SECOND FOURTH CASUALTY CLEARING STATION A.I.F.

Unofficial History.

—by Lieut. Col. T. Hamilton

Although December 30th, the day on which the Head Quarters of the Unit moved into Brighton Camp, Hobart, and issued its first Routine Order, is the official birthday of 2/4 C.C.S., the actual planning of the Unit took place long before that date.

I was seated in my Surgery at Newcastle, N.S.W. on November 15th 1940, talking quietly to a patient, when the trunk line call which I had been awaiting from the outbreak of war came through on the phone.

I recognized the even tones of the D.D.M.S., Eastern Command.

"Will you accept an appointment to Command the Second Fourth C.C.S. and take it abroad?"

My pulse rate leapt ten beats with sudden excitement but I managed to say:

"Yes Sir."

"Good, then you may have to proceed to Tasmania to form the Unit there."

"I'll go to Timbuktu if necessary, Sir."

The D.D.M.S. must have sensed the excitement because he laughed and said,

"All right, take ten days to get ready and we will give you further orders in writing. Army Head Quarters will ring you on Sunday night and give you particulars of your team of Officers; come and see me when you are ready and I'll give you all the help I can. Good-bye."

The crackle of the far-away voice ceased and I tried to concentrate on my patient again. Her ailment seemed to be forgotten; she had evidently got the drift of the conversation, for she smiled nervously and said,

"So you will be leaving us too, Doctor."

I nodded, and she continued—

"War is a cruel business; my husband sailed three weeks ago."

Instantly I felt sorry. Here was a new aspect which I had not considered. She had just recovered from a serious operation and, with her husband away, was faced with the task of living in loneliness and rearing two young children on a meagre income. I wondered how often
we fellows on service realise that the real brunt of the war is being borne by our women-folk on the Home Front.

We shook hands solemnly and she departed, wishing me "Good Luck" as she went.

My Secretary entered with a letter. She seemed to know also.

The letter was dated 13th November, by Air Mail from Tasmania and was from Captain R. E. Lee asking for the post of Quartermaster. I read: "Funny how quartermasters know everything before anyone else."

Need I describe the ensuing days? The rush to dispose of practice and war; the farewells with the family; the examinations at the Recruiting "bull-ring" in Sydney; with the help of Eastern Command and a friendly Warrant Officer I got through the ordeal in forty minutes, which must be close to a record.

Captain G. R. Turner came down with me to interview the R.D.M.S.

want him in my unit and he wanted to come. We were colleagues and good friends in the 1st Field Ambulance (Militia).

Headquarters were adamant. There was no place for Captain Turner, until later, perhaps! We returned to Newcastle feeling sulky, but I let him go up in the train that I would have him with me by hook or by crook.

Honesty prevailed as the best policy and Captain Turner joined later in Tasmania and has been a tower of strength to the Unit ever since.

On the 9th December I paraded at Army Medical H.Q. in Melbourne and was given the opportunity of meeting Major H. A. Phillips and Captain R. Wall.

In between conferences I was whisked out to Royal Park Depot where I saw Major J. H. Chalmers and W. O. MacLeod in action at Training School. I was impressed by their evident efficiency and promptly requested that they be included in my Unit.

The accompanying officer, Colonel (now Brigadier) R. W. Walsh, died and shook his head.

"You can't have all the good men in the Army, Chalmers and MacLeod are already allotted."

Now Major Chalmers and W. O. MacLeod subsequently joined us in long and unofficial story which will be told after the War.
Hotel Windsor,
MELBOURNE,
31st December, 1940.

Left Newcastle on Sunday afternoon train, feeling miserable. Felt better when I met Capt. Col. Barlow on the train and found he was going right through to Melbourne to a staff and command school.

Raining and very humid in Sydney and Central Station just as depressing as usual.

Managed to get berthed in with Capt. Barlow on the Limited and had a good trip to Albury.

Col. Monty Brown and one or two officers of 1 Division also called in and chatted till we arrived.

Albury cold and fresh - had breakfast on the "Spirit of Progress" and found a seat next to Capt. Max Brown of Tasmania - fine train.

Capt. Fisher and Seaman of Newcastle Hospital were also on the train proceeding to Ewarton to join the R.A.A.F.

Victorian barracks at Melbourne seem to have doubled in size. Commonwealth Police and officials everywhere.

R.O.M. quartered in block "J" and it is an interesting revelation of how the Army Med. side of R.A. is run.

Lunch at the Imperial Service Club and met old General Hardy, late Base Commandant of H.Q., who has just been "retired". The poor old chap seemed a bit sad about it.

With Col. Colvin I went over the team for the R.C.O. Should I say yes to Captain I had never seen? I managed first to get Col. Barlow fixed and then I decided to interview the others. One (when the General specially nominated) I asked to be re-checked
T.A.U., TAUOMA.
11th December, 1953.

