps until the end of the war on Aug 8, 1945.

Alec returned home on 13 October, 1945 on a U.S. plane. He was thin and yellow and spent a few days in Hollywood hospital before returning to Bunbury with Mary. His malaria and dysentery attacks continued for a year or so then tapered off over the next 5 or 6 years.

When he first got home, he recuperated for 3 or 4 months at home before beginning work, at first in insurance, then with the "South West Times" newspaper, doing general office work then advancing to a proof reader.

He transferred to Bridgetown with his family in 1949 and later became secretary of Bridgetown Hospital. The loss of their sons Brian (in a car accident) and Frank (in a plane crash) were bitter blows during this period.

When Mary was receiving treatment for breast cancer in 1967, they moved to Perth and remained there. Alec died in 1980, aged 81 and Mary in 1987, aged 85.

## 2) In The Army

Alec joined the AIF on 10 Aug 1940. He was made a sergeant in the 2/6 Field Park Company, Royal Australian Engineers. Their headquarters were at Ascot Race course in Perth and he spent time there and at the Northam army training camp, returning to Bunbury for leave at various times. He departed for Singapore on 31 May 1941, arriving there on 10 June, 1941.

From his arrival in Singapore until the diary begins on 29 Jan 1942, he presumably was involved in training exercises etc.

## 3. The Fall of Singapore

The Japanese attacked the American Naval Base at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii on 7 December 1941. Air attacks were also made on various other Asian cities, including Singapore, and Thailand and Malaya were invaded. The Japanese aimed to make a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" to replace the British Imperial presence, and intended pushing through to India. During December 1941 and January 1942 they waged a successful campaign to overpower much of SE Asia.

The Allied Command believed Singapore could only be successfully attacked by sea and proclaimed on Dec 8, 1941 that they were prepared and confident with strong defences and efficient weapons. The boast proved to be empty. Promised aircraft failed to arrive, most troops had received little jungle training, and preparations were poor.

The Japanese annihilated Allied troops as they moved down the Malayan peninsula with skilful enveloping tactics. The allied defence was characterised by confusions, panic, wrong decisions and sluggish troops. The Japanese landed on Singapore from the rear on Feb 8 with little opposition and 7 days later, General Percival signed the surrender with the explanation to troops that it was due to shortages of water, food, fuel and ammunition.

The troops were bewildered by the surrender and many considered it premature, and the whole campaign appalling. Winston Churchill described it as "the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history".



#### 4. Prisoners in Changi

The troops started their POW life harbouring resentment of their commanding officers and morale was low.

The Japanese considered their mission divinely inspired. They felt at that time, that to fight to the death and die in battle was honourable. To be a prisoner was a humiliating disgrace and suicide was the only honourable alternative. At first the prisoners were largely left to organise themselves. The Japanese didn't want to immobilize more personnel than necessary for this ignominious duty.

Later the front line troops were replaced by occupation troops including many Koreans who were much more brutal. In the Japanese hierarchy the Koreans had the lowest status and were treated poorly by their Japanese superiors. They released a lot of their frustrations on the POW's.

The Japanese used the vast unexpected fund of prisoners as a pool of cheap labour for their projects. They completely ignored the Geneva Convention for POW's and were ruthless in achieving their aims. The sick were treated with spite and callous indifference for impeding the Japanese war effort.

By February 1942, Changi housed 47,000 Allied troops with extreme overcrowding, water shortages, poor hygiene and outbreaks of disease. The Allied Command tried to structure leisure time by providing University courses and arranging entertainment.

#### 5. The Thai/Burma Railway

Working parties of prisoners began leaving Changi in 1942 for unknown destinations. Various working "Forces" left for Burma, Thailand, Japan, Borneo, Taiwan, Korea and Manchuria.

Alec was in 'A' Force which sailed for Thailand, then Burma on 15 May 1942. They suffered cruelly at the hands of the Japanese with overwork, starvation, disease and brutality but they were lucky in comparison to some of the other Forces e.g. the appalling 300km death march of 'F' force in Thailand to Songkrai railway camp and the infamous Sandakan death march of 'E' Force in Borneo where 2500 POW's died or were killed in the last weeks of the war.

The Japanese wanted to build a railway from Thailand to Burma to carry troops and equipment into Burma ready to launch an attack on India. The area contained dense mountainous jungle, and was previously unpenetrated.

The Burmese section worked from Thanbyuzayat towards the 3 Pagodas Pass on the border while the Thai section worked from Non Pladuc towards the border. The total length of the railway was 415km.

The Japanese Engineers were in complete control with the camp Commandants being mostly NCO's. Scheduled to take 18 months to build, the Japanese decided to complete it in 12 months, from October 1942 to October 1943 and were ruthless in their demand for a daily 'quota' of working men from each camp, regardless of health. Men were literally driven out of hospital with sticks to fill the quota.

The whole railway was built using manpower with the most primitive of tools. Personnel employed on the railway included approximately 10,000 Japanese, military, 61,000 POW's and 183,000 Asiatic Coolies. 12,400 POW's died and 90,000 Coolies. Disease was rife, especially amongst the Coolies who had little idea about hygiene and who were ravaged by cholera. They also suffered from a lack of military discipline.

The conditions under which the POW's lived, worked and died in these camps were indescribably awful and it took a great strength of spirit to survive. A positive outlook was essential, as emphasized in a speech to POW's by a Japanese Colonel who advised them to 'Obey, pray and hope'. (30 Aug. 1944). Keeping this diary may have helped Alec maintain the belief that he would survive and return to his family in Australia.

## Notes on The Diary

The diary is printed without alteration apart from the following.

- a) Dividing the diary into chapters according to the location.
- b) Some "filler" words e.g. a, he, I, and, etc. in the early part of the diary to enhance its readability.
- c) Expanded abbreviations, especially in the early part of the diary, to enhance its meaning e.g. "M.O." in the diary may appear as "Medical Officer" in this copy.
- d) My own added notes which are indicated by these brackets [ ]. They may contain alternative spellings, word meanings, an explanation etc.

[?] means I've copied the original text as accurately as possible but the meaning is difficult to comprehend.

[?] means one word is indecipherable.

[several indecipherable words] means just that.

\* is a longer explanatory note appearing at the bottom of the page.

- e) The year is printed after each date, this was not the case in the original text, where only the first entry of each new year had the year noted. It would have been an almost impossible task to order the entries correctly without the money tally (described in (f)).
- f) In the entry Wed 24 June, 1942; a sum of money is noted next to the date (£89.14.0). This, I assume, is Alec's accumulated army pay, to that date. From then on, each Wednesday, he meticulously notes the increased amount. In this copy, I have only included the occasional amount.

It probably became one of the few enjoyable moments in his P.O.W. life, each Wednesday, to tally and record the increasing amount of money and perhaps contemplate the post-war spending of it. On some occasions, it was all he recorded for the week.

In any case, it proved to be my most invaluable clue in putting the entries of the diary in their correct order, particularly after Jan 5, 1944. The last 18 months were written on scraps of paper and were, at times, very difficult to decipher.



g) Other notes that were with the diary are not printed apart from Alec's poem and "Contents of the Red Cross Parcel".

These other notes include:

- 1) A list of men's names in 2/6 Field Park Coy, R.A.E. with number, rank, force ('A' Force etc.) and which ones killed in action etc.
- 2) Two other poems, one by Abraham Cowley, and one called "House Beautiful" by Anon.
- 3) A list of Japanese words with English equivalent (approx 215 words).
- 4) 'Bridge' scores.
- 5) Another list of names, in someone else's handwriting.
- 6) A list of units with numbers of KIA, missing etc., plus total casualties for Australia, Britain, Holland and U.S.
- 7) Daily routine times (Changi) e.g. Reveille 6.00 am etc.
- 8) Money exchange equivalents.
- 9) Some addresses.
- 10) Some mathematical formulae.
- 11) Some amounts of food per man.
- 12) The document sent to Mrs Hodgson (Alec's mother) informing her of where her son Frank was buried in WWI (Ypres in Belgium).

## Glossary

### 1. Japanese and Local Words

attap - plaited palm leaves used for making roofs.  
benjo - toilet  
bung - a local native  
Chow - Chinese  
chuppattos - a type of flatbread  
coolie - a local native worker  
hancho - overseer  
kampong - village  
Kempii - Kempei Tai - Japanese Military Police  
Kumi - section, a company of soldiers  
lava lava - lap lap - a sarong loosely tied as a loincloth  
presento - gift  
Tacsan Yasai - plenty big  
tenko - roll call  
Tham - Thambyuzayat - Burmese town  
tong - bath  
Yesme - Yasume - rest

### 2. Army Terms

A.A. - ack ack - anti aircraft weapons  
A.G.H. - Australian General Hospital  
A.I.F. - Australian Infantry Forces  
A.S.C. - 1. A.A.S.C. - Australian Army Service Corps  
          2. A.S.C. - Army Supply Corps  
A.S.M. - Acting Sergeant Major  
B.E.F. - British Expeditionary Force  
boob - goal  
B.O.S. - Brigade Orderly Sergeant  
Brig - Brigadier  
choco - 'chocolate' soldier  
C.O. - Commanding Officer  
Col. - Colonel  
Cpl. - Corporal  
C.R.E. - Commander Royal Engineers  
C.S.M. - Company Sergeant Major  
D.A.F. - Dutch Air Force?  
4 E.B.'s - 4 engined bombers  
furphy - a rumour amongst servicemen  
Gen. - General  
G.O.C. - General Officer Commanding  
H.Q. - Headquarters  
i/c - in charge  
L.A.D. - Light Aid Detachment (concerning machinery)  
L.M.G. - Light Machine Gun  
Lt. - Lieutenant  
M & V - tinned meat and vegetables

M.A.C. - Malayan Army Corps  
M.G. - Machine Gun  
M.O. - Medical Officer  
2/4 M.T. - Motor Transport unit  
N.C.O. - Non commissioned officer e.g. Sgt.  
N.I. - Netherlands Indies  
O.C. - Officer in charge  
O.O. - Orderly Officer  
Ord. - 1. Orderly 2. Ordnance  
O.R. - other ranks  
P.T.'s - exercise (physical training)  
R.A. - Royal Artillery  
R.A.A. - Royal Australian Artillery  
R.A.E. - Royal Australian Engineers  
R.A.P. - Regimental Aid Post  
R.A.S.C. - Royal Army Service Corps  
Recc - reconnaissance  
R.Q.M. - Regimental Quartermaster  
Sgt. - Sergeant  
Spr. - Sapper  
W.O. - Warrant Officer  
R.A.A.F. - Royal Australian Air Force  
R.A.F. - Royal Air Force



List of Diseases affecting P.O.W.'s

Beri Beri - vitamin B1 deficiency. Early symptoms are "off colour", weakness, numbness. Later heart rate elevates, fluid retention, swelling. Possible cardiac failure. Administration of B1 gives rapid recovery.

Cholera - an acute bowel disorder caught via contaminated water or food. The body rapidly expels all fluid and a sufferer can be unrecognisable within hours. Death is rapid unless an intravenous drip is used quickly.

Dengue Fever - an acute viral infection with fever, headache, shivering, pain in joints, depression, insomnia and a rash. Lasts up to 10 days. No specific treatment.

Dysentery - an infection of the bowels causing diarrhoea. Treated with antibiotics.

Malaria - spread by mosquitos with rigors, chills, high fever and sweating. Attacks can recur for many years. Quinine type drugs help.

Malnutrition - caused by lack of food.

Pellagra - niacin deficiency. Symptoms are weakness, diarrhoea, dermatitis, sore mouth. Eventually nervous and mental changes occur. Treatment with niacin gives rapid improvement.

Tropical Ulcers - start from a scratch or sore and spread, eating away flesh and sometimes bone etc. Many legs were amputated because of these but few survived long.

## CHAPTER 1

29th Jan, 1942

Paid off last of Coolies. Bombs dropped north of river. 2/10 preparing bridge for demolition. Received indefinite orders to go, but refused pending instructions.

30th Jan, 1942

2/10 picked us up and gave us dinner. I worried Major Laurence for trucks and at 11.30 p.m. 27 trucks arrived and were loaded. Had to go up to Brigade Headquarters to check up orders, as officer in charge of convoy was instructed to go to Tanglin. Got away at 2.30.

31st Jan, 1942

Rode down with Chinese officer named Lee who had a bottle in his car. Halted convoy at Bukit Panjing and went on with Lee to look for company. Lee's car broke down and walked on, finding company at 5.30 a.m.

Had to take trucks out to brickworks, and unload without breakfast. Two flights of 27 dropped eggs on town while unloading. Left George and Bob there and back to company at dairy farm at 2.30 p.m. Heard Doug Dempster killed and Bill Passmore wounded. Charlie Graham turned up with 16 reinforcements.

1st and 2nd Feb, 1942

Constructing dump in quarry. Several raids but all on road. Explosives in ridiculous position on top of hill. Pamphlets dropped.

3rd Feb, 1942

Sent off Cable, prospect of beer. Plenty of dive bombers. Pretty accurate shelling of road by Long Tom. Believe he is after Division headquarters. Beer arrived, Al but warm.

4th Feb, 1942

Artillery H.Q. parked all around. Explosives, but we'll all catch it if it gets hit, so may as well be near as 200 yards away. Went to Naval Base for salvage.



5th Feb, 1942

Dive bombers very busy. Surprised to find how jittery some of the fellows are. Have to keep driving to get them out of their slit trenches and holes. Watched about 40 shells explode all around house opposite us without a hit. Went to Naval Base for salvage again. Plenty of rum, result, half company full, don't like the stuff myself. Joe Young and Jack Maskiell wounded.

6th Feb, 1942

Heard machine guns and heavy shelling all night, and not surprised at news that Japs had forced landing. Watched dive bombers score hit on oil tanks very cleverly. Dive bombers kept us low nearly all day, plus high bombers and shelling. Artillery man hit and killed about 50 yards away. Direct hit at 2/12 killed 6.

8th Feb, 1942 (or 9th)

Stood to all night and cowered like rats in holes all day. Japs don't seem to have much artillery nor many aeroplanes for that matter but are making very skillful use of both. Haven't seen one of our planes for a couple of days.

Moved at dusk with what we could load. Usual chaos, company in two halves and spent night on road as did not know where to go. Hear Japs are progressing everywhere.

Picked up some of 2/10, who had been in on the job at the landing, (Jap nearly surrounding them), they are scattered everywhere and lost fairly heavily. It seems to happen to every unit when they come into immediate contact with the Japs, this scattering haphazardly. 2/10 chaps say the infantry just left them "in the air", particularly 2/18th.

Saw strings of Indian troops without even a rifle among them. Can't understand it, morale seems to have gone, even among white troops. Am inclined to think baby officers have a lot to do with it.

9th Feb, 1942 (or 10th)

After much messing about, eventually found company headquarters at Stevens Road. Plenty of breeze, [fear] and dashing about. More b\_\_\_\_\_ slit trenches to dig. Tojo has had several goes at this joint, judging by the houses and smashed cars about. Are bivouacked on a hillside which will be a nasty spot if he lobs shells this way.

Left behind at Kota Tinggi or lost on the road a tin containing letters and the photo Mary sent me.

10th Feb, 1942

Pretty hectic day. Dashed back to pick up Bill Hooper and Scringeur, who had been left behind in charge of explosives. J.U.E. [?] turned up during day full of mud. Some of the lads found some gin and Halls wine and there was a certain amount of convivial feeling. Pretty continuous waves of bombers but none came just our way.

11th Feb, 1942

What a day of panic!! 15th RAA moved in during night and posted guns in bottom of gully only 50 yards from us. The din when they opened up was deafening and it wasn't very long before the dive-bombers started smelling them out. Lewis and Marshall could not be seen for hours at a time and Mute was away on some scrounge of his own.

Moved section over to reverse slope of hill. Must doff my hat to gunners. Stuck to their jobs all day, but did they draw the crabs on us!

Marshall spent whole day in dugout. Somebody or other lost last remnant of nerves during afternoon and ordered whole company to get packed up. Went to officer in charge to find out definite orders and was told to go and find out where a sniper - one solitary sniper, was firing from. Found he was at least half a mile away, came back and found whole section and practically whole company missing. Lewis running around like a sick hen.

A few of us who were left scrounged around and loaded what gear we could on to the only truck remaining (a foul thing) and managed to find three other trucks after dodging two or three snipers who must have had their eyes shut, as none even heard a bullet passing. After a couple of hours aimless wandering about, we eventually hid (no other word describes it) in a Chinese cemetery towards Changi and a D.R. [Despatch Rider] went in to try and find the remainder.

Lofty and I went out on the road to guide any in should they happen along. They did, nearly the whole team, in about an hour and a half, majority pretty full as they had been waiting at the U.J.C. We [?] turned them in and had just got on the narrow track when Yellow Ned turned up. Had decided couldn't stay there. Changi guns were firing and there was a little machine gun fire about 1 1/2 miles away, so I suppose we ran away from the noise. After more fruitless and aimless wandering about we spent remainder of night on roadside.



12th Feb, 1942

Arrived Bishop's Court on Tanglin Road. Had much needed shower and shave. Billeted in unoccupied house. Boys soon found tucker and booze. Plenty of aircraft, all Jap of course.

Had half Company out looking for snipers, which I'm beginning to be convinced are not snipers at all. Periodically there is a small crack from a different point each time, which might be a 22 but I am sure it is some stunt of Tojo's. Nobody ever gets hit or sees a sniper.

A good bed and a good sleep (I don't think). The blinking artillery followed us again and the din all night was terrific, as Tojo lost no time in replying.

Unloaded all trucks for the "nth" time. Mute wanted a list of all tools and stores we have. Oh these dud officers. I suppose Mute is the best of 'em, but he has more faults than merits. Lewis is just a swollen-headed egotist with no ability or knowledge of how to handle men, and Marshall - God 'elp us. Sloan seems to be a man, at any rate.

23 years today since I was demobbed t/m (?). Wonder how many years to next and last.

13th Feb, 1942

Still at Bishop's Court all day. Pretty lively with dive bombing and shelling but none of ours hit. This place had been occupied by Air Force just before us, and by the looks of things they had cleared out even quicker than some of our exits. Clothing, food, equipment, tobacco, scattered everywhere. Was able to make up a bit of my kit which had been missing ever since Tanglin Club panic. I haven't a thing now which I treasured. Even my pen and wallet are gone and every photo.

Believe the Air Force have followed Navy and skipped. I think we have about shot our bolt here. Japs have firmly established landings at several points, and their planes are playing havoc with the fellows spirits. Haven't seen one of ours for a week.

Had a very busy hour with dive bombers. Shelling was continuous all night, seemed to be after a battery in front of us.

Had to go over to take charge of Workshops Section as an infantry platoon. Marshall useless. Mossy hopeless.

Three at least of chaps were terrified at the idea of becoming front line troops. Had just split into sections and was going to start training them when wanted by officer in charge. He, Spurling, Charlie Graham, Sid Cupitt and I went around to Firestone Park, where he showed us positions we had to take up and after a lot of questioning, managed to discover we were forming a perimeter and were drawing away from coast, allowing Japs to work down along S.W. coast into city.

Looks to me as if the game is up. Cannot begin to understand our generalship. Seems to have been directed towards helping Jap all the while, and now the final suicidal policy of allowing him to encircle us with superior numbers? Artillery and all the aircraft seen. He can just pound hell out of us now. Surely the game would have been to scatter into say companies and go looking for him, not here on the island but up in Johore. His planes would have been useless then. Instead we have put up miles and miles of wire which he has bombed us out of.

Hear a very persistent rumour that Yanks and British have landed at every port from Penang downwards. Don't believe that and don't believe the Jap has anywhere near the number of troops we have actually on the island. Reckon if we were all sent to it we could chase him off.

Am not at all impressed with what I have seen of A.I.F.

Warned at 6 o'clock might have an attack on my sector, so made arrangements. Found an 18 gallon keg of rum and tapped enough to give the lads a tot each.

Lewis came round about 11 and moaned because some of the men were asleep so had it ding dong. Told him they were dead beat with digging in, and if he had them standing to all night they would be useless when wanted.

Met Huon Barton of 2/10 on patrol, who told me Bill Clasper had half his face taken off and McCullough badly hit in chest. Night passed quietly as regards SA [small arms] fire. 13th artillery alongside us again. Hoot Gibson [George Gibson] and party went.

14th Feb. 1942

More trenches dug, and fields of fire improved, but an awful position to defend. Dead ground everywhere and tommy gun range masking fire.

High level bombers pasting wharves and shipping all day as well as shells. Battery by us soon spotted and dive bombers and shrapnel very close. One bomb collected 9, 3 Poms, 4 Indians on road alongside us. Lewis told me to take no notice of Marshall but carry on on my own. Lewis slept in bomb proof shelter, Marshall as close to it as he dared.



Sloan has gone back to 2/10 and I believe he cheered to himself to get away from this mob. Shortage of water but plenty of tucker.

Nothing much to vary things. Went around to Bishop's Court with party of volunteers and brought back some tea, tucker, what personal gear we could find and a few bottles we found.

From reports, Japs are closing in all round. Don't know what is happening elsewhere on Island, but Singapore is getting a whale of a time from shelling and bombers. Had to stand by all night. Japs are pressing 26th back. S.A. fire and mortars very close. A miracle that none has been hit so far with the dive bombers or shrapnel. Marshall wanted me to change Bull, but refused.

15th Feb, 1942

Tojo got onto us today with great gusto. Shrapnel in morning and H.E. [high explosive grenade] in p.m. with bombs and Ha Ha's all day. None hit in morning but Steele, Jim Scott, Bardsley and Norm Allen hit. [in afternoon?] Steele and Allen dead.

2/10 have lost about 20 killed and 50 wounded. Their hill caught more than we did. Luckily, I had moved my chaps out of slit trenches and under bank, otherwise must have lost more, as several trenches received practically direct hits. One H.E. lobbed between Lynch's and mine and scattered our little bit of gear far and wide. We happened to be eating our tea together in another trench 20 yards off.

Went down to tell Mute I was pulling my reserve sub-section out from behind him and got blown off my feet by the back blast of one, and a dud landed about 5 yards off Bill Olver and I when we were lopping a shrub which masked some fire. Have been warned to move my chaps up tonight to link up with Mixed Brigade.

The chaps have found rum and are game for anything, but too b\_\_\_\_\_ rowdy for night work. Shelling seemed to come from all around us this afternoon; I'm afraid we have a forlorn hope now. Unbelievable to me that any general would have allowed himself to be forced into the position we are in so damned easily. There has been an extraordinary quiet here since about 5.30. Not a gun and hardly a rifle firing.

Have just had orders to be stood by to move up with magazines empty to go in with the bayonet. Apparently the idea is to let our chaps through then do a death or glory stunt. Marshall is a bundle of nerves but has pulled himself together well. The boys are ready for anything. Am writing this in old shed by torchlight. Might be the finish but can only hope. Has been very little Ack Ack fire today.





16th Feb, 1942

SURRENDER, and from my narrow view of affairs, a shameful surrender. Apparently, and this I feel intensely, even while I was trying to build the chaps up to tackling anything, the armistice began at 7.30 last night, and we didn't know till about 10.30, probably the last unit to learn, as always.

Feeling of utter disgust and shame. never saw a Jap, never fired a shot and there are thousands like us.

Whole damn campaign has appeared to be a dismal tragedy of non co-operation and blundering.

Am writing this in luxurious surroundings, with a cigar, glass of beer, and wireless going in next room. As soon as we heard it was all off, Paddy and I got outside half a waterbottle of Eundaberg and made ourselves comfortable in an empty house belonging to local manager of Firestone Tyre Co, and had first night's sleep for about a fortnight. Then this morning went back to our old crowd in house belonging to one of his assistants. Few holes in roof, but plenty of beds and chairs, clothes, 3 cameras, 2 wirelesses and electric light and fridge.

Grabbed a truck first thing and went down to try and spy out chances of getaway, but pretty hopeless. Jap patrols, planes and motorboats everywhere, so dived into sheds and wharves and loaded up with tucker and Cascade. Should estimate 30 cases of Cascade went into company today.

Japs very friendly to us, no trouble at all with their pickets, in fact, some had a drink with us. Gave away about 2 cases and Biscuits to some Punjabis who were absolutely parched and starved. City around docks has caught it pretty heavily. Buildings, go downs and boats burned out, and bodies every where.

Heard wireless saying Percival's last message before surrender was "No Petrol, water, food, or shells. Bunkum! Trouble was organisation had broken down. Surrender apparently unconditional. What a smack for the British Lion, and what a wonderful job the Jap has done.

Going to have a game of bridge in comfort and quiet tonight. Wonder how long it will be before Mary learns I am all right. Kath's birthday tomorrow, wasn't able to send a cable.

Rumours that C. Bennet has flown home to try and arrange something.

CHANGI

CHAPTER 2

18th Feb. 1942

Yesterday had to march to Changi and could only take what we could carry, so brought only tucker. Beautiful camera which owner of house, who turned up yesterday said I could have, but tucker main thing. Have lost my pen somewhere. Now have not a thing which I had when I left Kota Tinggi.

Japs ratted house just as we were leaving. March was pretty ghastly, but eventually arrived about midnight! Slept on concrete, what a change from night before, big bed and mattress. Are in Selarang barracks, about 1 1/2 miles from R.E.

Water going to be a problem here, and tucker soon.

These Japs are not nearly so little as I expected, average about 5'3" and pretty sturdy with plenty of flesh\*.

Saw Les Holtzman.

19th Feb. 1942

Just mucking about trying to get as comfortable as possible. Water rationed to one bottle per day, plus cooking. Go about 1/4 mile for a wash. Tucker, Bully and Biscuits.

Rumour that Russians entered Poland. Went on Jap time 1 1/2 hours on.

21st Feb 1942

Went past Changi village for a swim. Had a look at old mess. Now Officer's Mess. Didn't think that next time I visited I would still be a guest, "of Japs".

Yarn that Germany attempted invasion of England, 300,000 casualties. Japs shot 150 Chows.

22nd Feb SUN. 1942

Went for swim to different place. Had feed of coconuts. Believe rations are going to be 12oz rice, 2oz of dried fish per day. Saw Lee Steere, Beer and Wenn.

\* The troops had been told all sorts of nonsense about the Japanese e.g. they could hardly see etc.



23rd Feb, 1942

Over to Johore battery after salvage. 15" guns well wrecked. Am told fired 400 rounds till barrels were like ... - salvaged barrels, forge anvil etc.

British and Americans said to be in France. Russia declared war on Japan. British and Russian bombers shutting over Berlin!! Rommel capitulated.

24th Feb, 1942

Still biscuits, bully and tinned fish. Officers started mess, and producing "private parcels" after Lewis had ordered everything into Quartermaster stores. Dugout Jackson worst of lot. Marshall chirpy.

25th Feb WED, 1942

Paraded for inspection by Jap Commandant. 2 1/2 hours for 3 minutes.

26th Feb, 1942

Had first day of rice with a few shreds of bully for dinner, sardines for breakfast. Arranged intersubsection baseball game. No. 1 won 11 - 8.

27th Feb, 1942

Agricultural classes started. Others likely soon. Went for swim but water too low and too foul, so hunted for coconuts. Saw several Japs cruisers (dam) and merchantmen coming in, also a flight of huge bombers. Still rice for each meal but a scone!! for tea. Believe field bakery might get going soon.

Gordon Bennet supposed to be back. 2nd. Ech [?] betting we are home in 3 months. Choco's\* captured 12,000 Japs in New Guinea. Turkey declared war on Germany. Hitler packed in! Lee Steer tells me he saw a Jap controlled newspaper from Singapore. Jap claim to have control of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, New Guinea, and to have destroyed Darwin and landed parachute troops.

Artillery captured about 200 4 and 5 pound fish in breeding pond.

\*Choco's refers to "Chocolate Soldiers - Militia units who mainly stayed at home in Australia.

28th Feb, 1942

Rain in the early morning. We were able to capture a lot of water. C.R.E.'s parade. Warned to expect long term, prepare veg's and other food. Furphies\*:- Bennet back and in a week will make a statement which will startle world. Churchill prophesies peace by Mar 7. Seven nation conference in Europe. Italy turned it in. Rice.

1st Mar SUN, 1942

3 meals of rice again. Church service. Very fine address on moral courage. Churchill prophesies world peace in 2 months. Italian fleet handed over to Britain. 8 Jap warships sunk for loss of 40 British planes. Saw Tim Howard, still talkative.

2nd Mar, 1942

Mary's birthday. Wonder if she knows I am safe yet. This lack of any news of anything whatsoever is the worst part of this period. Have come to conclusion by talking to Artillery Infantry and Machine Gunners that whole generalship broke down and there was never any serious attempt made to stop Japs.

Inspection by Jap Admiral this afternoon.

Reports: Heavy fighting in Sumatra. Naval engagement in Java Sea. 1 battleship, 1 destroyer lost of ours. 1 b'ship, 6 destroyers, 14 planes and convoy wiped out by us. Two of Rommels 3 columns annihilated. Russia in Riga. Naval and air battle somewhere around Britain. About 30 Jap ships in straits.

Actually had a slice of bread today, the first for a month. It was glorious. Splurling and I made a set of chess and draughts.

3rd Mar, 1942

Fresh meat today. Just a suspicion of mince in the rice, and the bones used to make peas soup which was excellent. Bread ration held up till tomorrow to eke out tomorrow's grub which is very light.

Report that Yanks have fully occupied Phillippines. We are to be moved to Argentina!! 35 Jap vessels sailed southwards.

\*Furphy - a rumour among servicemen. Many were accurate, perhaps based on radio reports, many were wildly inaccurate. Information of the outside world, especially concerning the progress of the war, was naturally of paramount importance to the P.O.W.'s and had a considerable influence on morale.



4th Mar, 1942

Parachute troops landed in France. Jap officer told Aussie that Japs had lost 14 ships, Britain 2. Singapore papers state Italy given up and handed 1/3 of fleet to Britain.

Remarkable fact that we are here right on coast occupying all the east end of the island, and no effort made anywhere round here by Japs to fortify. Am told Japs are removing everything of value to the mainland. Taken over all biscuits not yet issued, grabbing bedsteads and water bottles.

5th Mar, 1942

Latest furphies: Allege official BBC, Dutch claim possession of Java, no mention of Borneo. Position in Libya unchanged whatever it was, Luftwaffe making strong offensive there but held by RAF. British parachutists landed in France and Belgium for sabotage. Darwin, Broome and Wyndham bombed. Canberra exonerated Gordon Bennett from blame for disaster and congratulated him on escape!!!

Men beginning to get bored. Several classes started but not engineering yet. Believe Royal Engineers workshops, Engine shed etc. badly smashed. Stores shed still intact. Melly cooking.

6th Mar, 1942

Reports that Japs are concentrating us still more. Artillery and ASC moving into our area. Out all day with party collecting timber from dugouts and slit trenches.

News: British occupied Norway, half Denmark, landed in Thrace, Russians in Prussia. Germany asking for conference. Russia refused, Britain mediating. Sumatra occupied by Japs, Dutch and allies clearing Java. Big naval action in Pacific - 34 Jap and 29 Allied sunk.

7th Mar, 1942

Everybody excited. Wild news flying about. Supposed to be in Jap controlled Singapore press that Italy has capitulated and rumours that Germany has asked for armistice. British troops supposed to be in Essen of all places. Japs lost 43 ships, Allied 27, tremendous battle. Jap officer said to have told one of our chaps that they backed the wrong horse. Rommel said to be captured. Gallagher bets out by 16th March.

8th Mar Sunday, 1942

Had to take a party to help shift 10th A.G.H. Told by Staff that move was owing to Malayan Command not cooperating with Japs. Said that Senior Officers had taken permits off M.A.C. drivers to use carting their belongings.

Saw 26 heavy bombers flying N.W. Wonderful vehicles 6C had designed man killers, while infantry have motor chassis. Lecture by Medical Officer on Diarrhoea. Tonight everybody dampened by news that all furrphies are bulldust\*. Latest is that Britain and Russia are using 22,000 planes over Germany. Bennet is hailed as national hero and warned Australia of impending invasion.

9th Mar. 1942

Saw Pat Melly and Syd Strickland. Both well and going into Singapore. Say nothing to be obtained in there. Give alleged authentic news that Britain for last 3 days had 150 planes in air over Rhine area continuously. Russians 70 miles from Berlin. British landed at Calais, Belgium, Norway. Calais heavy losses, Belgium penetrated into Luxembourg, Norway no news.

Sailor supposed to have been captured by Japs off Sumatra says Turks and British occupied Greece and Crete. Germany being battered constantly by air raids, asked for 3 days to bury their dead. Collapse expected daily (4 days old). Jap fleet being pounded.

Later Supposed to be in Singapore paper that Germany has thrown in the sponge, and General Headquarters asked for confirmation and permission to announce to troops.

Fair amount of aerial activity by Japs over here today and guns said to have been heard last night. Lewis and Medical Officer with diarrhoea after lecture on cleanliness.

10th Mar. 1942

Shifted gear for 13th A.G.H., again using Juggernaut. Got a tow on way back and lost a wheel. Left chariot on roadside. Very few rumours about till late at night then received what was supposed to be 10 p.m. BBC news. Jap fleet wiped out in Bay of Bengal, 500,000 Jap casualties in China recently. Japan asked for 7 days truce to send mission to England. Later, that Chinese were in Kota Bahru. Had a game of cricket.

\*There is some evidence that many false rumours were spread soon after imprisonment by the Japanese to build up hopes of prisoners then demoralise them by allowing truth to leak out.



11th Mar WED., 1942

Tojo blamed by officers for new timetable ordering 6 1/2 hours work per day but don't think anyone believes that Tojo knows anything at all about it. Back on the 3 meals a day again.

New timetable: reveille at 8.00, parade at 8.15, stick at 8.30, breakfast at 9.30, parade at 10.30 to 1.30, dinner at 2.00, parade 3.00 to 5.00, tea at 6.30, lights out at 9.00.

Plenty of Jap aircraft about today. Brought tar boiler back. Supposed to be inspection of quarters by Japs today but nothing happened. Percival supposed to be coming around in the morning.

Heard what appeared to be 2 sticks of bombs dropped, and tonight reports that Flying Fortresses raided Singapore. Don't think myself that they would have any to spare for here. Think Allies are satisfied to just delay Japs temporarily while settling Europe, and if only a shadow of truth in rumour, I am more or less reconciled to my lot here, although I am still convinced that even without the planes which were needed elsewhere, we could have put up a better show altogether.

12th Mar THURS., 1942

40 men from company to go into Singapore tomorrow as working party. Reports today from chap who claims to have heard yesterday's BBC. No mention of any surrender. Contact established with Rommel. Russians still fighting successfully. Fighting in Java and Sumatra. Hope Graph has gone down with a bump.

Barbed wire all around us now, on both sides of Changi Rd. Darwin bombed, driven off by R.A.A.F. Jap convoy bombed. C.B.C. latest, Chinese in Kuala Lumpur according to pamphlets which have been seen by a "friend of a friend". American aircraft carrier supposed to be off the coast and attacked by 46 Jap bombers, no damage, 18 bombers shot down.

13th Mar FRIDAY, 1942

Miserable wet morning and feeling miserable, probably due to conjunction of day and date. Did nothing all day. Cannot find out when maths classes etc. are likely to start. Alarming growth in numbers of diarrhoea cases and a fair few dysentery.

Supposed BBC news: Russians report heavy fighting at Kharkov, R.G.F. raids on Germany and France, Rommel forced back 40 miles. South of Bengazi, Rangoon evacuated. British forces driving to try and link up with Chinese troops in Indo China. Civilians asked to leave Colombo. Fighting still in Sumatra and Java. RAAF bombed Salaran, New Guinea, destroyed 4 ships, G. Bennet giving invaluable advice to government on tactics (running presumably). 3 food ships on the way here from Australia.

14th Mar, 1942

Today's headlines: American reinforcements in [Philippines] drive Japs well back. McArthur given rest. Huge American forces land in Australia with 800 planes. Russians in Polish corridor. British paratroops in France and hourly expectation of British landing.

15th Mar Sun, 1942

Just the usual day of boredom. No new rumours.

16th Mar, 1942

100,000 Germans surrounded by Russians. Maskiell and Jewell pulled up by Japs when returning from foraging expedition and \$50 worth of tucker taken off them. Tobacco and cigarettes selling for fabulous prices. Heard of a 2oz tin fetching \$8, and \$1 a packet for cigarettes quite common. I brought 2 1/2 lbs of tobacco and 400 cigarettes but have given a lot away to 2/4. Charlie and I will be without in a few days. Raining all day. Paddy in RAP.

17th Mar, 1942

Just a month today since we marched here, and the first of a long line of months, I suppose. Can still manage the rice, but up to now we have generally had a little something to flavour, or at least to provide a suspicion of flavour. I believe the flour is about to cut out. Probably before long we shall just be getting rice and dried fish only as the rations of tinned stuff, however they are eked out, cannot last forever.

Callaghan told us that casualty lists had been handed to Consul General for Argentine, and ought to be home in about 3 weeks time.

Supposed wireless news: Rangoon evacuated. British troops driving from Burma to link up with Chinese. RAAF made 2 successful raids on New Guinea, which means the Japs are there. Guerilla fighting in Sumatra and Java. Huge American reinforcements arrive in Australia. Russians at Kiev. German army cut off in a) North b) South. RAF raids on Germany continue.

Walked all around AIF area which is now wired in with triple DAF Dann. DAF looking for sports ground but no good. Must see Capt. Weederson.



18th Mar. 1942

Still raining. This is fourth wet day, but it saves carrying water half a mile. 4 deaths from dysentery.

Wireless news? Jap aircraft carriers got to work and sank 22 of our ships including Hobart and Perth for loss of 3 of theirs. American planes established such supremacy that Jap shipping cannot move. Not much disparity! Essen and other industrial towns razed to the ground. Russians advancing so quickly that news is outdated before published. German army now surrounded at Smolensk. Hitler made speech excusing retreat in Russia and British air raids. Curtin ill, Evatt Premier. Australia now impregnable??

Borrowed a buck off Telfer, and won 3, returned his when told he had left his roll lying about and someone had got it. Astonishing to me where some of these fellows get money from.

19th Mar. 1942

Had to read a notice on parade re breaking out of area and stealing. Japs very hostile about it. Apparently they had promised to do something about a canteen, but might now refuse. Raining like the devil. Made up a contract four ["bridge"] with Alex Bell and 2 learners but good bridge players.

Furphies: Russians near Kiev. Americans put 7 divisions in Aussie. Such air supremacy that Jap shipping cannot move in New Guinea. Chows moving south through Indo China in huge masses.

Attended meeting to form debating club. Won 1.40. Paddy Lynch still very crook in RAP. Japs said to have seized all but a weeks supply of medical supplies, and have been warned they are grabbing water carts.

20th Mar. 1942

When going down for early morning tong, saw 5 Jap cruisers or battle cruisers going out, and am told that an aircraft carrier and more tin cans went out after. Jap paper dated 19th claims Java, Sumatra, Borneo, heavy fighting in New Guinea and promise of same to Australia. Claimed to sink Exeter, Perth and plenty of other ships. Germany preparing for spring drive.

Padre told by CRE that Malayan command passed word around that Germans laid down arms last Wednesday. That is the most authentic sounding furphy yet. Had a taste of curry and meat with the rice today. Two meals, rice and milk tonight. Had an issue of soap, about 2 1/2 inches per man. Had a game of netball.

Some news held by HQ which is so astounding that they are withholding it from troops. I think that is easily the best yet. -Tonight's alleged wireless: Casey gone to London on war cabinet, Dr Evatt to Washington. General McArthur flown to Australia with family. Perth, Hobart, Yana, 4 British and 5 US ships lost for 2 Japanese R.A.A.F now destroyed 10 ships in New Guinea. Jap cruiser sunk. Position in Europe still the same. Chinese forces driving south-east.

No pictures and no racing in Aussie.

Food prices:

2 ozs tobacco	8	dollars
Milk	3	dollars
Bully	3	dollars
M & V	3	dollars
Herrings	1 1/2	dollars
Kero tin of sugar	72	dollars
Cigarettes	1	dollar

[M & V is tinned meat & vegetables]

21st Mar, 1942

Very bright news. Chows and British moving down to North Malaya. Americans occupied Luzon and patrolling surrounding waters. 10 American, 4 Aussie and 1 British Division in Aust. Japs attempted landing but owing to air activity had to beach ships and suffered heavy defeat. Air forces over New Guinea paralysed Jap activity. Still hold air bases in Java.

Skirmishing in Libya. Russians holding Odessa and line up to Lithuania. German army near Leningrad being pounded. Unremitting indiscriminate bombing over Germany. Japs lost 3 battle ships in action where Perth was lost.

Tobacco finished. Went to good concert at 2/4 M.T.

22nd Mar Sunday, 1942

3 Tommies [British Soldiers] shot while trying to escape. Minute prospect of canteens being allowed. Chows said to have captured Bangkok and wilder rumours say Saigon and Rangoon.

Had 2 very nice rice cakes for tea. Notice from strength statements that 9 AIF in detention.



23rd Mar. 1942

Russians have 6 armies, 54 divisions ready for Spring offensive. Unrest reported in occupied countries, particularly Yugoslavia and Norway. Guerilla warfare. Neutral observers quote German army very dispirited. Russians 3rd line at Smolensk. Italy is out. Civil war in Italy. Britain seizes Sicily and South Italy. Italian navy handed over to Britain at Alexandria. In Atlantic, Britain loses Rodney Nelson, 5 destroyers. Germany loses 1 capital ship, 8 cruisers, 10 destroyers. German navy finished.

Pacific: Americans have complete control of Luzon. Java, in complete U.S. control. Sumatra fighting isolated bands of Japs in North only. Burma, our forces in Kedah encountering very little opposition. RAAF in 10 days sank 21 Jap ships of all classes. New Guinea, Japs have been unable to contact or supply their troops for 15 days.

Australia, Mr Casey on British war cabinet stated absolutely no danger of invasion. BBC denied sinking of Queen Mary which arrived in Aust. 5 days ago with US troops on. What a bulletin!

Amendment: Germany lost 3 capital ships. Heavy Jap air attacks on Java. British landing in Denmark.

Started school surveying. Pretty awkward as I have forgotten my trig and maths but will get over that.

24th Mar. 1942

Yesterday's news said to be all bull dust. Big battle in Mediterranean won. Italy not thrown in, Rangoon not taken. Russians taken 3 more big towns 2 South 1 North. Organised revolts in Yugoslavia and Norway. Battle in Libya, victory, heavy enemy losses. RAAF sunk 21 ships, 10 warships, 23 planes. Line stabilised in Burma. McArthur submitted defence plans to Canberra.

26th Mar. 1942

Russians have Smolensk and are in East Prussia. Revolts in Norway, Rumania and Slovakia, Rommel in Berlin. Heavy fighting around Bonghazi, with local Nazi air superiority. Wavell's troops advancing in Burma. Yanks have full control of Luzon, Java and the main part of Sumatra.

Rations are now drawn from RA barracks, about 1 1/2 miles away and carried on vehicles made out of motor chassis. They are of all shapes and sizes, from baby cars to 5 ton Marmons. Naturally we would fall for the Marmons. Huge chassis, huge wheels and 14 bags of rice. Took pushing with 16 men, but downhill was good going.

Inspection in morning by supposed Japanese Crown Prince.

28th Mar, 1942

Bulletin handed out by Lewis sounds like ideal of news bound. Churchill says war in Europe is as good as over. Germany fighting hopeless battle. Atlantic won, US fleet in Pacific, where they've already done damage to the Japs. Russians in Danzig. Desultory fighting in Libya. Chinese investing Hong Kong. Wavell recaptured Rangoon and making 4 pronged drive towards Malaya. RAAF sunk 2 Jap Aircraft Carriers and a cruiser off New Guinea.

29th Mar Sunday, 1942

Fighting in Libya ceased. Civil war in Italy. British landings in Italy and Sicily. Mussc fled to Austria. Japs on the defensive everywhere. Fighting in Kelantan. Wonder if this is true. It is supposed to be official but sounds too much like wishful thinking for me to take undiluted. 90% of the fellows are as good as home and I pray they're right, but I cannot conceive Germany throwing up a war she had as good as won so easily.

Personally I would confess to a sneaking desire for an opportunity for the 8th Division to justify itself before going home.

Later: British troops encircled Tripoli, Free French and British landed in Nazaire. Sehornhorst Griesenau and one other bottled up in Trondjeim. Russians massing troops in Manchukuo. Later: Trondjeim confirmed, St Nazaire confirmed, Tripoli confirmed.

Russians holding line at Leningrad, Smolensk. Koepang (Timor) heavily bombed. Churchill says can now see victory whereas 12 months ago could not. 6th and 7th Divisions in Australia under Blamey. Smuts warns of probable attack on India. Burma position stabilized. Thailand capitulating. American aircraft sank off Philippines. Sank 22 out of 27 in convoy. Chinese Guerillas operating in Negri, Sembilan and Johore. USA landed in Sumatra, Timor capitulated.

31st Mar, 1942

Went for an interview at Education Centre regarding trying for a Diploma. Indian guards mounted round wire and Jap orders are that they are to be saluted. Don't know yet what they are but they look like Sikhs. Tom Spurling in RAE. I am ASM.

I borrowed \$10 in 25c off Vic Francais and gave to Wally Parnell to buy cigarettes. Blewett paid \$3 each for 12oz tins of jam. 10 months since we sailed.



1st Apr, 1942

Jap Sion Times says Japs have had to abandon Sumatra owing to dysentery. Yanks landed in Selangor. Chows still in Kota Bahru. Yanks had naval battle, and occupied Celebes.

There is a story about that the Chinese are coming to the fence and telling the chaps that they will guarantee passage to the mainland and guidance to guerilla parties for those willing to link up. There are reports of heavy guerilla fighting in Selangor. I think I'll have a crack if I can get in touch with them, although the perimeter is much better guarded now that the Indians are on.

2nd Apr, 1942

Order prohibiting organised gambling. What a hope. No definite news but reports that US fleet got among Japs in the Yellow Sea, and sank 22 ships for loss of 3. Hitler announced there would be no Spring offensive owing to inexhaustable Russian reinforcements.

3rd Apr Good Friday, 1942

Americans intercept Jap convoy, sink 3 and capture 27. RAAF bombed and sank entire convoy. Position in Burma now stabilised. 800 Ghurkas broke loose and killed guards. Jap paper admitted evacuation of Sumatra and say Hitler told German public that Spring offensive postponed till Summer.

Reported suspected case of meningitis in 2/12 R.A.P. and showers quarantined.

4th Apr, 1942

Wavell on offensive, Philippines in American hands. Sumatra clear, fighting in Java. Reported American landing in Penang and Wellesley Province.

Afternoon: Battle of New Guinea raging. Captured convoy, taken to unknown port. McArthur tramped. Americans landed at Saigon. In Australia, many millions of pounds to be spent on aircraft. Russia declared war on Japan, British paratroops still landing in France.

Paddy borrowed \$100 from Sid Goldfinch. Five of us in about \$200, Tucker coming down in price now. Hope to be able to buy for \$1 a tin before long. Heard of \$1 being asked for cigarette papers. Sugar 4lb for 5 bucks.

5th Apr, 1942

Germans started offensive. Lost 12000 killed in 2 days, repulsed. Skirmishing in Libya. Jap attack in P.I. defeated. Americans counter attacking. Wavell's line held since Wednesday. Japs landed paratroops behind Chows, mopped up. N.I. Air Force and Fleet reforming in Aust with RAAF from Malaya.

Later: Russians in Polish corridor. P.I., N.I. and Timor in our hands. RAAF destroyed Jap convoy, Yanks destroyed Jap convoy. Wavell on offensive.

6th Apr, 1942

Early morning edition, stop press: Attempted landing inside Barrier Reef signal failure. 2 escort vessels only escape. No Europeans left in Sumatra owing to disease. Roosevelt states he is in a position to dictate terms Japs, and [? s out?] Singapore in 28 days without [? written in shorthand code.]

Heavy air raid on Ceylon, 54 Jap planes shot down. All A.I.F. in Australia. Andaman Islands taken by Japs. Bombed Flying Fortresses from India.

7th Apr, 1942

No news except that things not too good in Burma. Badly constipated.

8th Apr, 1942

Party out carting stone for concrete. Carrying it 2 miles in buckets. A jacket is required around waterpipe crossing 18ft latrine.

Notice issued that arrangements made to purchase stuff in town. Japs imposing no restrictions. \$48,000 required for first month in cash, and \$40,000 per month after. Stores will be issued from A.S.C. More money asked for in pay books, limit of \$50 lifted. Small loaves 75c. Heard of 1 1/2 lb tins of bully beef going for \$1.50 at the site of the agricultural plots, so Paddy is going out with a party tomorrow.

Dearth of news, views and rumour but did hear that Roosevelt threatened Japs with violence if they weren't out of Malaya in 28 days; that we hold Java, and that Russia had declared war on Japan.



British Empire	}	
U.S.A	}	
Greece	}	(Germany
Russia	}	(Italy
Free French	}	(Japan
Holland	}	(Austria
Belgium	}	(Hungary
Norway	}	(Bulgaria
Jugoslavia	}	(Rumania
Poland	}	
China	}	

Nearly a football match now.

Went to a a darned good concert\*, AIF concert party. More rows about rations.

9th Apr, 1942

Early morning newsletter: Japs are bombing Ceylong from some mysterious islands (probably Andaman). So far they have lost 87 planes there. Darwin had 50 bombs dropped, but Beaufighters brought down 8. We hold Java. Europe at a standstill owing to bad weather.

BBC news: RAAF bombed Java, Sumatra, Rabaul. Australia expecting invasion at any time. Wavell's army is 80 miles north of Rangoon. Japs landed 150,000 reinforcements in P.I. and pushed Americans back.

Aerial activity in Europe. Russians on Polish soil at one point.

Party carrying darned cement bricks for their confounded church.

10th Apr, 1942

Scattered fighting in Java and P.I. Position in China and Burma satisfactory. Allied control of waters around Java, Timor etc. Japs sank convoy in Bay of Bengal. We lost two 10,000 ton cruisers.

Position in P.I. desperate. Tulagi or [indecipherable] in Solomons bombed by RAAF. Wavell has little air support and is holding on. (One cruiser Dorset).

\*The concerts put on by various parties throughout much of the POW time are praised by all the POW writers for their high standard, inventive improvisation and morale boosting effects on the POW's.

11th Apr, 1942

Hermes sunk in Bay of Bengal 10 miles from Ceylon. Colombo again bombed from aircraft carriers. Still holding on in P.I. Japs landed 40 transports of troops. RAAF bombing Rabaul. Essen again heavily bombed. Russians advancing slowly. 4 enemy transports sunk in Mediterranean both sides digging in in Burma.

12th Apr, 1942

Americans in P.I. surrendered. Japs occupied New Britain etc. Bombed Colombo. 40 brought down.

Just back from church parade and Bill Heggarty of LAD back from working party in Singapore says Germany collapsed a month ago and Hitler shot himself. George Harris back from hospital, had mild meningitis and dysentery and looks ghastly. Says tucker is just terrible in hospital.

We started trying a bit of trading to make our money spin out. Gallagher had \$12 to buy stuff and says Japs took 6 tins of milk off him. Had 3 loaves and a tin of jam for supper. \$2.50.

13th Apr, 1942

Americans claim to have sunk 126 Japs since the war started. including 85 war vessels. Position in P.I. desperate. US casualties alone 38000. Wavell executed masterly strategy in Burma and cut Japs off. Brett has started air offensive. Russians claim 6 weeks will finish.

13th Americans have position in hand in P.I. Wonderfully successful air raid in Java. Revolt in Annam, things much more satisfactory in Burma. Russians still advancing despite thaw. Molotov says campaign will be over in 6 weeks. Japs lost several ships in Indian Ocean. 37 Jap warships went out this afternoon heading Northeast including 6 aircraft carriers.

Quarantine lifted and Tom Spurling back.

Went to AIF concert, very good, and site absolutely ideal.

A natural amphitheatre, holding about 2000. Paddy's market being driven nearer and nearer our lines.



14th Apr. 1942

Received big batch of news which appear genuine. Beasley became Prime Minister on the 13th [not true]. Gordon Bennet's report in P.M.'s hands not being published.

In Philippines, Carregidos still holds out on Batan Peninsular, but against impossible odds. Admiral Somerville announces that Allied subs are doing great work. General Alexander and 2 other columns engaged in Burma, west of Irrawaddy including P.M.'s. New Guinea and Koepong heavily bombed by us.

Beasley says all equipment removed or destroyed before evacuation of Java. 17 Jap planes brought down in Burma. Sporadic fighting near Benghazi. Beasley says believes we are being treated with consideration. Indian Congress rejects self government offer but says will not impede war effort. 480 planes and fighters over Germany, none lost. 10 lost over Italy. Malta still being heavily raided. Russia advancing steadily, line Leningrad, Kharkov, Odessa. 2 planes over Dover, first for months.

15th April, 1942

Mulligan missing. 32 warned to stand by to go on working party, said to be to one of the islands. Marshall in charge. I was to go but squealed about missing my classes and Maskiell, who wanted to go, took my place. Had our first debate "That brothels in Australia should be licensed". I lead the cons and we had a win.

Fetain said to be replaced by Laval.

16th Apr. 1942

Comm. est, [?] with Conegidor and Cebu islands. Russian line Leningrad, Smolensk, Kiev, Brask, Crimean (where tank battles). Guerillas around Odessa. 1000 tons of bombs dropped on Germany in two days. Position in Burma much brighter.

I am told Dean and a Lance Corporal from MG's have been brought back and put in tennis court by jail, after being away 3 weeks and getting 1000 miles up.

2/29th sent a party in to work today but they were turned back at the jail. Tommies have been sending parties out regularly, and returning just as regularly. Mulligan back. He was caught by Indian sentries outside wire and roughly handled by them, then Japs came along, stopped the manhandling and put him and two others in cage. Spent about 36 hours there.

Paddy's market was very slack tonight, it looks as if the trading is gradually being stopped. I bought 2 pounds of sugar for \$2.

Tonight's flash. Russians claim to have broken through and expect Berlin in 6 weeks. Russia severed relations with Japan. Germany demanded French fleet. Britain says if France does anything to help Hun, Britain will march through France.

17th Apr, 1942

Last letter from Mary was dated just 3 months ago, Jan 17th. If only one knew that everything was O.K. at home, and that they knew we were more or less all right, things would be considerably more bearable but this lack of knowledge of everything in which a man is interested is the worst part of the business.

Had a minor mutiny today. Chaps have been absolutely dissatisfied with cooks for a long time without getting any redress. Lewis in his usual egotistical manner refusing to make any changes. Climax came when men sat down on 10.30 parade. Junior non commissioned officers and 4 sappers singled out and charged with mutiny, men told they would get no tucker until working. We sergeants paraded and tried to put the case to Rainbow, but as usual, just wasted breath. Told him we would eat nothing until men did. No dinner. C.R.E. came over pm and I think choked Lewis off. Had a parade at 5.30 and told tea was available for those who intended to work tomorrow. Naturally, everybody took it. Lewis says he has power to stop tucker but don't believe him.

Understand case against corporals wiped out so don't see how he can proceed with others.

Today's flash. Russians at Brask. Laval mobilized 1,500,000, 1/3 to do police work in Germany?, handed 90 ships of French fleet over to Axis, giving them supremacy. Position in Burma bad. 40 flying Fortresses bombed Japs in P.I., refuelled and bombed Rabaul on way back to Australia, sinking cruiser and merchantman. US spokesman warns Japan in 2 days retaliation starts.

18th Apr, 1942

Did my first job for quite a while, over to sub base at Lotang with 20 men pulling down attap [plaited palm leaves] shed for church. New cooks in for tea and put up quite a decent show.

Today's news came from what appears to be a reliable source. Confirms bombing of P.I., Wavell reinforced with aircraft. We hold Port Moresby. Sinking of aircraft carrier and 2 cruisers correct. Japs lost 57 planes in attack on Ceylon and lost heavily at Darwin. Russians hold line at Kiev to Odessa. Trouble in Bulgaria. 95% of supplies to Russia made in Britain. Darlan says French forces will not be allowed to be used by axis, but not reliable. Halifax says USA production just reaching peak, and colossal, with soon beginning to show effect.



Food ships waiting for final Jap permission, and news at night supposed to come from divy said Japs had agreed, also that from Monday we have 2 oz. veges per day, purchased from funds.

Lewis appears to be in a bit of a quandary over the sit down strike. I am pretty sure they will get in a fix over it yet.

19th Apr Sunday, 1942

Party from 2/10 went to Mersing today to take up land mines. Other party for island still standing by, but reduced to 10. Paddy's market is about shot now. Some birds have been caught selling stuff out of the kit bags including tobacco, watches etc., and pickets are constantly breaking up the crowd. In addition, Japs are getting very keen outside.

20th Apr, 1942

Commenced social study course. Excellent lectures and promises to be very interesting. Believe Lewis has asked CRE to demote Moss on grounds of inefficiency, the swine. He would like to have a go at all of us after hearing what we thought the other day.

Japs smacked some of 2/10 across face for not saluting car, and order issued that Jap patrols will move around area wire in future and anybody caught outside will be returned to camp but taken to Singapore and punished severely.

Rumour that Tokyo and Yokohama bombed by FF's shuttling from Aleutian Island to China and that Wavell driven back again, and that Russia fighting Japan. Mutineers remanded.

21st April, 1942

Saw 7 Jap subs and 2 mother ships going out from Loyang. Subs looked about 500 - 700 tons. Order issued that parties will keep close together on road.

CRE referred case back to Lewis, probably told him to stew in his own juice. Bombing of Jap towns confirmed and more raids reported.

Attended initial meeting re RSL.

22nd April, 1942

Wavell said to have advanced in Burma. Germans admit heavy setback in Russia. Record British Air raid on Berlin and Hamburg. New Guinea being bombed, more raids on Japan.

Got dropped on for allowing men to wander off road this morning.

Mutineers ? up before Rainbow in afternoon and awarded 28 days, more than is his power to award. The whole case has stunk throughout.

23rd April, 1942

Tokyo admitted 4th air raid. Jap cruiser sunk by US sub. McArthur announces commencement of offensive. US troops in Burma, Wavell advancing strongly. Damaged Jap cruiser towed in.

Saw charge sheets. They are charged with mutiny, resisting a superior officer in execution of duty and sentence awarded as O.C. Boneham's. Has footnote, recommend sentence suspended.

Attended a unique RSL meeting last night, about 60 there, including Indian army men. Rainbow showered with a bucketful of latrine fillings during night, through window all over bed. Believe he fled for long spewing at every step. A filthy trick, but just what he deserves. Got some greasing lamps from Loyang. Filled with deisoline, they give quite a good light.

24th April, 1942

Paratroops and other troops in Philippines (U.S.) Japs attempted to land reinforcement at Rangoon but all destroyed by R.A.F. Wavell captured 3000 Japs. Japs about 6000 k, 1600 w in raids on Tokyo. Huge sea battle in Indian Ocean.

Neutral observer says Germans can't hold Russia advance, relation between R & J very strained.

Jap fleet defeated in I.O., fled to Pacific and encountered U.S. fleet. Said to be no Jap fleets in South Pacific, Wavell trapped 3 divisions. P.I. strongly reinforced. N.G. heavily bombed, we lost 13 planes.

Several fatal cases of beri beri. We started today taking yeast brewed from yams, coconuts etc. etc. To be taken twice weekly.

Party of 10 went off to island. Too wet to attend reunion so went to debate.

Nine years today since Enid died.



25th Anzac Day

Attended Dawn Service and astonished at the number of "39"ers present. Must have been at least 150, and of course hundreds from various units.

We marched at a slow march into line facing platform with cross on it, then officers were fallen out (numbered about 30 too, even in these days of babysubs).

The newly formed camp choir led by a Y.M.C.A. bird, who, by the way, sports a pip on his lapel, led us in "O God our help in Ages Past" then Callaghan gave an address.

Wreaths were laid by representatives of units present at Gallipoli and by units of present A.I.F. then a solo "They are not dead" by McNally, Last Post and Reveille.

During silence, old G.O.C. collapsed. Believe he has a weak heart.

Stirring furphies today. Turks advancing into Bulgaria. Finns about to pack up. Japs lost 24 ships, we lost 9.

Konoye formed new party in Japan, asking for terms. Churchill expects peace in late Spring or early Summer. Wavell expects surrender of Japs army in few days.

An officer was smacked in the face for not saluting this morning.

26th April Sunday, 1942

Test match won by 6 wickets. Had another meeting of Old Men's Gathering. Decided to call it Malayan P.O.W. Ex Service Men's Association. More like an Old Woman's Gathering.

Naval battle supposed to be confirmed. We lost 14, Japs 24 and 31 transports. Japs supposed to have surrendered in (A) New Guinea with 14000 (B) Philippines with 38000.

Saw what purported to be BBC news of yesterday "Huge air attack on Rastock", wherever that is, with several types of planes. 2400 tons of bombs dropped. Heinkel factory left a mass of flames. Russians advancing at increasing rate in 3 directions.

Heavy air raids on Malta. 200 axis planes brought over Malta in past month.

Position around Mandalay [Burma] improved, also steady along Irrawaddy.

Japs admit heavy civilian casualties in air raids on Japan. Japs air raid on Port Moresby. R.A.A.F. raid on Timor, 4 planes lost.

Anzac Day in Sydney factories worked.

27th April, 1942

Scrounging.

Heavy weather in Russia. Goebbels spoke about Churchill's brutality bombing women and children. British fleet heading for North Malaya. French fleet departed for unknown port.

Longest convoy ever to leave Australia sailed. Java and New Guinea ready for reoccupation.

Japs envoy gone to Moscow for peace feelers.

Russians have thousands of small boats on Danube.

Another batch of Japs raided Darwin, more fighters than bombers, lost 13. Heavy fighting Leningrad sector. Hitler warned German people that defeat meant annihilation but promised early victory.

(From first batch) 57000 Japs hopelessly surrounded in Burma.

28th April, 1942

Company reorganised into 4 equal sections. Discipline to be tightened up. New N.C.O.'s appointed. Jack Lynch - sgt., Sgt. Tubby Thomas - L. Sgt. Ron Earl and J. Dixon Cpls. What a position to start enforcing choco discipline.

Heard a really fine lecturer in Maj. Cousins and went to concert party at night. They are improving wonderfully.

Watched the duties being changed with full panoply [splendour].

My cripes, we're wonderful soldiers now there's no fighting to be done.

House school & Paddy's Market are falling away now, money is about exhausted. Paddy's birthday. Yarn that Timor taken and landings in Java. Tojo said to be dead.

29th April, 1942

Wakened up in wee sma' hours by eternal triangle of bicoxin' cats howling in the room, alongside Paddy's mosquito net. Probably thought it was a meat safe.

To be a holiday today in honour of Emperor's birthday.



30th April, 1942

Up to mud in Burma. No change in Russia. Jap concentration at Rabaul. R.A.F. still blasting Germany - Kol (where Scharnhorst), Trondheim (where Scheer, Tirpity, P. Eugene). German's bombed York. 18 Div's landed in France.

Everyone guessing tonight. Very circumstantial yarn that Japs are negotiating for us to be placed on neutral island, and of course, one after another remembers things which bear this out. Big conference.

1st May, 1942

More confirmation on move? Ron Wilson from 2/4 claims to have heard Treasure Island.

Russians hold Odessa. Germans Smolensk. Huge tank battle at Kalinissa. Stalin says no May Day holiday. Bad weather for air over Europe. H & Musso in conference to be joined by Jap. Peace feelers expected.

Japs reinforced P.I., taken Lai and Salamar, bombing N. Queensland 47 Jap planes shot down in 24 hours. Blaney expects invasion. Japs only 25 miles from Mandalay.

3rd May Sunday, 1942

Cricket match again. A.I.F. won by an innings. Barnett 60 odd.

Still strong rumours as to going places, until order came in late at night that 20 were to go in a working party. 100 R.A.E. total.

Flash: B.E.F. [British Expeditionary Force] advanced 80 miles. Russians making slow progress. Wavell stabilized line, both sides reinforced in P.I., bitter fighting. Java nearly recaptured, small force landed in Sumatra, meeting little opposition.

4th May Monday, 1942

Lot of chaps heard cheering from direction of jail last night and there is a considerable amount of conjecture about it.

Quite a bit of stuff has come in from kitbags including clothing and mess gear. Jack Dixon has recovered a book on surveying.

5th May Tuesday, 1942

31 went in early this a.m. on working party. I was to have been in charge but C.G. wanted to go, I didn't. Telfer & Apples went in. 100 R.A.E. and I believe nearly 2000 from camp went in. Looks as if we will all be in before long.

I believe O.C. is waiting for report on Bill Rule, might make him sgt.

C.R.E. yesterday said he believed working parties in Singapore are having a fair time, better tucker than us. Said reports indicated things in bad way in Burma but flash from Div. H.Q. supposed to be first BBC news heard here for a fortnight says we have Java, Burma, some of Sumatra.

Japs lost 38 transports evacuating Java, also R.A.A.F. sank 36 additional.

C.R.E. also said planes over Townsville.

15 men required at short notice this afternoon. Sid Cupitt went with them. Believe they are going to S.B. for about a fortnight.

Excellent concert tonight.

6th May Wednesday, 1942

C.R.E. saw Jap paper. Say they are still mopping up in P.I. & Java. Claim friction between Curtin & McCarther. Large force of yanks in India.

I believe Pommies had many fatalities from Beri Beri. We had an issue of yeast from Div. Lab yesterday, not a patch on Sandy Bell's.

I had a suprise when I went into Q.M. today and found my kitbag. It had come from ordnance packed with groundsheets. Nothing of mine of course.

7th May, 1942

Official notice that 8000 men required for working party. All men to be medically examined. Naturally, all sorts of conjectures flying about but nobody knows anything definite.

Got kit bag.



8th May, 1942

Still rumours about move. Return wanted of all men fit and available. Officers received a large proportion of their gear.

Stuchbury has varied assortment of stuff, razors (13), toothpaste, tooth, hair, boot etc. brushes, soaps & so on. 500 in all to divide among 200. I hope to get a razor.

I managed a pair of sandshoes yesterday afternoon. I am wearing my boots today - must break my feet in. Have had them on now (1300) longer than for three months. Feel very queer.

[Rumours] Going to Timor to be exchanged for 50,000 Japs. 5 Portugese boats here now. Discipline to be rigid in case of trouble.

Transfer to be complete in 3 months. Churchill not too pleased. Curtin claims Australia behind the move.

Russia says if Britain can keep up present supplies, there is not any need for Western Front.

Position in Burma bad but not desperate. We have Java & Sumatra. Another Jap convoy scattered.

Sounds wonderful eh?, but there is most certainly some move on within the next few days.

Paddy, Mute, Spurling out on a scrounge this afternoon and ran into a nest of Chows. Paddy led them to a place where he had been in the morning and found deserted, bags of paw paws, yams but when they returned, dozens of Chows came from all points of compass. Spurling & Tubby Thomas collected clouts from sticks but they got a bag of paw paw, bag of yams and a bag of tobago root home. Fully expecting repercussions tomorrow.

9th May, 1942

Party of 32 required for large movement, I understand over 3000. All sorts of rumours as to destination, from Formosa [Taiwan] to Timor. Wild stories of exchange.

Sunday. Supposed big Naval Battle.

10th May, 1942

Have been warned to stand by probably going Tuesday. Still no idea of destination.

Had a try at casting an aluminium plaque but absolute failure.

Jack Dixon recovered photos of girl.

11th May, 1942

Trip postponed to Friday?, Sat, Sun. Kathleen Mavourneen. [?] Brig Varley, Shaw, Jackson & about 230 Engineers going. Only Admins & unfit left in each unit.

Have drawn some stuff to make up shortages.

13th May, 1942

Had a parade of 'A' Force. G.O.C. made a few remarks but said nothing except that as far as he knew, rumours were unfounded. [?] are to ride in.

Had farewell supper.

14th May, 1942

Up at 5.30 after practically no sleep. Off in trucks at 11.30. 40 men to a truck. Two tramp steamers waiting for us, one we hear to take 2000, one 1000.

Hung about in sun on wharf all day and most of night, furnishing working parties to act as lumpers. Not allowed to smoke and Jap police walking around with sticks, hitting where they saw cig's.

Fellows scattered and scrounged tinned onions, and we found some Christmas puddings burnt in fire, but still eatable.

Singapore town almost undamaged in appearance, except around wharf where shed after shed, several ships burnt out. No motor traffic except military. Nothing in markets. Did not see big shops, but plenty of small ones boarded up.

(Abercrombie & shed episode).

Japs caught a few fellows looting and battered them severely.

Had drawn the day's rations - 2 pasties & rice cakes but eaten before 4 pm besides drinking 2 bottles of water.

Had very welcome tin of onions and then some pudding. Scrounged more onions, tobacco & sugar at night. Missed shed with milk & weeties in. Had a feed of rice & M & V off Japs at 10 pm.

Finally went aboard at 5 o'clock (a.m.) packed like proverbial sardines. We (engineers) were lucky, allowed so far to settle down on decks. No room to be down in day but better than below decks.

Waited till 10 for breakfast, then missed out. This mob don't seem to be any better organised than ours as regards organisation.



Ship is Toyahasi Maru, I think an old British ship. Pulled out into harbour at 10 am. Two others and a little merchant cruiser lay waiting.

So ends three months of captivity.

Wonder how much more.

Pulled out at 1 o'clock and much conjecture as to which way we would go, but soon dispelled as we swung round Southwards, round outer islands and headed North West. No escorts, just the two old tramps doing about 8 or 9 knots.

Dinner was quite decent. Rice & stew. One of crew indicated by words & gesture, that we were going to Medan, Penang and we get off somewhere between Penang & Rangoon, so it may be Andaman's or Cocos Isles.

Still plenty of confidence in exchange furphy. Not allowed to smoke on deck but can in two 'tween - decks. Japs sentries pretty strict about smoking. Big toe shoes, bows, (P.T.'s and worships). Seem decent enough little fellows. Stewards generous.

One Jap officer (ship's) says two months, Japs won, we home!!

Crowded troop decks.

16th May, 1942

Still heading WNW Malaya in sight to starboard. Must have covered 200 miles by midday. Probably somewhere around Malacca.

Had a fair night, a few knocks from passersby but not too bad. Messing is chaos, agst. [?] latrine. Smoking now forbidden anywhere, probably as punishment for smoking up on top.

Talking to engineer also spoke little English. He was highly amused at rumour of exchange.

Still heading N.W. by N. Passed convoy of six ships, one of which a little thing about 1000 tons, might have been a converted merchantmen. Otherwise no sign of escort.

Crew selling beer at \$1, cigs at 25c a packet. Food not too bad so far, better than Changi at any rate. Am enjoying cups of tea and coffee with sugar.

Latest rumour is we pull in somewhere about 9 in morning. Officers who were on boat deck have had to exchange quarters with guard and are now below.

17th May Sunday, 1942

Course N of W. No land in sight. One of crew drew maps showing Japan holding Burma, Malaya, Sumatra, Java, Timor, Borneo, Philippines and said Hawaii "Bung Bung". I asked if "Bung Bung Australia?" and he seemed quite surprised at the idea "No! No!".

Arrived at Medan? at 9.30. Just a low strip of jungle with very few houses visible. Anchored about a mile out, along with several other ships, some of which had troops aboard. 18 Japs landing barges came out & tied up, in a line and there was a scatter when the rope broke with the strong current.

This ship carries 4 of these barges which appear very strong, roomy, manoeuvrable and fast. They had trucks and troops aboard but didn't appear to have any object in coming out.

Met a chap who has 100 to say we will be home in July. Says Jap Officer told him negotiations must be completed by 8th June.

Other of prisoner ships pulled out about 2 o'clock. Food been very light all day.

18th May, 1942

Still lying at Medan, long range of hills visible this morning by coastal plain. Lighters towed out loaded with what appears to be all light loot-picks etc., food, bikes, motorcar tyres etc.; motor barge brought out a load of medical stores.

Guard partly changed. Still persistent rumours of Timor. Cannot see any possibility of bringing us North then South.

Our consort came out of river mouth during afternoon and two other ships with troops on. Didn't appear to be Japs - possibly Dutch or English. Left Medan at 7 pm.

19th May Tuesday, 1942

Plenty of rain during night with result that dry spaces were standing room only. Heading W of North at sunrise. Light cruiser, tramp and small tanker coming in from starboard.

Very dull. Slight sea. Sea plane called twice today from East. Heading N by W.



20th May Wednesday, 1942

Course N by E very rainy, cloudy. Land on starboard hilly. Little islands to port.

Warned at 10.30 that we, 2/10th, R.A.E.H.Q. and some of 2/12th to be ready to go ashore today, about 125 in all. I believe 1000 men going off boat. Think we are off Thailand, but cannot imagine where and what we will be going for hereabouts. Will learn, I suppose.

Dugout Jackson going with us as O.C. unfortunately.

Followed a coastline till 2 pm on starboard very hilly and a number of little islands to port. Entered behind large island at 2 and dropped hook. Believe it's Point Victoria.

We are about 4 miles from mainland in wonderful anchorage but may be shallow close in, as we are so far out. Got all our kit packed and assembled at 4, then told only 200 going off today.

Barges lowered and two took personnel, others are loading rice etc.

VICTORIA POINT, BURMA 1942



THIS PAINTING OF VICTORIA POINT, BURMA WAS  
DONE BY AN UNKNOWN POW

(Provided by Mrs Kathleen Hancock, daughter of Alec Hodgson 2010)

VICTORIA POINT, BURMA

## CHAPTER 3

May 21st Thursday, 1942

More movement again. Rained and blew all night. Half the fellows wet through (crowded troop decks).

Purser tells me town of 50,000 people close to here. Plenty veges and meat, but no catch girl. Seemed to think that was ever in our minds. I have very rarely heard women mentioned during last three months. Main topic: news, furphies & food.

Great majority extraordinarily friendly. We have fared quite decently from little galley close to us. They seem to live pretty well, mostly on loot I suppose.

Left ship at 5 on barge. Arrived ashore at 7.30. Dozens of tiny islands in very shallow water, round bend into little stone jetty with a small native settlement alongside. Few Burnese & Tamils about. Burmese rather like Malays.

Counted & recounted & checked then cocky little Jap L/Cpl. bossed and ordered us about "Make hiro\* lines. Hurry up, hurry up, number". Gradually sorted out into houses.

2 am when finally settled down outside little shed to which 50 of us had been allotted. No tea. L/Cpl. sharing officers about. Made them carry own gear up hill to house.

Captain in Rangoon a month ago.

Had tin of M & V Res. Rations. Jackson came round wanting some for himself, no go. We shared 2 tins onions.

22nd May Friday, 1942

Managed to get through night without rain. No breakfast. Had breakfast/dinner at 12 o'clock.

600 of chaps marched out to aerodrome at 1 pm, 8 miles away.

I did a bit of a job loading Engineer stores. Can't get away from them.

Not many Japs here, and no visible defences. Must be pretty confident.

I was able to get a good wash down after being filthy for a week.

Unloaded a fair amount of aero petrol. Not many of our fellows left.

\*The only Japanese words resembling this, in the context, are "horyo" = P.O.W., "Kire" = salute.



Moss, Thomas, Spike Comb, Fallows, Duff, A. Bell, Simpson, O'Meagher, Brady, Boneham, Morris, Padgett, Whelan & Ned Iles.

Puzey moved during afternoon to bigger house. Darned good tea.

23rd May Sat, 1942

Moved out to aerodrome in trucks, fellows yesterday had to march. Road a real hairpin, several smashed cars on the way. Jap command nob, through interpreter, said if we work well, we would be well fed.

Aerodrome very small. We are camped under hut, as no accomodation available inside. Japs say they'll kill a bullock a day for us, as we are too thin. Chaps yesterday had nothing for 31 hours. Fair tea. Covered with dirt, but dry.

24th May Sun, 1942

And commenced with the crowning indignity of being ordered by an Australian officer to turn East and bow to the Sun. Where is their backbone? Had a good wash in waterhole. Took 9 class in P.T.'s [exercise] after Church Parade. Officers are trying to keep up choco smartness. Jap is putting the wind up them. Officers give one a pain, trying choco parade ground stunts. Tubby appointed sanitary inspector for camp.

25th May Monday, 1942

I am 43 and feel about 33. Nearly volunteered as interpreter, but held back as Japs asked for 9 strong men who spoke Malay. Duff went - he speaks very little.

I am having a good spell from any responsibility. Put my name down as surveyor and roadmaker. Have been wrecking 9 houses. Believe Japs intend us to reerect here. Aerodrome reminds me rather of Bunbury. Iles bought 10 eggs for a rupee off natives. Stinking rice for tea. 12 months since I was home. I wish I knew they were all O.K. That is the worst part.

26th May Tuesday, 1942

Went sick with sore throat and headache, then had a bludge and did some washing. Had an inspection by new Commandant, Japs are slicker than us at inspections. Tom Comb appointed small goods butcher. Might be handy. Marvellous how a man looks forward to and appreciated rice plus anything.

27th May Wednesday, 1942

Japs refuse to shoot any more Yaks, as they say it's causing trouble with bungs [local natives] apparently not been paying for them. Tea just plain rice. Had party wrecking house. Now have picket of our own on gate to stop fellows going out. Wonders never cease.

28th May Thursday, 1942

Nippon's orders. Work 10 - 12.30, 3.30 - 6.30, one day off per week. Pay is O.R.'s 10 cents, N.C.O.'s 15c, Officers and W.O.'s 25c. Nippon will punish any disobedience. They are trying to arrange for letters home and for canteen. Warned for guard tomorrow. Will refuse to order sentries to stop men leaving camps. Must not talk to bungs, must not discuss war. Military political class & literature to be handed in.

29th May Friday, 1942

12 months since we left Ascot. Raining like old boots. I missed guard.

30th May Saturday, 1942

John is 16. I wonder how tall he is and how he is going on. Suppose I can reckon on at least 12 months before I see them all. Japs asked for surveyors, want aerodrome traverse and levels. No instruments of any description. Would have liked a smack [smack?] for any other reason. Bungs mad about Yaks.

31st May Sunday, 1942

Green reckons we had to pay for Yaks and that Japs will punish any more scrounging. Have found out that some of our money came ashore. Raining like the devil. Have been here a week and have seen the sun about twice.

1st June Monday, 1942

On aerodrome surveying? Still raining. Japs want dimensions and levels without any instruments. Reckon in 3 weeks, a high bug [senior Jap officer?] due in plane. Had Jap rations in stew, seaweed, fish, soya beans etc.- not bad at all. Some of the fellows very undignified in the way they run after Japs for tucker, here and on the boat.



2nd June Tuesday, 1942

Fine in morning. Good bludge all day. Walked over drome looking at holes. About 18 blown but a number of others have been charged and left. Japs brought some stinking yak unfit to eat. One hole 35 ft. diameter 12 ft. deep.

3rd June Wednesday, 1942

Still moderately fine. Bludged all day. Rumour mongers, from whom we have had a spell, have the Chinese in Rangoon, our supply ships sunk, and us leaving here (1) next week (2) on 25th. It's funny at Kampong [village] with local Woolworth selling for 4 kinds of money.

4th June Thursday, 1942

Another day off for me. Gang were on acrodrome removing unexploded mined charges. Gangs building Hospital, officers quarters. A batch of Camp Standing Orders read out. Gem of all is "no visitors allowed without permission of Battalion H.Q.". Pay is being made up to May 31st @ 15c per [day?]. Milk 1/25, fish 1/25, sugar about 80c. Cheroots 3c. Fine all day.

5th June Friday, 1942

Digging up mines on drome. Signaller died at point. Rumour Bangkok bombed, our food ship missing, Russia & Japs at war.

6th June Saturday, 1942

On drome again. Sensitive plank [?]. Sold 4 tins onions for 2 bucks, bought molasses. Issue of 5 cigarettes and 1 cheroot. Wet through afternoon and concert at night. Tubby bought 3 eggs, 30 cents.

7th June Sunday, 1942

Flogged tomahawk for 3lbs. sugar. Day off. Had a banana and a piece of coconut. Mixed rice with them and brown sugar and fried in fat. Top hole. Orders now going into Point. Sugar 25c, milk 80c, cigars 1 & 2c each.

8th June Monday, 1942

Japs had us over drome. In Malay, Japanese, pidgin English they managed to convey they wanted a survey of 400 metres extra runway. Told them we wanted 4 days - OK. After lunch, all hands ordered out on drome looking for mines again with bonus offered. 2 Engined plane flew over and dropped message. No mines found. Banana stew for tea.

9th June Tuesday, 1942

On aerodrome. Tojo wants an area 400 metres wide surveying. If he wants it filling in we will be here 2 years. Green announced he had arranged for coconuts @ 6c and bananas @ 1c. About 1 in 20 has any money. Gangs filling craters.

10th June Wednesday, 1942

On drome again. Had men carrying dirt in bags in addition to 4 trucks. Tiger patrol at night. 12 months since we landed.

11th June Thursday, 1942

On drome. Jap Captain came out with book and interpreter and started questioning. He wanted to know from us how long a runway aeroplanes required. They don't seem to know anything. Lieutenant told us in 2 or 3 days, planes coming. Sugar to be 25c, milk 90c, bananas 1c, coconuts 12c, fish 50c & 90c.

12th June Friday, 1942

Finished survey. 500,000 cm. 500 men filling holes.

13th June Saturday, 1942

Paid \$2.40 for 16 days. Green and other H.Q. [officers] drew full 20 days. Ordered 7 cigars, 5 pineapples, 2 tins of fish, 30 bananas, 1lb salt - \$2. Took levels of drome. Then started on Sun house for Jap sentry. Japs shot buffalo on drome. Rain.

14th June Sunday, 1942

Did a bit of washing and read or rather studied. Cricket and football in afternoon, but both washed off by rain. Rumour of Germany's capitulation again. Pay \$2.40. 16 days at 25c. Green, Stringer etc. made sure of their 20 days at 25c. Sick get nothing.

15th June Monday, 1942

Rain all day. Rushed on to repairing fence round drome. We were only ones working on drome. Japs in a hurry to get Red House down. Jap told some fellows "Germany no fight now". Supply ships missing. Tokyo bombed heavily. Some stores arrived. Cigars & sugar. Cigars @ 3c. Surprisingly good smoke.

4 months today since surrender and have been fortunate as regards health up to now, but would like some news.



16th June Tuesday, 1942

Still raining all night. Rained all day; did no work. Germany capitulated again.

17th June Wednesday, 1942

Repairing fence and gates around drome. Tojo kept [?] Red House, party on till 7.15 to finish. Rumours of Britain, U.S. & Russia bombing Tokyo. Britain bombing Rangoon, Moulmein. No food ships arrived yet. 1 buffalo and 2 yaks killed.

18th June Thursday, 1942

Weight 99k [60kg?] = 9st. 6lb. Ht 173cm = 5'8", chest 87 - 91cm. = 34.6 - 35.8". Rained all morning. Medical inspection. No work. Chaplain supposed to have learned that we leave here on 25 - 29th.

19th June Friday, 1942

Aerodrome a.m. Dodged p.m. Ribbins hit with stick.

20th June Saturday, 1942

Had tobacco issued. Dodged all day. Moss keeled over. Fine.

21st June Sunday, 1942

Fine. Went with Tubby hunting iron. Got some fat from hangars. Played cricket W.A. vs Vic. Fighting finished in Libya. Russians have all Ukraine. Fighting in Indo China. Mandalay reoccupied.

22nd June Monday, 1942

Fine. Aerodrome a.m. All sorts of up lifting rumours about. Tubby went to Kampong. Sold boots etc. bought cigars, dried fish etc. I got Rs 1:14 for shirt & shorts. Told that Japs say only Jap currency to be used in future. Henry [?] five men for buying off bungs. Say we must not talk to natives.

23rd June Tuesday, 1942

Fine. On drome, filled in last and biggest crater. Had a feed of fish, fried rice & onions and a small loaf and delicious!!.

Went down to Kampong. Sold watch for Rs. 3. I asked R2 for Jack knife but most offered was R1.8. Tubby hoped for good price for cape, but R.3 maximum. Wouldn't part with it.

Bought onions, cigars, matches, bananas. Ordered eggs at 2 annas each. Matches 6c per box.

Got news from native that Britain had Mandalay, Chinese in Indo China, Russia belting Germany and fighting Japan. He said 1 month and English here.

Funny to hear bartering, fellows selling shirts off their back. Home at 1.00 (machine guns in jungle).

24th June Wednesday, 1942      £89.14.0

Fine. Down to Kampong. Bought dried fish, eggs, onions, frying oil, sugar, cigars. Spent up. Bungs everywhere buying and selling. One sat down in middle of road to try on boots. Bought them for Rs 4. Had fish and fried onions for tea. Gorgeous. Brady made jam.

25th June Thursday, 1942

Marking out runway 800m x 100m. Tojo intends to put 1 1/2" gravel where necessary. Rained all afternoon. Great feed of fish boiled, fried eggs, onions, rice and fried bread.

I was to represent B in quiz but cancelled. H.Q. at last made suggestion regarding buying. Suggested 1/2 cent per day per head to buy one beast more per week.

26th June Friday, 1942

On drome, all hands messing about. Fellow out of 2/4 M.T. died. Japs attended funeral, furnished wreath like a Xmas tree.

27th June Saturday, 1942

Jap holiday today. No work. Crop of wild and wooly furphys flying about. Major Cousins supposed to be at point and brought yarn that everything as good as over. Other version is that he is looking for tucker for other parties. 7 of them said to have been shot while escaping.

28th June Sunday, 1942

More or less confirmed. Cousins is going somewhere. 9 of one of A force parties shot after being recaptured. A force - 1500 at one place, 500 another, probably Mergui and Tavoya. Plane which flew over here came down at Mergui.



Bungs very insistent about "Hitler finish". Fighting in Mandalay, Indo China. From Duff, Japs say fighting in Aleutian Islands. On guard Saturday night.

29th June Monday, 1942

Slipped and ricked back last night. Confirmed that Cousins is going to Japan. Alleged news he brought was that 1500 at Mergui lived on rice and salt for one month. 9 shot. 2 died dyptheria.

British have Andamans and Nicobars. Mandalay firmly held. Chinese Indo-China. Revolt in Thailand. Russians hammering Germany. Tokyo very heavily bombed, also Singapore. Japs lost heavily in battle in Coral Sea. Attacked Aleutians, repulsed and landed at remote part of Alaska. Thai radio announced Hitler's death and cut off two minutes later.

Jap this morning said Toyahasi Maru and 2 others torpedoed returning to Singapore. Cousins said crew of little boat he was on very windy.

30th June Tuesday, 1942

Enquiry re Kampong. Henry and I had a few words. Henry donged 2/4 chaps. All over a clock stolen and found by owner. 17 admitted going. Called up after tea and after various threats including 4 days without food, Henry sentenced us to 3 days pay. Green must put his spoke in the way and he threatened also and yapped about what he was doing.

Showers of bungs along fence till Japs came down and charged with bayonet. Scattered like chaff. Knocked one out with butt.

1st July Wednesday, 1942

Carrying firewood down from hill. Rye growing in little clearings belonging to prosperous farmers. Green made announcements - Japs will shoot anyone caught outside fence. Green entirely unsympathetic. He's a pig.

2nd July Thursday, 1942

Up road 2 miles for gravel. Rained off pm. Through Spike we got 12 eggs for 15 annas, 12 annas worth of onions also some cakes. Spike is in Jap cook house. Bet Ned Iles 5 we would still be prisoners 22nd November. Bet Frank Downward £1 we would not be home for Xmas. Nice feed of boiled egg, curried onions and rice. Extra Jap sentries.

3rd July Friday, 1942

Bag carrying. Bet Fred Hall ~~A~~ would still be here end Sept.  
Eggs and onions.

4th July Saturday, 1942

I am orderly sergeant. Japs shot yak 3 times but it got away. Eggs and onions. Phillips looked for mining bags. Found 140.

5th July Sunday, 1942

W.A. played Queensland. Made 11. Won easily. Had last of my smokes.  
Eggs and onions.

6th July Monday, 1942

A few stores for canteen in. Got 2lbs of sugar. Probably very few more available. No Jap money for our pay yet. If no pay, no more canteen. Cooked last of eggs, last of onions, then spilt them. Bitter, bitter fate. Carrying firewood, hunting for L.M.G. [Light Machine Guns?].

7th July Tuesday 1942

Bag carrying and bludging.

8th July Wednesday, 1942 £94.50

Saw waterspout this morning over low hills. Must have been very high. After some time it bent over to 45° then bottom vanished and top swung into clouds.

Muster parade 1.15. A man escaped named Golding. Parties of Japs out all afternoon. I cannot fancy his chances but hear a yarn that he has bought a boat. Bag carrying. Tiger patrol.

9th July Thursday, 1942

Bag carrying am. All Japs (practically) out searching. Only one with us and did nothing. In afternoon, everybody rushed on to putting up more fences and putting scrub down.

Tonight the guard consists of 1 officer, 2 sergeants, 4 corporals, 27 OR's. Had yarn to Scott about attitude of men. He agrees that men have neither respect nor affection for some (?) officers and Green's attitude bad.



10th July Friday, 1942

Last night, the guard who were on when Golding escaped were sentenced to 5 days confinement in the open. Watson and Green confined to rooms for 2 & 1 days. Jap guard received some punishment which extends over 5 months, one of them losing a privilege to which he would have been entitled in a couple of months.

34 guard, 36 pickets, 8 on boob, Q.Q. & B.O.S. on duty last night. 80 all told and Japs who were on gui vive [?] all night. Stringer read order from Japs. Golding to be shot at sight, we would soon be home. Needless to try and escape, further punishments much heavier. 20 of guard in room 12 x 12 no roof no walls.

11th July Saturday, 1942

I believe drome work nearly done. Guard is faring pretty well in boob. Great excitement among Japs when truck went past with Jap in it hollering something. Later: Golding captured, I believe only 10 miles away. Concert quite good. Lockyer died at Point, 2/10.

12th July Sunday, 1942

Guard in boob released. Golding shot. All appeals went unheeded. He died like a man. Shot almost out of our hearing. We lined the road out for him. A twin engined plane landed pm. Looked as if it was going to clean up the fence, landing with wind but just managed to turn. 7 aboard. On guard at night. I believe Golding gave himself up. He had apparently no plan and had just been wandering round in the jungle. He was picked up only 10 miles away. Didn't think Japs were serious until finale. Henry and others very upset on surface. Plane left at 3.30 heading N.E.

13th July Monday, 1942

New Jap officer here. Altering fence and removing lump - 800m is apparently not long enough. Note: Cookhouse in dark. 5 cigars issued, 1/4 coconut, 1 1/2 dollars credit.

14th July Tuesday, 1942

Making knife rests [?] where fence shifted. Believe Japs have had some bad news. Scott tells me Green is a typical dictator - Believe he reported Golden [Golding] to Henry immediately he knew.

15th July Wednesday, 1942 96-10-6

Knife rests. Two ships seen in roads, one said to be white. All kinds of rumours about them.

16th July Thursday, 1942

Filling in small holes on drome. Sgt. Rodgers bashed and given an extra days pay. Note: Hindle's case with Jackson & Green. Bung said "Rangoon - Indians, Moulmein - Japs, Java, Sumatra - English, Singapore - English Bomb, Indo China, China - Japan fight Germany O Labis"?

17th July Friday, 1942

Roller too wet so knocked off and brought in some yaks after 3 days without. Basher clouted 3 and nearly collected himself. Japs had had blow in Burma.

18th July Saturday, 1942

Issue of cigarettes. Messing about on drome. Henry said to have stated that Japs in bad position in Burma. Note: Kreta lembu yokes [?] etc. runaway buffalo shot on drome after straying. Concert interrupted by rain.

19th July Sunday, 1942

Played N.S.W. in cricket. Lost. I made 11 n.o. and 2 for 3. Rain on and off. Duff says Japs not at all worried. Japs practising with rifle machine gun and mortar on drome for shoot at point tomorrow. Shooting woeful.

20th July Monday, 1942

Bag carrying. I missed. Japs shot a crocodile about 10ft long. Note: Ambush at Gemas while on patrol of bridges. Officers supposed to be getting their own mess and kitchen. Food has been ghastly last 2 or 3 days. No sugar, no salt, no meat. House picket at night.

21 July Tuesday, 1942

Raining. Platoon on firewood. Rumour that canteen stuff due today. Bungs say Germany finished some days.



22nd July Wednesday, 1942 98-16-10

Water fatigue. Canteen stuff supposed to be here waiting for cash which is due by either plane or boat. Indians said to be independent about Jap money. Henry alleged to have said they had Ceylon. Tucker putrid.

23rd July Thursday, 1942

Aeroplane arrived about 2. Only here about an hour. Two engined monoplane, long pointed nose, tapered wings, single sudden retract gear. Ploughed up sheets of water when taking off. Moss & Halliday into Point to fix up wireless. Rain. Again awful grub. Weevilly rice & vegetable soup.

24th July Friday, 1942

Boat said to have arrived with money and supplies. Rain. Tubby & I made bed. Moss back.

25th July Saturday, 1942

Canteen stuff came out. Believe there are cigs, soap, toothpaste, eggs, onions etc. Credit to be for 40 days. Nothing to be issued till tomorrow.

Felt very crook, headache and stiffness but M.O. can do nothing for me. R.A.P. is full, one man has very bad beri beri, living on eggs and milk. Had a cheroot loaned to me, first smoke for a week. Rain the day through.

26th July Sunday, 1942 100

Will have a hundred to go out with anyway and unfortunately prospects of considerably more. Suppose M [Mary], will have a little away.

Quite a sensation this morning. Apparently a light seen out to sea during night. Japs rushed into point, came back and took Green in. He returned about 10.30 am. I'm still feeling pretty groggy. Rain all day.

27th July Monday, 1942

Drew sugar and onions. 1 egg which was bad. Rain all morning, fine in afternoon. Rations very light. Jap Lt. told McAuley that Finland slung it in some time ago, Russian troops taken over from British in Iran. Cousins went to Australia, to go by plane from S'pore. Taking list.

Told at evening, rice cut down in future and flour finished.

28th July Tuesday, 1942

Fine all day. About 80 men from point out on drome working. Jap said we were going to Tavoya in a month.

29th July Wednesday, 1942 #101-1-8

Alleged to come from Indian British driving East of Rangoon to Moulmein. Another column towards Bangkok and Chows overrunning Indo China. Bangkok in ruins, Hanoi captured, Saigon & Rangoon threatened. Henry said to have admitted loss of Java. Rain am. Good tea - yak stew and onions.

30th July Thursday, 1942

Further rumours. Rangoon, Java recaptured. Plane landed pm. Yarn that Sitting Bull is going on it tomorrow.

Hours now 10 - 12.30, 2.30 - 5.30.

31st July Friday, 1942

Kerd [?] rice for breakfast. Unknown plane passed over at great height heading north. Japs knocked us off at 3. Plane still here.

1st August Saturday, 1942

Plane still here. Bungs again confirm news. Say Russia taken 100,000 prisoners. Plane left this morning, taking Captain from point away, after giving a joy flight and giving boys a slip stream. Knocked off at 4 o'clock again. Rumours of drastic reduction in food. FIRE PICKET.

2nd August Sunday, 1942

Had a good game of cricket. Started weeks P.O.S.

3rd August Monday, 1942

Glorious prophesy this morning. We are to be told on Thursday that we are moving. Henry said to have asked cooks how many days' rations could be prepared. Bung says fighting in Burma finished. Chows and Indians here in few days.

Plane brought Sitting Bull back and took off again immediately. Couple of chaps smacked.

4th August Tuesday, 1942

Now said to be 100 men going to Tavoya Saturday, remainder following in 5 days. Japs say if no better work less tucker. If any complaints will make change (probably for worse). Raised pay 5 cents per day & 10. Men 15, NCO 25, Off. 35.

6th August Thursday, 1942

Big moves today. All "C" Company ordered away, then three platoons of "B". Myself and 13 others, Moss, Bunny Jones, Ribbons, Oliver Yates Slim Falloys and 2/10 chaps excluded fortunately. Then Japs wanted more and took all 3 platoons except 3 men now including Tubby. 18 RAE here.

Some gunfire heard at 0830 and Jap trucks which were here to transport troops, dashed away to Point but returned later. Made 3 trips, chaps had 21 biscuits and 2 buns to last them probably 3 or 4 days. Going to Tavoya. Japs say we are all to follow inside a month. 420 gone from here, believe 150 from point. Now 270 here.

Drew Rs 3/75. Got little canteen stuff. Remember Green and his being sick is bed. Henry "He got I know he sick but he GO!" BUGS.

7th August Friday, 1942

Reveille not till 0900. Ted Baten H.Q. Great improvement complaint from 4 [platoon] but no good. Moved to officers quarters.

8th August Saturday, 1942

Transferred to 4 platoon. Had a good meat pie and bun for tea. Placed order for 1.50. Quite comfortable in new quarters. Only 9 of us including Ken Skinner, Pop Hammer of 2/4, Moss & I. Ken of 2/4 has not yet come up.

Am told fellows were allowed round village at Point before they went aboard.



9th August Sunday, 1942

Bought some Chuppattos [a type of flat bread] out at back. Natives allowing 4c Burma for 5 Japs. Have a rupee down with Duff trying to get cigars but point cleaned out.

Had a knife and fork tea. Roast yak and sweet potatoes. Peculiar but the anticipation was the best part of it. I suppose that is the case with most things. Killed a snake.

10th August Monday, 1942

2 years today since I took oath. Still in reasonable enjoyment of health and faculties. Raining like old boots during night and morning. This hut is alive with rats.

On drome in the afternoon. All tools gone into point and believe a move is likely Wednesday or Thursday. Rest of boys paid up to 31st July, probably canteen stuff coming.

Rumour. Fighting within 100 miles Moulmein and 30 miles Bangkok. We have closed Malacca Straits. Obviously ridiculous. Tavoy is only 150 miles from Bangkok.

11th August Tuesday, 1942

Out on wood and was able to buy some chuppattos and buns, cigarettes wrapped in bamboo leaves. Believe we move tomorrow. Boys having a great sing song down in the big hut although it is 11.30. Have had plenty of meat today.

12th August Wednesday, 1942

Moved all night. Am sitting on stone jetty at point waiting to go aboard a little oil tanker of about 1500 tons. 350 of us. I rode in on trucks and naturally ours broke down and we had to wait for another. Had the freedom of town for 3 hours. Had Jam fritters and coffee. Quite a respectable sized place.

13th August Thursday, 1942

Went aboard in batches of about 80 on to little MV of about 1000 tons, nearly all Japs in Garrison down to say goodbye, like close relatives. First 180 or (?) 200 crammed down below, just sitting room when everybody is still. Remainder of us up on deck. No cover except awning over hatchway. Ken Skinner and I camped alongside hatch - just able to lie down. My bedding bundle fell in the sea.

Impromptu concert. Sailed at 7.30. [Several indecipherable words]

Raining all day. Spectacle down below. 280 men in about 64ft x 21ft one area measures out 5sq ft per man and kit.

At 8 pm drew in to one of the hundreds of islands and anchored for night, reason unknown. Passed reasonable night. (Man sick stamping feet and writhing) No 593 [ship's number].

14th August Friday, 1942

Sailed at 8. Sea a bit choppy, but sun shining. Small M.V. No 561 passed us going south at 4.30. Probably the other boat that brought troops up.

15th August Saturday, 1942

Arrived at Tavoy at 8 am and anchored miles out. Got onto 2 barges and travelled from 1030 to 1415 seeing nothing. Had to march and carry baggage out to camp about 2 1/2 miles. The town has been quite a good one but every decent building now gutted. Burmese have wonderful fruit, smokes, cakes and biscuits.

Met up with other fellows except some have gone this morning to Ye, together with Dutchmen, who were here. (500) Some pommies here. Big crowd going to Ye Monday. Japs much stricter here.

Lot of Dutch have died of dysentery. 5 AIF shot at Mergui. 8 here attempted escape. Had feed of rice at 5 pm, first today. Camped in what appears to be a big school building.

16th August Sunday, 1942

Had a days rest and game of contract. Met A. Bell and Knight. Ralph says 3 shot, 17 died at Mergui. Lot of Poms here who escaped from S'pore and were caught in Sumatra. Sanitary measures rotten. Water bad.

17th August Monday, 1942

Crowd went out this morning. Rumour - we have New Britain, fighting in Java. Yanks have Philippines. Japs landed in Alaska.

18th August Tuesday, 1942

Germans near Rostov and Alexandria. Japs near Calcutta. Solomons, New Guinea retaken. Landing in Java. 36 Jap transports sunk. Coventry bombed again.

Over 200 in hospital at Mergui at one time. Made up contract 4.

19th August Wednesday, 1942

Rehearsing for play and had concert in evening. Hall absolutely full. Band here from Mergui. I hear we remain here for 10 days before we move on. Pommies caught in Sumatra after getting away from island.

Light failed on us for concert. Was paid £1.65. Orders taken for canteen. Prices dear. (Did Difference with Ellis).

20th August Thursday, 1942

We are supposed to have reoccupied Solomons. Had a game of contract. Lt. K. Briggs, Len Smith, Sandy and I.

21st August Friday, 1942

Still rehearsing. Canteen stuff arrived. Leaf not bad. Ghur like toffee. Rice cakes O.K.

22nd August Saturday, 1942

Play a huge success. We move on Monday. Rumour to Prepans Island.

23rd August Sunday, 1942

More contract. Paraded for Japs. Counting up for shift then told not going tomorrow.

24th August Monday, 1942

We are attacking Carolines. Germans near Stalingrad. Not too good. Hear we move Wednesday. Repeat play tomorrow.

25th August Tuesday, 1942

Had play again. Duke of Kent reported killed. Germans stopped. Big raid on Dieppe. Chows captured 2 ports. Mexico and Brazil in war. Japs lost engagement off Solomons. We're supposed to have retaken New Britain, Guinea, Timor. Still no move. Later - to go tomorrow.



26th August Wednesday, 1942

Move cancelled again. We're bombing Rabaul and Timor? 100 Jap planes over Darwin. Concert. Rodeo with yak around compound. Japs slapping. Raining.

27th August Thursday, 1942

Raining. Bridge etc. Fine talk on Prince of Wales and Repulse.

28th August Friday, 1942

Raining. No move yet.

29th August Saturday, 1942

Raining. Concert. Heard English officers give news. D. of K. going to Iceland when killed. Russians advanced 130m in Stalingrad sector, quiet elsewhere. Germans pushed back in Libya. No fighting, sandstorms. Long naval engagement off Solomons. Yanks claim win. Japs reported to try landing near Brisbane. Brazil, Uruguay Argentina declare war on Japan.

It has now rained 4 days almost without ceasing. Believe chaps at Ye are living in tents in mud. Our departure indefinite. Going to Moulmein eventually.

30th August Sunday, 1942

No news, no move.

31st August Monday, 1942

News excellent. Russians encircled huge army of Germans. Yanks outmanouvered Japs at Solomon. Chows driven through to coast and hold drome from which can bomb Japan.

2nd September Wednesday, 1942

Out to drome on working party. 25 cents. About 2 1/2 miles. Good drome, gravelled runways, 2 hangars broken, 9 pass planes, 2 engines, 2 rudders.

Met Watchorn. Says have had a good time except for first couple of weeks. Had 22 mile march with kits when first landed. News fairly similar to ours. Things tough in Russia.

3rd September Thursday, 1942

Japs had affair here, farewell party in our quarters. Band and Burmese band. Band given supper. Usual horde of ravening pigs eating scraps and draining bottles.

5th September Saturday, 1942

Drome again. Rained all day. Yanks celebrating great naval victory. Japs had heavy losses at Solomons. British landed at Akyab. Chinese doing well. Excellent concert.

6th September Sunday, 1942

Raining all day. Jap said to have told fellows about Jap defeat at Solomons and Midway Islands. Larry Osmond died last Thursday after being ill for months. He seemed to be picking up on voyage up.

7th September Monday, 1942

Raining. Landing said to have been made at Akyab, between Rangoon and Chittagong. Yanks celebrating great naval victory at Midway Isle. Tanks landed behind Rommel and doing well. News from Russia pretty tough. Chows near Canton. Two officers bashed at drome.

8th September Tuesday, 1942

Bungs say news very good. Jap officer told one of fellows "Japan never win this war". New arrangement. Am now in 'D' company. Still raining.

9th September Wednesday, 1942

Reports. Chows doing very well. Japs nearly out of N. Guinea. Rommel cut off from supplies. Col. Ramsay said new Jap taking charge. Raining.

10th September Thursday, 1942

Was going to drome but raining like b\_\_\_.

11th September Friday, 1942

At drome. Rained all pm. Concerts cut down to one per week.

12th September Saturday, 1942

Drome. Japs supposed to have broadcast some time ago that they were sending 16,000 POW to Korea. Heavy fighting in New Guinea. Chows doing well with American plane's assistance. Hard day at drome.

13th September Sunday, 1942

Concerts in Hall on Sundays only now. Raining all day. Muster parade. Rangoon being heavily bombed.

14th September Monday, 1942

Believe rice ration raised today. Town party rushed by applicants, bungs very good.

15th September Tuesday, 1942

7 months captivity today. Out on wood party. Quite a decent day sawing with Ken Skinner. Got some sweet potatoes and a naval Lt. was slapped for having some. Drome work finished today.

16th September Wednesday, 1942 117

No work except town and wood parties. Ken Briggs back from Hospital and says 30 trucks of Japs including 1 truck of wounded back from front. One of them told him Rangoon being heavily bombed. Japs supposed to be massing in Sumatra for attack on India. Reports say Germans held on all fronts. We have New Guinea and Solomons. Chinese doing very well. Had some sweet potatoes. Extra.

17th September Thursday, 1942

Only town and wood parties out. Pay closing today and I have 75 cents in. Sun is shining for a change, we are going to get our things down below to air. Nel Wiseman from W. Pemberton in 4th M.T. says Frenchs' Barnes [?] (doing well), kneebone about all there. Forrestry now at Butter Fat Junction. We have Rangoon.

18th September Friday, 1942

Sun shining.



19th September Saturday, 1942

Fine again. Japs told town party to remember they were still soldiers and British. Wonderful! I believe the exhibitions of bumming have been terrible.

Gave "Only a poor little millgirl". Two men caught in town at night.

20th September Sunday, 1942

Had muster parade. Col. Ramsay appealed for better behaviour and hygiene. Major Cholmers warned us that cholera and typhoid very possible. Bung threw stone wrapped in 1/2 rupee note to Fred Pritchard and said "news very good". Two men pardoned. There is one man in boob for insolence to Phil The Bill.

21st September Monday, 1942

Moss went out on his first working party. Won 8/- at C. Bridge; brought down to 1.3 later. Had a varied feed at night of stuff brought back. Burmese have treated us wonderfully. Believe at Mergui they offered to take over whole feeding but Nips would not allow. Even took some home to dinner today.

22nd September Tuesday, 1942

No work. Warned this morning to stand by at 2 hours notice to move to Rangoon by sea. This seems to effectually dispose of rumours. Had muster parade. 15000 Japs in R from Aus! [?]

23rd September Wednesday, 1942

Told this morning that we should be here 'til Tuesday at least. Chows have Canton and Hanchow. Russians holding Germans. Heavy Jap naval losses.

24th September Thursday, 1942

On what we thought was town party but which turned out to be wharf party. Hard work all day loading every sort of store from motor bikes to soft drinks. One Jap says they go to Sumatra.

Town party report Nips would not allow them to scrounge as usual and seemed very sour. Jap H.Q. party report same feeling and in camp they stopped projected football, boxing and concert.

Bungs in town giving V for victory signs. Stalingrad a German graveyard. Heavy Jap naval losses. Chows have Indo China. We are on offensive in Libya.

25th September Friday, 1942

Real dinkum oil. Chow have Canton, Haichow etc. etc.

26th September Saturday, 1942

7000 Yank planes in India where is serious terrorist agitation. Japs had smashing at Solomons but landed big force in N.G. Japs now lost 160 warships. Heavy work cut out? Rice reduced.

27th September Sunday, 1942

Received more authentic news. Confused fighting New Guinea and Solomons. Russians just holding at Stalingrad, which is raised to ground. Rommel has Tobruk but we have Benghazi. Canberra sunk. Heavy air raid on London. Observer says Germany can hold out till next Spring but Japan till the end of 1943! Wow. Oh! We are going to [?].

We have landed Solomon. Chows massing millions on frontier.

Later. Russians chasing Germans. Heavy air raids on low lands. Germany lost 2000 tanks Stalingrad Commentators think air raids prelude to attack but probably not before Spring.

Japs have 150,000 men on Indian border consolidating. New Guinea very confused. A.I.F. have to have supplies by plane. Churchill says Jap plane production 1000 per month. Disposition of Jap fleet known and can be dealt with. Largest convoy ever to leave England arrived in Russia after attacks by sea and air. Chows have Hong Kong.

28th September Monday, 1942

Found steambugs among gear. We gave everything a good search and sunbath - all we could do! Made deal with bung for Rs 30 for store. He's coming Wednesday evening with coin.

29th September Tuesday, 1942

Aerodrome crowd marched past on way to boats. Say going to Moulmein.

30th September Wednesday, 1942 121-11-0

About 200 of Mergui chaps returned from wharf after 24 hours in a scow being not able to get aboard boat. Nips told them they would be going in 10 days time.

Fruity crop of rumours of success everywhere. Roosevelt resigned - ill health. Japs presented all B Company Coms with roses [?].

1st October Thursday, 1942

About 50 Dutch came in from hospital leaving about 200 out there. Was B.O.S. Hear fellows at Ye are coming back here.

More loutish behaviour. Bungs treated fellows out on road job well yesterday and were repaid by having their bucket and two fowls stolen. Truly the greatest drag on white man's prestige is the white man.

Nips, after last week forbidding concerts except at weekend, ordered one today.

2nd October Friday, 1942

Red hot flashes passed through fence. Russia - Stalingrad graveyard of German army. They have received hammering from which they cannot recover. British convoy reached N. Russia with loss of 1 ship, destroying 3 subs and 48 aircraft. Cologne almost destroyed by 1000 bombers.

London aircraft production figures - Britain and U.S.A. producing twice as many planes as whole axis. U.S.A. - Wilkie says must open new front. France. Laval ordered 30 mile deep evacuation of coastal areas. India. Wavell says drive is on. Burma must be relieved first then every effort to help China. Says unrest in India very minor. 70,000 enlistment per month. China. Chungking reports doing well everywhere.

New Guinea. Stanley Hill, last stronghold of Japs has fallen. Also a yarn about recapture of S'pore.

3rd October Saturday, 1942

Quite a number of men missing from working party at drome. Some discovered down town. All slung in civil jail. Russians now in tough spot in Stalingrad and AIF doing well in N. Guinea.

4th October Sunday, 1942

Pommies from jail brought back. Several M.T. men driving trucks for Nips. Supposed to be taking Poms to Ye tomorrow.

5th October Monday, 1942

M.O. Major Cameron addressed us, asking us to behave well to save Nips sending any more guards here. Start P.T.'s tomorrow.



7th October Wednesday, 1942

Working on new road for Nips. Had a look round small Burmese temple and tombs. Burmese appear very confident. We're supposed to be going Friday.

8th October Thursday, 1942

Two transports conveying Brit POW's to Korea reported sunk by USA subs. This confirmed by Japs here. Say only 20% saved. This will make pleasant reading at home.

Russians holding Germans. New Guinea news good. Tremendous bombing Germany. Say BBC reports plane production USA 2000 per month, Britain 1000 per month. Cannot accept that.

Bungs say release in 16 days! Moss crook. Nips taking wireless masts down.

9th October Friday, 1942

Ships supposed to arrive Tokyo with diplomats and Japs prisoners. Nips getting a smashing everywhere. Report Chow captured Hainan. Yanks using it as air base. Whispers of bad feeling in Russia against British efforts.

12th October Monday, 1942

Dutchmen took part in concert. No. P.T's yesterday or today owing to pouring continuously. Brought Bridge balance to over 2. Rumours becoming very optimistic. Akyab occupied.

Great shortage of wood for private cooking. Place looks like being wrecked before long. Been raining solidly for 3 days.

14th October Wednesday, 1942

Still raining like old boots. Parties on wrecking parts of huts for firewood. Wild and wooly furrphies of Mergui being bombed. Singapore occupied etc. Many chuppatti sellers.

17th October Saturday, 1942

Had Irish night at concert. Rumours of another move next week.

18th October Sunday, 1942

Told this morning would be moving out Tuesday morning. Destination supposed to be Moulmein. 11 planes passed over heading North very high up. 8 recc. planes landed at dome pa.

Germans say have seen hundreds of barges along England coast and had to bring troops from East. Fifth successive huge daylight raid on French coastal area. Wavell's H.Q. at Delhi and he flown to troops fighting on Burmese soil.

Japs made attack on Solomons again. News from N. Guinea still good - Bung beaten up.

19th October Monday, 1942

Two pommies caught outside last night, believe first time one of them has been cut. Do not know yet whether they will be shot, as Japs threatened. Anglo - Indian is taking big risks.

We're issued with 4 bags of biscuits, tin of meat to 12 and tea as rations for voyage. Had check parade.

20th October Tuesday, 1942

Paraded at 9 with kit. Fortune favoured us as kitbags were trucked in. March in through town, people too scared of Japs to offer to give much. 400 Poms, 500 us, 90 Dutch, 150 from Ye. Had to travel 35 hours of scow. 5 hour journey made into 10 owing to us running aground in 2 mile wide stretch of water. Several planes passed over.

Indian on scow told us India had Home Rule, very solidly behind British and Burma. 3/5 at least of Rangoon being bombed. Boat about 2500 tons with 700 aboard. Jammed down to sitting room only in hold. Japs very bullying.

Sailed at 2 with other smaller ships with about 300 aboard. Read "Between 2 Wars" by Vigilantes absolute eye opener regarding politics.

21st October Wednesday, 1942 #128-7-6

Passing up Burmese coast all day, same old hilly country with innumerable islands just off shore. Extraordinarily beautiful sunset. Sky pink, red and blue, even making sea pink and in one place forming what looked like a lake with golden rays of sun shining and shadows looking almost like trees in background and a ray of yellow light right across it.

There is a Chinese prisoner aboard. We know nothing about him.

22nd October Thursday, 1942

Dropped hook at 4 am until 8 then set off up Salwyn River till 2 when we pulled alongside jetty. Our consort is our old friend 593 and this tub is 583. River just series of mud flats with hills in background. Channel very winding. Moulmein spread out along S.E. bank of river.

Disembarked and told we would camp here for night and go on train journey tomorrow. Marched through town to jail, quite a big place. People seemed very friendly, numbers of fruit and smokes given. Am now bedded down on concrete verandah waiting for tea, due at 9.30.

23rd October Friday, 1942

Finally had tea at 10pm last night. Breakfast 8, set out at 9, marched to station 4 kilos, carrying gear. Entrained in trucks, 30 to truck, 2 hours travelling to Thambuzayat, 36 miles on line to Ye.

Great activity here. Nips are commencing construction of line to Bangkok which had been surveyed by British camp close by, just base. Troops all spread out in 3 jungle camps.

Met Anderson of Ord. from Vic point and Ron Earl. Say work is monotonous but tucker and conditions fair. Jap. Com. a pig. They had good time at Ye. Marched 25 miles to Chail over broken line and bridges and have been here a few weeks. Have 600 in their camp. Green C.O. He has turned out trumps. Did 8 days rigorous confinement refusing [?] parole. Blew White (M.G.) up. He, White, is the last word.

Told us of Japs tying Dutch up to trees with red ants. Jap propaganda magazines. We expect to move out Sunday, all going to one camp. Had feed of onions off boat. Incc. for Cholera.

24th October Saturday, 1942

4 Dutch half castes escaped 20 days ago, not yet been recaptured. Chap who moved too slowly when ordered stood to attention for 2 hours in front of guard room. Mosquitos vicious. Other fellows arrived.

25th October Sunday, 1942

Arranged in Humis of about 50. Stewart in charge of us 46 W.O.'s and Sgts. Had plain rice for breakfast at 10.30. Am told there are 1700 A.I.F., Dutch and Americans from Java in Moulmein including some 2/3 M.G., 3 M.T. Wonder if Tim and Bessell were unlucky. Also 200 survivors of Hobart, Perth Australia. Had speech from Jap Colonel.



KANDAU

## CHAPTER 4

26th October Monday, 1942

Out to jungle camp at 4 kilos. Green C.O. 3 dysentery deaths this week. KANDAU. Approx 1200 men here. Sleeping on shelves.\*

27th October Tuesday, 1942

Started work, have one .2 [1.2m?] metres per day per man to shift. Bungs in camp here as well. Have decided the "heirloom" is not valued by bungs at all.

Some of 2/3 MT and Dutch and sailors off Perth and American Artillery from Java passed here. Stubbed my toe.

28th October Wednesday, 1942 130-12-0

Had day off, toes too sore. Did some washing.

29th October Thursday, 1942

Put in bridge building gang. Longer hours but some spells. Have gone completely native now. Just wear hat and lava lava [loincloth].

Sailors off Houston passed. Say 2/3 M.G. were captured without firing a shot. About 3000 AIF caught in Java. Perth, Houston etc. claim huge damage before they were sunk.

30th October Friday, 1942

Still bridge building.

31st October Saturday, 1942

Wedding ann. and quite a novel way of spending it. Had in the nature of a mild strike to protest against long hours, but no good. Had armed guard and riot act read. News from North exciting.

1st November Sunday, 1942

Work as usual today but had easier time, whether owing to yesterday's trouble I do not know.

\*'Beds' were bamboo sleeping platforms about 40cm above ground which ran the full length of huts. They slept on wooden slats.

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2nd November Monday, 1942

Quite a bit of very high aerial activity. News that Wavell driving from Akyab, Mandalay ours. Have commands in Nips. Yeski! Yasma! [?].

3rd November Tuesday, 1942

Day off. Had shave and did some washing. Melbourne Cup day.

11th November Wednesday, 1942

Armistice Day. We had our 2 minutes silence out on job. Several fellows have been bitten by scorpions and centipedes and snakes killed around camp. Saw elephant hauling logs. Whitfield escaped on Monday, still not heard of. Japs say cholera broken out near here. Stopped bungs coming but they still come round. Cholera also said to be in next camp.

Skinner and Northey crook with diarrhoea. I sold slacks and shirt for Rs 5 1/2. Every Kumi to provide Watchmen in future.

Boys hold a bit of singsong nearly every night. Clarinet, trumpet, guitar, drum, sounds excellent. Bungs held counter demonstration last night. Sounded b\_\_\_\_\_ awful.

12th November Thursday, 1942

Party went into Thamborozia [Thambuzayat?] today for dental treatment. Brought a bushel of news back. Landings in N. Africa, complete control. French fleet destroyed. Darlan captured. Germans arrested Vichy leaders and occupied whole of France. Russians advancing on all line. Jap losses in Solomons heavy, only hold small part of N.G.

13th November Friday, 1942

Rained all pm, knocked off at 3.15. Nips had 42 eggs pinched from their cookhouse. Issued an order to man responsible to confess. Have been taking down bridge we had nearly completed for some reason.

15th November Sunday, 1942

Rest day and raining this afternoon. Had photo of Kumi taken this morning. 9 months.

16th November Monday, 1942

Ran a bit of stake into toe, nothing much but sent home. (Egomy - [Jap officer] Dyn cyanide and his behaviour, Dumpy. Bungs "Nip Bung B - G - F"). [?]

17th November Tuesday, 1942

In camp with attack of trots. Bungs frightened away from market, eggs very difficult to get.

18th November Wednesday, 1942

Still crook. Several deaths.

19th November Thursday, 1942

Egomy kept us till 1.30 before he let us go to grub because tools weren't all collected. Elephant working.

20th November Friday, 1942

Off crook. Rumours of move very soon. Canteen stuff arrived.

21st November Saturday, 1942

Still in camp. Rotten pains in tummy.

25th November Wednesday, 1942     #139-15-0

Resto. Yesterday we were taken off the Bridge bldg, and went along with rest of crowd to cutting. Finishing two hours earlier than our usual time.

Guard have changed over, others gone elsewhere and what a relief to get rid of Egomy. Hear more Dutchmen escaped, and result is guards (armed) at all points. Patrolling in pairs at night and very strict on watchmen. Bung sellers have been practically cut out, scared to come near camp. Probably had not enough timber in sight in Burma to keep going with Egomy on bridges. New guards all equipped with our rifles, etc, very young in fact a man of 30 is rare. They are doing a bit of fraternising.



THESE (11) for Thailand

## CHAPTER 5

3rd December Thursday, 1942

In new camp 6 miles further on 14km from Thamb. At foot of very steep hills about 1000ft. New camp with lots to do make us reasonably comfy. Less room than before, about 2ft per man.

Cholera still about. Water must be boiled for 15 minutes. Not allowed to buy off natives. Camp rules very strict. Evenings are ghastly. 20 officers went into Thamb, last night to pictures and same tonight. Am going to Bible study. Have been making huts up to now.

5th December Saturday, 1942

Resto. Badly missing salt.

7th December Monday, 1942

Had most startling dream of Joyce d. appearing to me playing at piano and telling me she was not absolutely happy.

One of sentries fired shot about 11 apparently while unloading on relief. Believe he had his features slapped well and truly. We started yesterday on bridge and the cows kept us out till six. Nips object to us singing at work, since crowd in cutting stopped on in rain and sang to wet guards "Bless 'em all".

10th December Thursday, 1942

Off with a crook back, don't know whether it is cold or strain. Have been on pile driver for couple of days, while the Bungs do the carpentering. Statements said to be made by recaptured Dutchmen show natives as treacherous but might be Nips propaganda. Order night before last forbidding buying even if [?] guards was followed by orgy of open buying yesterday. Guards saying that quite all right.

Appears that Col. Nagatoma has gone, maybe for a month, maybe for ever and new Comm. has already made presence felt. Has postponed execution of Dutchmen. Increased rations all round. Ordered hospital to be built in camp here and promised to do all he can to improve things. I hear he regards Naga as a maniac.

(Intelligent elephants)

15th December Tuesday, 1942

Yesme today. \*The three Dutchmen were shot on Sunday at Thambuzayat and Whitfield gave himself up.

Pile driver collapsed on Sunday and hurt two of our fellows and a Jap. Had a saluting parade this morning! We have to salute all Nips now. Hopes to have fried steak for Xmas.

Hear Whitfield was shot later same day as Dutchmen. Three Dutch and Pom in camp to learn to tan leather.

18th December Friday, 1942

Had some canteen stuff arrive fairly cheap but poor quality. Dahl and beans full of weevils. Believe Nagatoma's brother-in-law a merchant in Moulmein.

News extremely cheering if true! Had a Nips general out who is supposed to be in charge of railway construction. did not see him but hear the only thing he said to Green was "Too many men in camp". 365 on sick parade out of 1100.

Have been on Pile driving for some time now. Perhaps the easiest job here is on the Bridgebuilding, but pulling the rope all day is by way of getting a bit monotonous. Measurement is now up to 1.4, 1.2 and 1 metre. Hard going!

Talk of Commandos. Three or four planes over every day.

21st December Monday, 1942

Was innoculated for bubonic plague yesterday, no Saturday. News still continues extra good, if believable. Russians now in Polish Corridor. N.G. & Solomons cleaned up. Advancing in Burma. N. Africa as good as finished. Andamans heavily bombed.

One of guards found asleep in our kitchen last night by their corporal. Bought bundle of fish, 50 dried like small gardies. Dahl, split peas and onions and eggs. Will have a bit of a feed Xmas day. Rumour of pensions in Aus. for our dependants. 11 dead in week at Thambuzayat.

\*Yesme. (Yasume) Japanese term for rest day which was granted every 10 days.



23rd December Wednesday, 1942

Nips are giving us Xmas Day off (It is a normal 10th Day Yesme). Very hot on bowing and saluting now. Made some chaps stand with hands in air for half hour as punishment.

25th December Friday, 1942

Xmas Day and Resto.

1st as POW, 2nd away from home, 3rd in AIF, 8th in army. Pray no more away from my own stamping ground. Had quite a decent concert last night. Lights out not till 11.

Green announced Nips promised cards home shortly and New Years Eve might be till 12.30 lights out. Had 3 yaks and 3 pigs for grub but butchers found one cow and one pig heavy in calf and pig respectively.

On pisquet [picket?] 11-12. Nearly got a stone at my head for looking in Butcher's shop then boned by Nip for no arm band. Grabbed somebody's washing [?] split off in 2. Had quite a respectable dinner, plenty of meat and fried egg fish meat and rice for tea. Also 1 mandarin per man.

27th December Sunday, 1942

Nips shot Sgt. McDonnell of 2/10 Fld Rgt at next camp. Details a bit dark, also shot 3 more Dutchmen. News still continues very good.

Had postcards issued yesterday and they are to be in by morning. Wonder if they will ever reach home. Don't know if I have mentioned our sanitary pan stew dixies before.

28th December onday, 1942

Sore throat. 5 more Dutch said to have gone.

13th January Wednesday, 1943 - very hard to read. 154.13.6

Weather still fine and having very easy time on bridging. Nips have issued scrood that they suspect diggers are not doing their 1.4m etc but that is not extraordinary as our officers measure out.

Pictures on in Tham. [Several indecipherable words] Their attitude has altered considerably lately. We have been issued with soap, blankets and in some cases plates. I applied for blanket. [indecipherable words] Wish we could get some clothes. Good many of the chaps are in rags and my one surviving shirt is about gone.



Guard says Red Cross ship coming. Yarns of finishing on this job soon. Rumours of Moulmein bombing. Great advances in North. German advisor said to have advised Nips to take us off job.

Big noise coming on Friday so we have Yesme tomorrow, partly so that we will be working when he comes, and partly to clean up tomorrow.

500 expected in here any day, alleged Dutchman. Camp staff changes tomorrow. Sold Scott stockings R 1 1/2.

16th January Saturday, 1943

New Gaucho seems quite a decent old sport. Allows singing or anything like that any night but very keen on saluting.

Big gun expected any day and last night we were practising saluting etc for 1 1/2 hours. Gurtu, Cashmiri megi, Cashmire istan, cash nogut [?] bowing etc. Pantomime especially when instructors voice went. Bridgers came in from Thambuzayat today. New Gaucho will not allow community [singing?].

17th January Sunday, 1943

Goucho put guard through paces last night. Diverting, some eyes right, some presenting arms at same time. General came on inspection, did not see him.

Very good concert last night. Jimmy Baggs fine tenor. Green read letter from Varley. Nagartoma spent 20,000 yen on tinned stuff, games etc providing 10,000 blankets, 8,000 nets, 8,000 boots, 10,000 shirts etc. Pay raised to 30c and 35c from 1/1/43.

Dutchmen in Tham. wounded by bombs in Rangoon. Guard doing bayonet and PT exercises.

19th January Tuesday, 1943

McCauley smacked by Gaucho.

20th January Wednesday, 1943

Nips hurt by [rest of entry indecipherable] Corporals paraded.

24th January Sunday, 1943

Chap named Johnson of 4 MF died here suddenly this afternoon. We all lined route from RAP to Guard House where he is to be for night. Nips turned out. Gaucho paid full respects, standing at foot of box and giving sort of oration. Also placed candles in RAP. Believe cemetery at Tham. now has about 90 graves but of course there are 9000 troops here now.

Gaucho has stirred guards up. They are out saying prayers and doing PT every morning and evening. Had us on PT one evening after Tenko [roll call parade] now only "no duties" are to do it during day.

Quite a lot of chaps have hearts affected. Number with rheumatics and others losing sight although Dr says only lack of vitamins.

61 bombers went over heading North the other day. Hear that Nips transport sunk close to here and other hit, some prisoners killed and wounded. Saw extraordinary meteor on Saturday night. Bridging work nearly done. Looks like a possible move shortly. News still highly optimistic. Record air raid on London 27 ref.

25th January Monday, 1943

Johnson (VX) [Victorian] was buried here this morning. Gaucho could not obtain transport to take him into Tham.

Yanks landed in P.I., British landed 140 miles from Rangoon. Tripoli surrendered. Russians near Polish border etc etc etc ad nauseam. Of course, we all listen to them but the majority seem to believe them even after 11 months of b-t [?].

Sandy tells me he is going through with N & others? [escape - see 12 Feb] Bit of tinned stuff available but too dear.

27 January Wednesday, 1943     ~~160~~-4-6

1st February Monday, 1943

Something or other roused Brother Jonathon tonight. We have an idea that it is because one of the guards has been telling tales in Tham. about the latitude he allows us. Anyway by order of Nagatoma, no more talks or quizzes, which will make the long dull evenings even worse.

A party of big Nips was out today inspecting work and caught a guard asleep. Jonathon kept them stood to attention for over an hour.

Fellows are beginning to droop a bit. A big number suffering from bad sight, quite a bit of malaria about and still some dysentery. The super optimists have realised how silly were their hopes. I had yesterday and today off. Some fellows received Dutch hats.

3rd February Wednesday, 1943

Nips found Bung wearing pair of issued slippers. Kept us on parade an hour till seller found them, let him off and gave him a tin of peaches. Names taken of those "A" grade tennis players wanting to go in to play at Tham.

5th February Friday, 1943

Pop Hammer and others went in for tennis. YESME had boxing contests in afternoon - very good, some very funny. Hear news which has been floating around not authentic.

7th February Sunday, 1943

Tennis players back. Thetkau won. Pop says tucker good, canteen good. Officers in there buying stuff from men and selling to Japs at profit. Our officers have come out very badly indeed. We were to have an increase in pay this month to 30c and 35c but the nobs asked for indoor men also. Nippon put it all off for a month. Bought 20c bean dahl, 5 eggs.

10th February Wednesday, 1943 ~~165-5-6~~ D.P. ~~73~~

11th February Thursday, 1943

Having a Yesme for some Jap national festival or other. Choir gave quite a nice concert (nigger minstrel) last night. Rommel capitulated again. Green says this camp best of all line camps. Talks of separating 40 & over.

Chap shadow sparring in bushes. Nip shot at shadow. Nips said to admit loss of 4 more ships with 2,600 prisoners. Creek stopped running.

Water in well falling rapidly. Other well being dug but washing will be a great problem. Pool will soon pong. Saluting drill.

12th February Friday, 1943

Mull, Dickenson and Sandy Bell made a break last night. They are fairly well equipped, but it seems long odds considering the advantages are purely personal. Nct reported till tea time when we had a special Tenko. Brother Jonathon did not seem very upset at first but after he had been scared up from Thamb, he got snaky and tightened up on Picquets etc.

Heard what seemed very like two sticks of bombs during lunch hour.



16th February Tuesday, 1943

All kinds of restrictions on us now. Have stood on parade at night for 2 hours 2 nights now. Lot of lectures. Tonight had search of kits. Finds were 2 pair binoculars, 1 compass, books, lots of paper, pocket jack and table knives. Were marched down to tong and back. Amhurst bombed, we hope. On dirt.

17th February Wednesday, 1943

Held up again tonight over rice. Rained in night.

21st February Sunday, 1943

We have a new Camp Commanding officer. He paraded us when he took over on Thursday and delivered an oration which Peter said meant he was happy to meet us, Green was a good man, we would be home soon, must not escape. Pay was raised to 25,30 & 40 from Feb 1st.

Over 40 have been put into special Kumis. All knives, binoculars, padlocks, cameras to be handed in. Inventory of kits to be taken.

Officers are having a great time. Only a few going out, remainder stop in and buy all canteen stuff. Have shown up as rotten crowd.

23rd February Tuesday, 1943

24 Dysentery cases in 2 days. M.O. worried. Had day off yesterday. News still very gay from Europe. Had onions and peanuts from canteen. Good boxing last night.

24th February Wednesday, 1943

Pay up 25,30,40c. LOUSY AS BATS. [sick] Weight 9st. 2lb. German 6th Army wiped out.

28th February Sunday, 1943

Off with diarrheca and feeling rotten. 252 sick out of 1117 (plus R.A.P. cases). Jonathon ordered P.T. for us this a.m. Yesterday he was worried about us. Believe we have smallest sick parade of any camp. Ours used to be 400.

Some mysterious planes cruised overhead yesterday for quite awhile, ceiling was low and they were invisible but some chaps claim to have heard gunfire just after.

Were supplied with a little Dutch clothing. Dickenson said to be captured after being hurt 1st night [2weeks, 2days after escape].

1st March Monday, 1943

Wakened by planes during night, they cruised around for a while then dropped bombs and planes on Tham. Nips like ants.

3rd March Wednesday, 1943

In dock and pretty sorry for myself. Believe bomb dropped right down line other night. Move started today. I am to go in to hospital at present. Dickenson shot this am.

THE JOURNAL

## CHAPTER 6

7th March Sunday, 1943

Came in yesterday. 53 of us (increased from original 6) and of course spent hours hanging about in here before finally settled. Our arrival in town coinciding with air raid alarm and consequent panic among bungs.

There are 2600 men in here (only 300 being workers) and accomodation for only 2000. Sick and no duties are being dumped in from all line camps and last batch from Tavoy just arrived. A few due to go out soon though. Will probably be day or two before doctor is able to see us when I shall be about better.

Almost first man I spoke to was Tim Woodley's gunmate. Miller tells me Tim and remainder of 2/3 in Java. Mrs W and Mary will be able to console or congratulate each other.

Hear O'D & Lewis in Japan. Changi still good. Rumour of Cupitts party being machine gunned. Moulmein raided. Good news everywhere.

10th March Wednesday, 1943

This is a frowsy joint. Canteen no good with so many men in here. Told Dr. I was perfectly fit today and have been discharged although might still be some days in here.

Had a walk around cemetery, very neat and tidy - 55 Dutch, 27 Aus. (1 RAAF) and 8 Eng. (1-R.A.F.).

Number of officers among Dutch extraordinary. Dozens of private traders. Rangoon, Moulmein bombed.



MELAU NEILDE 75K

## CHAPTER 7

17th March Wednesday, 1943

Sandy Bell shot yesterday. He and Mull were apparently captured about 9 days ago and Mull shot later trying to escape. Believe Alec died like a man!

Came out here on Sunday. 75 kilometers. Terrible track and are now up in foothills. Razor backed hills sticking up sheer out of plain on way up.

Heard two very fine concerts at Tham., one a command performance for Nagatoma. Funny to hear Dutchmen singing in French to audience of British, U.S., Dutch and Japs.

Am still off, ticker not too good. Crowd from 26 arrived here today. News still good except that Huns recaptured Kharkov.

20th March Saturday, 1943

Still off, ticker not too good at all. Arrivals here from Anderson's, Ramsay's & Black's camps. Rumour we go to Singapore in May.

Heard of two of party of 4 2/29 from Muai, captured after a month with Chows shot out of hand because of ulcers and tinea.

24th March Wednesday, 1943

Terrribly hot and dozens suffering from what appears to be heat stroke. Nips forced sick to do camp duties and put several back in hospital. Did a day yesterday, but off today.

31st March Wednesday, 1943

Still off, had a bad day yesterday, vomiting and scours. Nips again taking men off sick parade. We are getting Vit. N. [vital news, presumably from illicit radio] but it has been disappointing to the majority of ultra optimists.

Meat cut out today. We go onto dried fish tomorrow!! and I start on light Duty.

\*A 3 stage system of fitness for work operated (classified by medical officer).

- a) No duties - sick. Excused of all duties.
- b) Light duties - recovering, light work, mainly around camp.
- c) Full duties - fit for heavy work.

On many occasions the Japanese ignored this.

2nd April Friday, 1943

Have done 2 days L.D. but no good. I am a long way from right. The fish water is cruel but we hear meat is on way.

9 planes passed over heading S.E. this am. Believe Allied, and some planes passed N.W. 2 hours after. Hope that meant Bangkok bombed. Vitamins quite decent. [Vitamin a code word for vital news in this case and in many other entries]

5th April Monday, 1943 YESME Day\*

30 cattle arrived yesterday, so water will now be tainted with meat instead of water. Nips dragged over 100 from sick parade on Saturday and sent them out in afternoon except for about 30 which Doc. Anderson refused to allow to go for which he had to sign affidavits and statements etc.

Nips say that work here must be completed by May 5th if they have to drag men out of hospital, but they have agreed to allow L.D. to be increased from sick parade. Result - yesterdays L.D. parade nearly 200, sick parade dropped from 250 to 120 but of course there are 90 in hospital.

There has been an epidemic of three or four day fever which I have missed so far.

Hear a row at Anderson's camp over working too long. Quite a few bashings. Officers as well.

7th April Wednesday, 1943

Touch of fever, pretty foul. Moved down to flat.

12th April Monday, 1943

Made a start again. Camp duties 1 day. About 3000 bungs here now. Nip Loot addressed 'No Duties'. Threatened them with no tucker. Every man must work. Railway WILL be finished in 4 months.

\*From now on, the Japanese started a "Speedo" drive to finish the railway quickly and treatment of prisoners, work and living conditions etc deteriorated rapidly.

14th April Wednesday, 1943

Nips say 7000 men in Thailand on Rice & Salt. Prospects bad for 135 kilo camp.

21st April Wednesday, 1943

Chap clouted a Nip today and Camp-Comm. read us a lecture that resisting Jap soldiers was resisting Emperor. He was just like a toy Musso [Mussolini], as he stood laying down his law.

We had a great treat Tuesday night - PICTURES - utter piffle and all chock full of propaganda of course.

Nips intercepted a note full of vitamin recently and breeze has been up all round. No vit. for last four days. Heavy rain.

28th April Wednesday, 1943

Rumours of move shortly. Bangkok, Saigon, Singapore, Formosa etc. Thousands of bungs passing and many trucks. More work on improving road than Railway just now.

Have had another bout of fever this week. Many fellows, including, I suppose, myself, just skin and bone. Damn hot.

1st May Saturday, 1943

Jim Mooney from Toowoomba died last evening. Heart collapsed following dysentery. R.A.P. packed, full of flies and stench and worst roof in camp.

Meterage up to 2.0 metres. Ganga in at 6 pm and out again at 7 pm. (Buried outside camp).

3rd May Monday, 1943

Cam. Smith of 4th M.T. died today. S. Aust'n aged 38. Nips driving everyone out even man with broken arm. Working till 12 at night.

5th May Wednesday, 1943

Collins of ASC att. 2/9th and Amb. died today - Beri Beri.

Cascara trees very full of beans. Yellow flower, long round pods. Another tree here with a mauve flower very pretty indeed.

30 kilo camp closing down, about 300 coming back here. Believe we move on 10th.



Nips took photos of things in Tham., including "Mill Girl". I missed my chance of appearing on Japanese screen in main part.

All hands working till all hours now, no duties till 10 o'clock. Raining fitfully now.

12th May Wednesday, 1943

Two more men died during week both of Black force. Past week has been wicked, working day and night. Even no duties being out till 4 am. Have been troubled with sweat boils under armpit and not been able to get attention.

Move in day or two. Missed chance of stopping here by thinking shortage of trucks for sick, then finding out 600 or so stopping here.

16th May Sunday, 1943

Most of fellows gone now. I developed fever and have had a few very crook days. - Am still pretty dicky. 1200 marched out Friday night with all gear and some took 2 days to do it. Then today another 300 had to be found from remainder who were all more or less crook. Also work party of 50. Believe more to go tomorrow.

Fellow named Henderson died Friday the 6th here.

Now 12 months since we left Changi and fellows are showing effects badly. Dysentery, fever, ulcers, beri beri, vitamin deficiency.

Doctors very worried.

Am longing for some change from eternal diet. Have a craving for a drink of plain soda water tonight. Had three mangoes presento. [Japanese term]

105KM

## CHAPTER 8

19th May Wednesday, 1943

Marched to 105k. 25 1/4 miles. Passed dead bung on road. Water 1/2 mile away 500 ft. down. Chaps had dead bung to bury here. Boils still troubling me under arm. Vit. N. good.

25th May Tuesday, 1943

44th birthday and am squatting under 60 ft. bamboos in a damp mouldy jungle. Been raining for 3 days. Very sore throat. Kumicho for 56 [?]. Heard tonight that Freddie Hall died at Than. and chap named Hinkley at 75k. Case of cholera here. Len Smith.

26th May Wednesday, 1943 ✕ 200-8-0

Another case of cholera today. Fatal, A G.K. man. Schemed a bludge.

27th May Thursday, 1943

2 more cholera. 1 death - dysentery.

28th May Friday, 1943

2 more cholera. 1 death.

29th May Saturday, 1943

1 more cholera. Len Smith died. Feeling off colour myself. 3 bungs dead. Remainder clearing out, our fellows driving Yak carts. Report 30 cases, 14 deaths at 115k and also rife at 75k. Pommies contacted at 115, say 7000 up from Changi. Some AIF at 130. Had letters. John is 17!

2nd June Wednesday, 1943

Sent second postcard home. Hear there is mail at Bangkok for us. Been working on road all while. Trucks bogged everywhere. Nagatoma and Varley out. Presents of cigars for diligent workers. Varley says 6 cholera deaths in force.

3rd June Thursday, 1943

1 death dysentery.

4th June Friday, 1943

1 death dysentery. 3 cases suspect cholera. 500 had to go to 100 kilo to carry rations back. Hear 35 cholera deaths at 115. Reckon "A" force deaths in 12 months about 2 1/2%. Not bad.

6th June Sunday, 1943

Norm Fraser died yesterday. Cameraman took shots on parade this morning and staging funeral later using Fraser's grave. What irony. I suppose Nips will be out in full force. 58 dead at 115 kilo.

9th June Wednesday, 1943

Told bridge washed out. 1/2 rations and no work for 7 days.

11th June Friday, 1943

Brady died, dysentery. Work has been resumed. 500 Dutch marched in. Have had trots for 3 days. Widgeons P.T.'s [?]

14th June Monday, 1943

2/15 chap died - dysentery. We received prize of Yak for diligent work. Now corduroying\* road.

16th June Wednesday, 1943

2/19 chap died. Report Tham. bombed. Trucks moving to ration us from Siam. Beinddeaux died at 75. This is becoming a death register. 1300 vis of sugar arrived, very weatherworn.

17th June Thursday, 1943

Another death. Fine all day. Scored salt, onions and cigars on ration party yesterday and some meat last night. Gorgeous stew tonight. A red letter day.

Word through from 128 camp "F" force. Ryan dead. 114 cholera deaths. 800 malaria cases. Party going to 95 for quinine. Had terrible trips up from Rail.

\*Corduroying was a roadmaking process where logs were laid side by side to provide the road surface.



19th June Saturday, 1943

Only 800 wanted now instead of 1000. Commandant at last recognized men's condition. Green force to find 310 & 40 L.D. & no blitz.

21st June Monday, 1943

Report from Tham. Capt. Griffin killed. Black and Varley wounded in bombing. Had 2 days fine but now raining again. Road improving.

22nd June Tuesday, 1943

Ron Grant died.

25th June Friday, 1943

George Lawson died in night. Word from Tham. Harry Brown & Schouberl killed. Westace, K., Albert Ralston, Jack Becker & G. Willmot dead.

28th June Monday, 1943

Chap fell from bed yesterday and fractured skull. Never recovered consciousness. Today report from Tham. About 20 of AIF, some Dutch, American, & English killed. Hospital shifted to 4, 10 & 14 kilos. Spike killed.

30th June Wednesday, 1943

Naga out yesterday. Inspected sick and had awful shock. Result about 800 to 1000 men going back for rest, and no more blitzes. Going to do all kinds of things to help us. Vitamin temporarily suspended. 300 gone today. But heavy blitz as figures had to be up for last day.

4th July Sunday, 1943

Yesme, why we don't know. Notes last night from 130. Casualty list apparently home in June last year. Quite a number now gone back to 55. Wrote a note up line. Heard Don Taylor dead. Saw some of ulcers today. They are frightful and men with dysentery just skin and bone.

7th July Wednesday, 1943

Now only 550 Green force here. Many still have ulcers. 4 deaths in 3 days including Jock Cummings of dysentery and ulcers.

10th July Saturday, 1943

One Blackforce died. Kumis rearranged. Under 250 fit for work out of 1250 original strength.

14th July Wednesday, 1943

Capt. Watts died. No meat three days. Few potatoes and onions. Rice short. Vitamin extra. Weather wicked.

18th July Sunday, 1943

Cheyne back full of bombing of Tham. Meagre amount of white sugar. Tosho Donna speech about finish work end of August on 2m.

21st July Wednesday, 1943

Pay withheld by order Tosho Donna. Wanted for canteen supplies.

23rd July Friday, 1943

Off with bad foot and praying that I avoid an ulcer. Rain, rain, rain. Clock back 30 minutes. No cattle. Minute issue tea and sugar (white). Had latter on pap this am. Lovely.

28th July Wednesday, 1943

Vitamin extra. Foot improving. Saw ulcer in hip like egg inverted.

4th August Wednesday, 1943

Sid Cupitt passed on 31st [July] going NW. Reports we go to just North of Moulmein. foot gone wrong after 3 days L.D. and 2 F.D. off again. Tosho Donna back on 31st. Says we are now 7th Railway Workers Reg't.

No canteen stuff. Sky's Cap. Cel. land. VBC. [?] Think out by Xmas.

11th August Wednesday, 1943

11 dead at 55 including 12 Green force. Jack Roberts, Jackie Goodman, Oigle Robbins, Bonny Clarke etc. 900 dead out of 7000 otherside. [in Thailand] R's begin drive, allies in Java, Sumatra. Tham. raided again.

Three years in A.L.F. yesterday. Nagatomi out today. Some awful ulcer cases and fellows like rakes.

Bridges down at 61 & 83. Rations greatly reduced. Off with infected foot. Ramsay vetoed vit.

18th August Wednesday, 1943

Party returned from 55 including Briggs. 37 deaths in 27 days including Bill Cook, Yum Yum, Sid Clarke, Chapman's leg off. Ulcers frightful, spreading all over legs. 5 amputations. Screams awful. Tucker bad. Ted Hope also dead. Still off with foot.

Hoshi says we are here for 2 1/2 months. Some capes issued - ATTAP!

21st August Saturday, 1943

One 2/3 died - cerebral malaria. Chris Bailey back from malaria control squad. Told us of dozens of mosquitoes varieties and microscopes. Start work tomorrow. Bailey says over 1000 dead other side.

25th August Wednesday, 1943

Death Blackforce Monday. Hear Col. Small died at 30. P. Dewe back. Wild furphies came up too which may not be so wild after all. Dutchmen going back to 108. Green force deaths now 91.

Have been cut 3 days. Fairly fine.

27th August Friday, 1943

100 died at 98 on 1 day. Ulcers, dysentery. Mostly Dutch and Yanks. Conditions there terrible.

29th August Sunday, 1943

Search. Earthworks finished. Stone tomorrow.



1st September Wednesday, 1943 232-8-0

Hundreds of Bugs going S.E. last 2 or 3 days. 99 dead out of Green force now.

Hear from up line, 14 escaped, got as far as Ye, 9 were caught by Burmese, 2 being killed. Rest, of course, are certain for death\*.

From 130 kilo, 600 of ours dead, out of 1600 and cholera going again. 25 more deaths at 55.

Anderson and Higgins exchanged and Higgins started off by scraping and gouging ulcers, without any anaesthetic. Talk of Anderson's crowd coming here. Downes, Hawcroft, Boyle, Constantine, Thompson dead.

Planes over 62. Some cattle expected. Will be a change from boxes of meat and fish.

8th September Wednesday, 1943

Numbers of men now coming in from 30. Below 30 camp is to be emptied. Rumours point to an early move for us. Gallagher, Telfer, Mulligan and Myers gone past to base. Ray Landa back.

Truck after truck of rice and sweet potatoes going up. We only got few potatoes. Weather now on improve fast.

Line said to be at 102. I.C. off. 3 pkts cigs and milk issued. 2 spoons sugar. Guards profiteering on cigars etc.

10th September Friday, 1943

Line passed here. Jack Strang and Combs up.

13th September Monday, 1943

Yesterday, new Nips out. quiet but beggars kept us out cracking Ballast till 8 o'clock. Ron Ken died after amputation at 55 & Merrill has leg off. Deaths average 2 1/2 per day. 50 much worse, 14 one day. Fellows have no spirit left after constant pain. Welcome death.

\*This escape probably refers to that of James Bradley (British) and 9 others who escaped from Sonkurai (one of the worst camps) on 5 July 1943. They walked through the jungle to Ye (5 died enroute) before being turned over to the Japanese by Burmese villagers. They weren't executed and Bradley's book makes fascinating reading. "Towards The Setting Sun".

18th September Saturday, 1943

Fellow back from 55. Saw Cupitt who said Boundy, Bill Rule up line. Chapman dead. Metadyen & Stremmel for amputation. Tim Hodgson lost leg. 45 done & 50 odd waiting. Dick Harvey's foot off here Thursday. Hobbs came from 80 for it.

Dutch chemist at 55 making anaesthetic. 3 deaths here yesterday. 127 dead AIF at 55, 33 here. Anderson's crowd up at 108. Believe have to do 153 [amputations] YESME. Still plenty rain. 3 beasts killed.

22nd September Wednesday, 1943

New Nips yesterday. Rumours of more. Report that Allan Dobbie is dead.

29th September Wednesday, 1943

1780 deaths out of 7000 otherside. Ballasting rushed through after 2 late sittings. Vit very scarce.

6th October Wednesday, 1943

2 died during week. Moseley back. Tucker been lighter lately. Still on ballasting. Had attack of fever. Rumours of Hun capitulation.

Had hair off 3rd. Dead bung on road (Nips refused food). Read "Disgrace Abounding". Tubby and rat.

13th October Wednesday 1943

Still on ballasting. Rails & sleepers till going up. Looks like things dragging on till next year. Change of Nip engineers again. No vit for days.

Troubled with vertigo. Steam train passed yesterday. Bung with small pox. We were vaccinated.

20 October Wednesday, 1943

Moss up from 55.

24 October Sunday, 1943

Claude Ivey, Tim Hodgson, Paddy Booth and others dead. -Raiph Knight had leg off. 198 AIF deaths at 55 now. 33 here. I hear line linked.\* Over 100 amputations.

27th October Wednesday, 1943 250-10-0

Men coming back from Tham, 50 & 55. Looks like a move shortly. 4 deaths this week. General's visit.

Ned Iles caught in Nip kitchen. Mysterious plane over. Limb fell on 3 men in bush.

31st October Sunday, 1943

Wedding day. I wonder where I will be for next.

3rd November Wednesday, 1943

Believe 450 dead at 50k. Extra concert last night with Melbourne Cup. YESME. Nip HQ moved to 160.

10th November Wednesday, 1943

Carting ballast out to line. Feeling pretty fit. Bung dying on road.

17th November Wednesday, 1943

Hear 2000 dead in Borneo and Nips sent to Singapore for more. Heart went again Friday and malaria on Sunday. Hut took 20<sup>th</sup> list downhill. Yesme yesterday and today.

Tucker very light. Lost 11 rubbers out and 10,700 behind.

Fred Mengerson, Tom Davidson, Dave Taylor dead at 55. 650 dead at 50k. Over 2000 including 500 AIF dead other side.

20th & 21st days to [Yesme] celebrate completion. Services on 20th. Concerts and race meeting 21st. 655 dead No.3 Branch. Races very good. Female impersonator. Nip concerts. Promised banquet very poor.

\*The railway line was in fact joined on 17 Oct 1943 near Konkuita, 262.87 Kms. The 415Km from Thanbyuzayat to Nong Pladok was completed, ahead of schedule, in only 12 months with an unbelievable cost in human life. The "speedo" period now ends.



24th November Wednesday, 1943 259-13-0.

1st December Wednesday, 1943

Fellow died from haemorrhage from ulcer under arm. Maggots pierced vein. 47th here. First from 50k going through to Thailand. 650 deaths at 50. 3rd Branch 9.6% dead. Green force 12%.

Sarongs lifted at concert. Nips sugar pinched, beat up night cooks. Tucker awful. Rice and radish stew. Obvious they are not interested now line is done.

8th December Wednesday, 1943

Crowd of No 5 sick in from 80k. 2 dead same day. Hoshi left today. 2 air alarms at night last week.

Been pretty sick for a week with pelargora [pellagra] of stomach. Vitamin def. No.5 Branch 2100 original 480 dead. No.5 been getting much better food than us, but 10c less per day.

15th December Wednesday, 1943

Had a bad fortnight with pelagora and fever. Tucker pretty crook. No move yet. Planes over night of 18th.

22nd December Wednesday, 1943

55k shifting about 200 per day. Letter for Java men. Red Cross comforts. 3 pkts. cigarettes each. Few tins of stuff to R.A.P.

Clothier dead. Iles very sick. Deaths average 2 per day here. Clothier's effects spread among officers. Major Green got jumper.

25th December Saturday, 1943

Xmas day, pap, b\_awful. Don Mackintosh passed yesterday.

29th December Wednesday, 1943

Planes over on 23rd. Ted Oram dead.

30th December Thursday, 1943

Our exodus started. Major Green and some of Buppin and-Cookhouse, Ramsay etc. Tucker here has become positively wicked. Boiled radishes only. Ned Iles is pretty low and not much hope for him. Had a dose of fever yesterday.

31st December Friday, 1943

Exodus continues. Another bout of fever (mild). Have won about RS4 this last few days at Solo, might be handy in Thailand - 1943 closes with me sweating in bed. Temp 103°.

KANCHAN BURI, THAILAND (TAMARAN)

## CHAPTER 9

5th January Wednesday, 1943

More or less settled here. Food splendid. Regulations strict.

Scenery on trip wonderful, as was engineering. Had wondered previously where 3 Pagoda "Pass" was, but know now. Sheer bold hills, luxuriant valley, winding placid river, colour schemes and shadow. Railway track overhanging river.

Trip took 30 hours, about 200 kilos. Good iron bridge over river here, also A.A. battery. Saw 600 bridge.

12th January Wednesday, 1943

Iles (??) died at 105, he made 101 there. All our chaps here now. 3 deaths on road and several since we arrived.

Tucker excellent. Our first meal was curried egg stew and have had pork stew twice. Extra every night. Cannot yet change money and canteen has good supplies.

This is land of plenty all right. Thais seem very superior to Burmese, women very stocky, dress different. Wonderful to be out of jungle. Several camps around here. Town 5 kilos away, quite a big place.

Plenty of nips. Arthur Pierce died. W. Tyrrell gave blood to Bert Peake who had 3rd amputation Cholera, Plague and TB inoculations.

Night and day air scares. Strong tales of mail and comforts. Recc. planes over for 30 mins. 2 Poms caught trading.

Great majority looking much better and brighter. Am eating like a horse myself. Thais giving 40c for Guilders, 33c Malay dollar, 17 Ticuls. Will not look at Nip rupees.

Canteen has eggs 10c, cakes 5c, bananas 1c, jam 1.50, toffee etc but am still without ticuls. Anyway, do not really need anything.

Monument. Dillinger.

13th January Thursday, 1944

Bert Peake died. Still 2 & 3 deaths a day. Thai ran away outside fence and dropped compass and binoculars. Had us standing to attention for an hour. No admission of course.



16th January Sunday, 1944

I had a cholera test. Chap walked away with glass rod\*. Sold magnifying glass for 1 ticul. Officers grabbing supplies.

17th January Monday, 1944

J's [Joyce] birthday. How I long to see them. Heard Vick Carter died at 105.

18th January Tuesday, 1944

Pop Randall died.

19th January Wednesday, 1944

Attack of malaria.

20 January Thursday, 1944

Postcards supplied (Tues). Big air raid at night. Red Cross supplies arrived. We got 1 pkt cigs.

26 January Wednesday, 1944 Advance party

Moved to \_\_\_\_\_.

Sat more malaria. Changed 6 rupees. Living well. Wrote notes for White to take but Ramsay ordered all burnt. Hundreds of ducks, dozens of pigs, also goats arrived. Nips found rat in village with plague.

2nd February Wednesday, 1944

We have cows, pigs, goats, kids, ducks and ducklings now. Rumours that Swiss counsul is coming to visit. 2 mental cases came in and one escaped first night.

9th February Wednesday, 1944

Several air alerts but nothing startling developed. Nip papers very funny. Following account of forcing one of our planes down by shaking fist comes story of rice cakes. Huts being erected and others pulled down. Report that 1500 more coming in. Hope it is our chaps from up line. Keith Harrison died.

\*Anal swab or faeces samples were taken on glass rods for testing.

16th February Wednesday, 1944

Big air raid the other night. Ack ack here firing wildly at sky, several splinters dropped here. Two years now and still full of running. Great feed put up by kitchen. 1 Bat rice, 1 egg, chutney, cottage pie, meat pie, banana fritters, spring onions. Camp Ord. (orderly) Sgt (?).

First mail came in yesterday. 2000 letters dated June and July 1942. Bitter disappointment, none for me but many others sama-sama [Japanese term].

Very hot just now, nights wonderful outside. Skies full of stars.

Assisted at post mortem.

23 February Wednesday, 1944

Inspection by nip, selecting men to go to Japan. 2600 wanted. More malaria. Yanks received mail dated October 43. Party came from Hombo at 105 to establish hombo here. Say man from 2/10 Fld Co. just been captured at Moulmein (8 weeks). News in paper excellent.

Hut and coked [crooked?] foot joint collapsed during wind. Nip bugle found case of stolen drugs. C.R. & 3 others. Quinine, Attabrine, Plasmoquin, Emmetine, M & V., Iodoform etc. 2 sentenced 25 days boob which is ghastly. Remainder appear clear.

1st March Wednesday, 1944

200 arrived from 105, say more coming. Thurs 200 more arrived, mostly Yank and Dutch. Sat 200 more. Recc planes over. Vitamin extra good. Building huts all over place. Very hot. M's birthday yesterday. Things getting very monotonous.

8th March Wednesday, 1944

Planes over 3 nights in succession, apparently in fair numbers.

Rumours of wholesale clearance of POW's out of Burma.

Sunday more still coming in. Nips opened Memorial today 700 Pows left Chungki. Weight 61 kilos. 9st 8lb.

15th March Wednesday, 1944

Plague inoculation. Nips say infected rat caught in camp. Technical workers warned move on 20th.

22nd March Wednesday, 1944 #300-5-6

Case of Blackwater receiving transfusions. Heard Le Steere died. Large numbers selected for Japan. Ford, Board, Skinner, Mossley, Slim Hovering. Asked for volunteers. Les Holtzman one. Nip Colonel Ishi (!) so pleased with idea of men volunteering that he ordered all Aust'ns out of jungle.

Nearly 5000 now in camp. 2000 odd for Nippon. George Stove and Freddi Glench dead.

Mon. First Nippon party left. Ray Ford, Skinner, Board (camp 450).  
Tues. 2nd party - Les Holtzman, Tom Johnson (450).

29th March Wednesday, 1944

3rd Nip party ready to move, mostly Dutch. All kinds of wild furphies about. Nip paper claims success up North. Puddles Jones died. Dutchman's exhibition of telepathy, reminder of fire walking in Malaya and barbs and hooks.

1st April 1944

Fever. 5th attack this year.

5th April Wednesday, 1944

Recc. planes over nearly every day and several night raids. Chink [chinese] off Houston has been 16 years in USN, never seen U.S. Apparently last of Nips party gone. Bob Bennett one.

10th April Monday, 1944

Examination of amputation cases rushed, might be hope of them going home.

12th April Wednesday, 1944

Party of 200 wanted to go away, about 60 of Green force on. Recc. planes nearly every day.



19th April Wednesday, 1944

Sorting 1400 letters, none for me again, very disappointing. Nips appear to have announced a few names on wireless periodically. Cameron, Northey, Long and Evans going as K's with party. Startling rumours.

24th April Monday, 1944

A day of tragic memories. [Enid died on this day 1933] Enid would have been 14 today. Very fine concert. Costumes and scenery excellent.

26th April Wednesday, 1944

84 on parade for Dawn service yesterday and several patients outside. 2 amp. One man in camp is 62. Work party standing by. 700 going Bangkok any day.

28th April Friday, 1944

Advance work party gone allegedly to 60k.

30th April Sunday, 1944

700 gone Bangkok. Saw baby vulture fallen out of nest. These vultures absolutely marvellous in gliding. Harry Scaddan died. Moss, Pusey and Knight gone to Bangkok.

3rd May Wednesday, 1944

Recc. planes each day. Letter from Jap party. At Saigon in barracks, e.l.h + c.w. good tucker, waiting boats.

7th May Sunday, 1944

Sorting again 6000 letters. 2 from M, one from John, 1 from Dot. All OK then D.D. Terrific rain storm. Brian 5 tomorrow.

10th May Wednesday, 1944

Lewis and Boundy in Borneo. Started on well yesterday. Recc. planes still active. Nips at hombo disappeared under table when AA started. River banned for bathing because of cholera outbreak up river.

Over 1/8 letters for dead men. 500 Dutch, Yanks in from No 3 camp. Terrific tropical thunderstorm at night.

Brig gone we think to Formosa. Nips took all his papers off him in spite of protests. Following day camp searched, we wonder if associated. Took practically all script. Tightened up outside. New guards now as keen as others. No paper for 2 months. Quite good signs.

Raining almost every day. Cholera inoculation.

17th May Wednesday, 1944

Party of 50 gone down river to build a wharf. 20 BAE. 2 majors visited No 3 camp. Say tucker better there but more cramped and more boggy. Letter from Scotty H., J. Party. Camped between ammo dump and oil dump, bombing frequent and close. Tucker good. Had been embarked once for 24 hours then landed again. Sounds good to me.

Nips say no diaries allowed.

Rivette lost script of a novel he wrote in Java. Weight 64 kilo. Duncan returned from DPK. Thrilling story. Chap down well.

20th May Friday, 1944

4th lot of cards sent off. Match contract. Good vit.

24th May Wednesday, 1944

Empire Day. 2 years today arrived Vic Point. Drome hut nearing end I hope. American red cross parcels distributed yesterday.

Splendid Nip general inspected. Nip tobans put off previously and a work party hidden. Slight attack fever. Nip guards found with figs from parcels. Trouble for them (Provosts?). Bob Buntings spirit story, canoe launching, waterspout.

25th May Thursday, 1944

45th birthday & fever. McNeil hears of card received. Party went down road about 22nd. Road work.

31st May Wednesday, 1944    ~~345-14-0~~

John 18, quite a grown up family now. 5000 more letters. Still pretty dicky with fever but only b.t. [?]

Had cholera innoc. 28th.

7th June Wednesday, 1944

Great day Monday. 4 en.B's in great numbers. AA futile. 700 gone to 109 to repair bridge they destroyed.

Won Company Chess Championship worth 50 bananas. Train load of Poms passed from Chungki going to Malaya. 2 truckloads of Dutch arrived here from NAK for work, brought great wit.

12th June Monday 1944

More bombers. Absolutely the impossible in concerts last night. "Gay 90's". Scenery and costumes incredible. L in F correct. Story of AIF POW recaptured in letter.

14th June Wednesday, 1944    ~~350-12-0~~ + ~~33-8-0~~ = ~~384~~

21st June Wednesday, 1944    ~~386-16-0~~

Visit by big party of Nip officers. Stories of us moving and this becoming Nip camp. Playing mini golf. River bathing again. Norman Mantle died. (8 staw. [?]) Remember Bunting's story of Coates getting a light from patient while amputating. General Health much improved.

28th June Wednesday, 1944

About 150 more went for Japan party. Believe remainder have left Saigon. Rumours growing more optimistic daily. Lot of medical supplies arrived last night.

Lectures and classes starting again. Red Cross stuff is excellent, drugs, appliances, anaesthetics, dressings, everything. Classes and lectures will be a godsend. Many must be bored stiff.



29th June Thursday, 1944

Fellow who jumped down well, who for a time was held by Kempies was sent into hospital when Kempies disbanded - guards increased to 4 posts. Walked out last night while orderly asleep, went to Bridge and attacked guard there, who naturally reciprocated. Is in a bad state from shock and 4 bayonet wounds.

30th June Friday, 1944

Young Varley allowed to go to Non Pladuk to see pop, and on same day new Nip Commander says no lectures or education. Classes the idea as silly.

1st July Saturday, 1944

Mob came in No 1 camp from jungle. Played softball last night. First Air Raid alarm for nearly a month. Recc.

5th July Wednesday, 1944

New Nip commandant banned singing and music at Church service. Some of Nippon party returned. Read book on POW stating bred with each other after six months. Very different here.

Story that Japan party returning. Singapore starvation. Made 9 hole course. Vit. extra. Drew \$8.40. More mail in. No luck. Some men had 20.

12th July Wednesday, 1944      ~~L~~395-4-C

Party back from 196. Duff, Boneham. Drewe pretty bad, hiccoughing 6 days. Dillinger and Bull deny identity. More letters. Still none for me. Had corn cobs July 4th.

19th July Wednesday, 1944

For a week or two now, officers have had to work in garden. Poker school stopped. (We bought cards off them \$4) (Dutchman's cards)

Concert of Monday "Dingbats Abroad" 7 scenes but missed. Nip papers pooh pooh landing. Big check up tomorrow. Pig farrowed, 6 all dead, so they sacked Sgt. of farm party. Remember Nip and Duckling.

20th July Thursday, 1944

Issue of singlets and blue shorts. Big check tenko and a 50th part of a chicken for tea. Very strong rumours of a move and also of some of Japan party coming back.

Monday took part in "Mortgage".

28th July Wednesday 1944     400-16-0

Party of 300 gone to Chungki as Advance. Bunting incl. 225 selected as party for something or other. Tubby and Wheilan among them.

Native woman coming into camp at night. 2 ticals a time in morgue. Issue of Nip rubber boots, blankets and green singlets.

2nd August Wednesday, 1944

Big check tenko when we changed to No 2 Branch. I developed fever on 1st. Believe we now stop here. Chungki flooded. Bull made fellow drop dog down latrine. Trading party to Chungki now going jungle.

9th August Wednesday, 1944

New Nips now taken over. Several improvements in conditions. No tenko now but our own parade. Kemp's restarted.

Discovered Tim Woodley was at Chungki in January. Lost job on pump as Dutch took it over. Attack of dengue [fever].

Hosts of traders now. Shorts \$5, sarong \$6. I have 15 and think I may last out without work. Bangkok party warned. 40 in from jungle, conditions there vile. Swimming to work. River very high here.

Green awarded 9 days det. to Len Daniells for taking leg of tropical shorts from Nip stores. Dutchman caught taking Nip sgts. gold watch?!x! Keith nearly boned Bangkok Chronicle. Parades all regimental.

16th August Wednesday, 1944

All but 100 ret'd from jungle. Party 300 that went Chungki now belong other group. Being split between jungle and Non Floduc. 4 tins oil missing from QM store. We have to make goods also on bales of sarongs.

No 3 branch Nips appear to have pulled a couple of fast ones on these coves. Threat to shoot outside.

23rd August Wednesday, 1944

250 went NAK Monday including Fred Simpson. New Nip guards are not big improvements. Several bashings for non saluting, smoking lying down on bed. Lots of trading and epidemic of thefts. Fellows bringing in grog. Nips threaten to shoot anyone outside fence. Dutch colonel robbed of almost all his gear. Javanese found with list corresponding and prices totalling 160 piculs.

Tubby and Whelan left with party for Non Ploduc, attached to No 1 Force. Nip Doctor examining, turned 50 out of hospital. Mental case missing so had check tenko. Tucker quite reasonable now. Have crop of itch and pimples. Alf Green and spirit message hocus-pocus.

30th August Wednesday, 1944

Fellow walked out of camp the other morning and went down to Kanburi for day, coming back at evening when hungry, walked back through gate unchallenged while Nips were searching for him. Told Nip Commandant he had replaced fence after getting through. Mental of course.

One of Nip tobans caught trading and two drunk. Badly bashed. Chris Bailey on Kempie - threw a stick at Nip sgt. who was crouching in bushes waiting to catch traders. Had speech from Nip Colonel who told us to obey, pray & hope.

Vitamin consistently good. Pommy sgt. given 14 days in Nip cooler for having paper.

Procession of bombers two or three nights. AA had a go with usual results. Several good lectures. "B's" are being kept at it carrying wood. New classifications A B C O Y 2 180,000 letters at Honchu.

6th September Wednesday, 1944 £429-4-0

13th September Wednesday, 1944

Story that 83 killed 200 wounded at Non pladuc in raid. More Red Cross and Nip told us his opinion G 1 or 2 months, 4 or 5 out to work. Some at Chungki from NAK.

20th September Wednesday, 1944

Heard from Tubby about bombing at Non ploduc. J. Lynch & Lou Hasluck dead. Jock Sime turned up. Rumours & more rumours about Bosche. No mention Italy.



27th September Wednesday, 1944

Padgett and Yates back from jungle. Nips increased rations of meat and veges. Saw Nippon Times Aug 24 '43 claiming assistance from spirits at Kiska.

4th October Wednesday, 1944

Still no mail for me. Bags coming in. Lot for English. Clearing for camp extensions. Saw pamphlet which was dropped up line. Heard Cois Winstead and some English got home. 300 went to jungle, unloading barges of ammo. Bert Morse and Hoof went.

Whiskers knocked a Nip about so much he died. They are certainly not as lenient with their own men as with us even. Trains of men and guns going up continuously.

Apparently our rumours about Europe were a little premature. The Hun is putting up a great show. I wonder if anything is behind the seeming inactivity of Russians.

On C III work a.m. only, playing solo p.m. cards in camp from home dated March '44. Still in hopes.

8th October Monday, 1944

Received letter dated 1/2/44. Nips had real bust up among themselves one night over too little holiday. Search.

11th October Wednesday, 1944

Increase in wages 10 cents to rail workers, others drop 5c. Heard of Jack Dixon crook at Non Ploduc. Great dearth of vit. after spate of it. Excessive hopes down again Jack Dixon somewhere around very sick.

13th October Friday, 1944

Had letter from Mary dated Feb '43. Holiday sports and races to celebrate 2nd anniversary of formation of No 2 Group. (15 + 16) Chungki administration moving here. Saw fight between small snake and huge scorpion. Wonderful sunsets and sunrises. Pinocchio.

Hear Jack Blane doing 2 years at Singapore for attempted escape from Borneo and having a shot gun.

18th October Wednesday 1944

Fellow with cerebral [malaria - causing insanity] broke free from orderly and went through fence. Caught next day, wounded in leg. Not back here yet. Believe guard severely punished. (Story about fellow with cholera being shot). Nips stopped concert at night.

Carried some Red Cross stuff into Kanburi. Painted tombs. Plain barns with gilt statue of Buddha. - Church like building no roof yet, anchor on gable? Three funerals in three days.

Matson and Boneham went on party to Wombung? 12 kilos up. 2nd party gone somewhere else. I am waiting to go on 3rd party.

BRENKASSI LOWE

## CHAPTER 10

25th October Wednesday, 1944

Left at 10pm 24th. Arrived Brenkassi 208K 10pm 25th. Travelled on tops of vans except some of us on flat cars hung around motor trucks. Brought some Red Cross stuff with us. Bridges enough to scare a man stiff particularly when looking down at those trucks which had not got over previously. One bridge 70ft high shored up with saplings.

Quite a good camp here. Joined in with 36 Pommies. Am acting as Sergeant Major, Chapson Road repairs. Tucker very good and Nips do not worry us. Pommy told me of 500 (Bungs included) being buried in one grave, some alive.\*

Train engines at night fearful, like bungs in S'pore.

1st November Wednesday, 1944

Two trains per day each way with occasional extra ammunition guns (25 pounders and small stuff) going up (and vehicles) returning empty.

Air raid the other night, didn't want us. Sikh police here and crowds of bungs. Hear of hundreds of bung dying round here previously. Major Cranshaw and one other medico passed through going down line. Came up with stuff to attend bungs, but all staff gone and most of Bungs dead. Was innoculated for plague which has shown some kilos away.

Chris Bailey sold small compass to Nip for 3 ticuls, 2 pkts cigarettes and some peas and stuff into cookhouse. Had fried egg on moubia for extra. Food here is really quite good, but other camps round about pretty bloody.

8th November Wednesday, 1944

Small convoys of new trucks like Chevs have started coming through on road. Sent some of our 150 back to Tamarkan sick already.

Plague rats round here now, several big sheds of stores been burnt and we have inspection every night. Saw rat nearly dead but missed it in bush.

Heard story of Pommy named Hilton who struck Nip and after terrific beating was taken away. not heard of since.

Total P.O.W. on line 50,000, average ceaths 15.2%. On 11th completed 1000 days P.O.W. Day came back with good supply canteen and Red Cross stuff. Hear of 4 Javanese married to Thais down below.

\*A mass grave was found recently near Tamarkan, Thailand.



15th November Wednesday, 1944

Plague rats dying in and around hut. Be glad to move.

22nd November Wednesday, 1944 451-0-0

Move to Hindatoe tomorrow for few days. Several more to go down to base. Chaps at 230k dying from some kind of fever, 16 dead up to now. Couple of small tanks went up on railway trucks.

HINDALOK

**CHAPTER 11**23rd November Thursday, 1944

Hindatoe very pretty around camp, stream with clean rocky bed and overhanging trees. Nips have laid out neat paths and planted pawpaw, pineapple and banana along side. This is a halting place for convoys going up to Burma.

Hear that all valuables have to be handed in down at Tamarkan. Man out of sick from Kuie died, double pneumonia and Wells disease. 36 sick being evacuated to Tamarkan.

28th November, 1944

Moved to Kuie by train, rushed out to station at 6, waited till 4.30 speedo onto train, speedo off train which stood in station all remainder of night. This is a reasonable camp on top of hill, is actually Nip transit camp.

29th November Wednesday, 1944

Moved to Brenkassi, with 16 sick from here and 11 from Wompin [Wampo]. 2nd man died. Mr Day reports seeing about 60 planes at dusk over 130 kilo. Hear Tamarkan got some, but only rumour. Day is rather inclined to be objectionable. (20 killed, 31 wounded TAMARKAN)

TAMAJI

## CHAPTER 12

6 December Wednesday, 1944

Rushed to Kujie then 200 of us to Tamaju, 238K. Woodcutting camp. No good.

8th December Friday, 1944

Big air demonstration by 4 B Bombers. Plenty of bombs dropped within hearing but there was some traffic on line same night. Several unpleasant thrills, kept in huts some in jungle got clouted. Fever 4 bad days.

13 December Wednesday, 1944

Bombers coming regularly. Destroyed 13 engines last few days. Killed 18 P.O.W. on train at Kinsaiyg [Kinsayck] and more at \_\_\_\_\_. Nips at Kinsaiyg threatened officers with HE 36 [grenade] if bomb dropped in camp. Eggs 7 for 2 bucks. Two officers went down for Xmas canteen stuff but don't suppose they can get back by then. 6 days without a train. Threat apparent of very short rations if raids continue.

20th December Wednesday, 1944

51 killed at Kinsaiyg on train including some of ours from Brenkassi and others elsewhere.

27th December Wednesday, 1944

Quite a good Xmas under circumstances. Cooks did a wonderful job. Bung camp close to here evacuated and we scrounged stores left there. A lot of rubbish but we were glad of it. Very overcrowded but new hospital being built which may ease things.

31st December Sunday, 1944

Original people here left, leaving 400 of us here. Am taking on RQM.

3rd January, Wednesday, 1945

Big demonstration at dusk by 4 engined bombers, about 30 seen. Have had frequent visits lately. Food has shown big improvement but might be due to canteen stuff.

Major Riley arrived Dec 30th. 18 killed at Tamarkan. Big destruction down there. Several of our sick left behind at Brenkassi killed and wounded. FEVER (little) Read letter dated Nov 1943.



10th January Wednesday, 1945

Slung job in, Day wanting too much done. Plenty of planes about - up to a day or two ago but easy now. Rumours of pamphlet to Thais.

17th January Wednesday, 1945

90 cows in, penned in 15 x 15, but no more meat. Rice Honcho says more when 200 men at work. Fever. Harry Hillman down with stomach trouble. Joyce is 17.

24th January Wednesday, 1945

Harry and 35 others evacuated. Am C.S.M. [Company Sergeant Major] at present. (26th) Wrote 25 word letter. (27th) Blitz on sick. 30 sent out for 1/2 day.

31st January Wednesday, 1945

Nip Dr says 14 days rest and quinine, but he don't count.

28th

Fever again.

31st

Sudden orders after evening tenko that all officers leave immediately, except 2 medical officers. No reasons given. Away at 11 pm after pretty thorough search of kits.

Further developments include an M.G. at Guard Room, and rifles out in jungle, also A.R. skeletons being dug. Nips treatment has shown no difference, or, if any, slight improvement. Rumours of landing at Tavoy.

7th February Wednesday, 1945

Two officers returned with pay and canteen on 3rd. Plenty of air activity. Plane machine gunning station etc.

12th February, 1945

Fever and three bad days.

15th February Thursday, 1945

Three years today and the days are dragging very heavily. There is nothing in this camp but work, fever and sleep. I thought we might have had a visitation, but no. Fever is very bad here. Only 130 out of 350 fit for work at a time. Chaps only having 4 & 5 days spell between attacks. We have had blitzes, arguments, and visits from Nip doctors, and have had promise of more quinine.

Train loads of nips said to be going down. Don't see why Nips should worry about wood as very little traffic on line.

18th

Kathleen 11 today.

21st February Wednesday, 1945

Quinine soon to run out. New method of treatment stopped on 24th. 2 officers remaining left on 23rd to march down! No planes for some days, must be busy elsewhere.

28th February Wednesday, 1945

Thai woman has been bringing in a little stuff for 3 days at terrific prices. Tobacco \$9. Oil \$7.50 a pint. Some fellows have been lifting things. [several indecipherable words] In addition, a carrying party to Manting for rations and Dutchmen stole a pair of rubber boots belonging to English Driver there. Boots were found and thief very lucky to get off but kept on parade 1 1/2 hrs till goods were paid for. Nips had L.M.G. and Grenades ready. Cost 23 ticals from funds to square up.

Boys boycotted woman and Charlie says no station buying. Nicki bridge destroyed again. Heard and felt bumps here 30 miles away. Working figures up just now but think they will soon fall through quinine shortage. Rations getting very lean, no fresh veges at all.

3rd March Mary's birthday.

7th March Wednesday, 1945

Heard explosions at night for an hour on the 2nd. Planes over for 2 1/2 hours on 3rd, bombing something around Conquita. Work figures dropped from 34 in jungle on 1st to 26 on 5th. Nips still going down.

8th March, 1945

Fever but not bad this time. New crowd of Nips took over, some very young, not used to wood cutting.

4 or 5 planes over this area for 2 hours, making half a dozen runs over objectives N and South, presumably Nicki or Conquita bridges. 2-engined hedge hopped past here other day. Good vitamin. 4 EB over nearly every day.

14th March Wednesday, 1945

Some whites and Javanese had to be stopped from hanging around Nip cookhouse and Guard room for spare rice, after they started fighting over it. This has been one of worst facets of P.O.W. life and in my view cost us a lot of prestige with Nips & Bungs.

21st March Wednesday, 1945

Captain Parker and others arrested for having papers (February). Baby elephant running in between mother's legs.

22nd

Awakened at Reveille by M/G fire. 3 4EB's over MC'ing & bombing train Haitang & Koto. Quite brisk for about an hour. Seems very obvious they know we are here. Quite creepy in camp, hardly a head above ground. Hear later that train and arm. cars on it badly damaged & 47 Nips killed.

28th March Wednesday, 1945

Recc. planes daily occurrence. Have become so blase to them that when alarm gong goes fellows do not even bother to get blankets in. Purphies frequent. Grub not too bad now.

29th

FEVER. 21 years today Father died. Life is unrolling pretty fast.

30th 500

Train up line - over on 22nd, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Great air activity.



4th April Wednesday, 1945      502-0-0

Had a quite a good concert on Easter Sat 31st and service on Sunday. Gave Dandy Fifth. Am organising show for 20th.

11th April Wednesday, 1945

Big increase in jungle figures since steady supply of quinine but supply broken now and malaria increasing. [indecipherable words] 348 are inside 64. Jungle 125 - 207 - 105. Some fellows 3 attacks a month. Appears no chance of Kite going to Konyu again for pay.

4 EB's frequent also Hedge lopping Harry twice. Becce's almost daily.

18th April Wednesday, 1945

Nips getting nasty again. Peculiar flaming objects dropped by planes on 16th. Also pamphlets. One dropped in camp. Nips vetoed concert.

FEVER - 3 bad days.

25th April Wednesday, 1945

Large amount of rice in. Will not starve for a time. Same day (24th) 4 EB's over after few days spell. Very large bombs dropped in distance. 11 yrs Enid died.

25th

After much argument, Nip L/Cpl (a little swine) allowed Anzac Dawn Service.

2nd May Wednesday, 1945

Nip said Roosevelt dead. Not much aerial activity lately. Chinese doctor at station gave Rasbury \$20. Optimism. Still practically no trains. Fairly frequent rains now. Tuesday thunder. Quinine finished. Found alleged quinine tree.

Nips talking about war finishing in 2 months. No reccy for several days. Don't know whether good sign or bad one. Nips owe us 50 days wages.

3rd

First train for several days tonight. No games allowed among sick. No mending, Malaria increase alarming. Bark infusion not much apparent good. Hear camp just up line suffering greatly from vitaminosis. 1 dead. Fever.

9th May Wednesday, 1945

Nips arrived from Chungki with 16 bottles. Have to eke out with infusion till month end. Very little quinine Chungki. Note for Don Williamson about refusal to sign parole.

Numbers down to 20 in jungle 150 in hospital. Fellows cannot shake fever off. I took 2 days tablets I had saved and better on 4th day. Have a little powder left.

Reccy on 12th. No bombers 18 in jungle.

16th May Wednesday, 1945

Few days fine weather. Sgt. Wolffe died on 14th. Nips started mild blitz but after 3 days getting 8 per day. Dunlop put foot down and only allowed two. Nips OK. Seems fact that blitz has peaked. Roll on. I have said 24th inst. [?].

23rd May Wednesday, 1945

After a couple of false starts 160 sick went last night, leaving 187 here? Major Dunlop went. Funnily enough, Nip L/C picked men himself and sent 18 workers.

Some local purchase Red Cross stuff arrived other day. Also mail. None for me. Some clothing but maybe thats Nip.

24th Formed 2 Companys I have to dodge jungle now. Blitz on 25th. Clarke put up good show. Jerry seems OK. No more blitzes after 26th. 4 years since I was home. Nip L/Cpl going in for refined torture. Will not allow party for buying.

30th May Wednesday, 1945

Nips ordered list of shortages and U.S. articles. Will be usual result.

31st May, 1945

2 lots of Red Cross stuff in a few days but have to hold half of it for fellows expected from Appron. Some also going to Tomito where only 80 are left. 4 have died up there recently. Their mail is still held here.

4th June, 1945

The first time buying has been allowed for some period. the swines. Another FEVER for me. 3 attacks in a month.

5th June

Tomito stuff went today.

6th June Wednesday, 1945

Trains running up and down this morning gave us ideas but found later there had been a train smash at 242 during night. Plenty of eggs and fresh vegs arriving which, with Red Cross stuff makes food quite fair at present.

8th June, 1945

Today this war has been on 3 1/2 years, we have been prisoners 3 yrs 3 mths 3 wks & 3 days and it is a month since G went. New M.O. arrived - Todd - a Congo man.

Plenty of snakes about after frogs. Python 4 1/2 metres long.

Figures down again, no buying allowed although plenty at station. Todd a menace.

13th June Wednesday, 1945

Two horrible dreams on successive nights about M.I. [Mary Irene] All reinforcements from Appron arrived 30 Dutch, very weak. Had a bad time. Swines make us draw a ticket from guardroom now to bathe, sick not allowed. Lack of vitamin. FEVER.

20th June Wednesday, 1945

Reshuffle of companies. Ours now International Brigade 20 Aus, 1 Malay, 4 Yanks, 79 Dutch. Sailor Eginton Cerebral malaria.



22nd June, 1945

Fever, rain.

27th June Wednesday, 1945

2 Hedge hopping planes. Very few 4 E.B.'s for some time.

4th July Wednesday, 1945

All on getting wood out speedo speedo. Fellows working very hard. We are told we are going to K.B. [Kanchanbur] as soon as wood is out, about 3 weeks at present rate.

9th

FEVER. Corn cobs. 10 for Tical.

11th July Wednesday, 1945

Sausages 25c each. A day or two fine weather which will make tracks in jungle much better. Bringing wood on tankas is killing in mud bare-footed.

18th July Wednesday, 1945

Robbie van Reyden died of blackwater fever. Terrific rush on getting wood out. No vit. few planes.

25th July Wednesday, 1945 547

All wood out of jungle. Am one of 60 warned for evacuation. Camp closing soon. Three huts gone away, also new bamboo and lot of rice.

## Epilogue

This was the last diary entry. 14 days later, the war ended. One could assume from the July 4 entry that Alec went to Kanchanburi from Tamaju, but the time from July 25 to his homecoming on Oct 18, 1945 is unaccounted for, unfortunately.

Presumably he returned to Malaya or Singapore and spent 2 months recuperating before returning home.

During this time, his wife, Mary, received a letter from the army advising her that Alec would be giving a radio message on a certain date. The whole family listened and heard his message on that day.