END STAGE

What a rush round Melbourne in the last two days — visiting the Barracks, getting tickets, interviewing officers and surgeons. The Movements Officer said he had booked me a good cabin for Tasmania but, being wise in the ways of the Army I found it was a dormitory of a four berth bilby cabin. Then I rang him up and complained he said it was because the boat was probably crowded. Going down town before sailing time I looked in at the Tasmanian Tourist Bureau and asked if they could do anything better. They said "Certainly sir, we'll give you one all to yourself, and it won't cost anything extra". So here I am with a decent cabin all to myself.

Sir Robert and Lady Knox took me to lunch at Benzie's to-day. I hope I don't lose all by being seasick. Sir Robert is going to telephone Robert and get us put up at the Tasmania Hotel in case I have to stay there for a few days and he is also going to get some of his business friends to look me up at the Club.

We have just cleared the hands and seen the poor old "Onagel" off the beach. She can be seen quite clearly from Point Lonsdale.

Last night I had to see Mr. Bullock quick, but he got lost and I was late at a loose end, so I went to the Princess Theatre next door and bought a seat. I was surprised when I was only charged 2/6 for a booked seat, but saw a ballot picture being on the stage, so sat down, and got a seat number before it dawned on me that I had blundered into a school performance by the pupils of John Hopkins Clifton College of Calisthenics. I wasn't quite sure what calisthenics were before, but I know now all right — so far, very fed up.

I got a pleasant surprise this morning when the Minder knocked 30% off my bill, seeing that I was in the A.I.F. I hope all the jocks do it.

More in the next stage from Tasmania. I must arrange for my wife to come over.
A clean town of 40,000 inhabitants, dominated by Mount Wellington and Mount Wilson. Douglas Parker, Superintendent of the General, spent yesterday afternoon trying to take me up to the pinnacle of Mount Wellington in his car - of ancient vintages.

About a mile past the Springs Hotel and in sight of the summit, the car coughed, faltered and stopped. Doug spoke its, his wife encouraged it, but the car was adamant, so we let it trickle down backwards to the Springs, had afternoon tea and came home.

In the evening I had tea with Dr. Denis Reid and his family - three nice young girls - just like mine. Seeing them come in and exhibit their silk worms, listen to the local "dad and Dave" and then kiss their good night with the rest of the family, made me a bit hungry. For my own home and youngsters and all the peaceful joys of man's own home.

To-day Dr. Frank Fay and his family are going to call for me.

Nobody works in Hobart on Saturday mornings - a very pleasant custom. I went up to the barracks to do some work, was presented with a cup of morning tea and assured that there was no hope of anything anybody that entered, as they had all gone fishing or calling for the week-end.

Major Turnbull of Launceston, will be unable to join the unit as his wife is expecting her fourth baby and has begged him not to go till it arrives. I had no hesitation in letting him off as I had been given a tip that he might be a hard officer to manage, although he seemed a very decent chap.

To-morrow I go to Launceston to see some potential officers and see there. A very fine type of O.C.O. is available, fortunately, and most of them have previous A.I.R.C. or hospital experience.

In order to stiffen the medical side of the work I have sent to Essendon Hospital for a young radiographer who can turn out beautiful X-ray work, and the head Theatre Assistant, who is thoroughly skilled with sterilisers and operating theatre gear generally.

I have been assured in Hobart that I was very lucky to get a C.O.O. as there was keen competition for the post, not only from Tasmania but from every Capital City in Australia. It is astounding the number of medical men - all with three or four children - who are tending in practices and submitting. The Tasmanians are taking the war very seriously.

On Friday night I had dinner with Dr. Bruce Hamilton and his mother, who is over seventy. Bruce has a larrikin sense, including a marvellous radio-grandphone cabinet which plays records of records at a time and does everything except mix drinks. His bedroom has four wardrobes, he has about forty suits - everything in the grand manner and although he adores the pastoral bushland, he has had hot and cold water brought in to a marble basin at his bedside so that he can practically shave without getting out of bed.

He is going off to see the Specialist with the 2/4 Hospital - a Victorian style - and I believe his kit has to be seen to be believed. As Bruce says - "I shall positively lose time every minute in camp. I've never been in camp, I like comfort, and I hate O.C.O. In fact I got quite fatigued watching the gardener dig an air-raid shelter for mother. I simply had to dig her one, you know, as its too big a job for the dear lady herself." Considering the dear old lady is over seventy I should say it was.
These notes are a bit rasping, but, reading them in years to come, we may be able to piece together the background and story of what promises to be a most interesting unit. Later on I will be able to introduce the personnel.

Tom.
"For trouble-free motoring, join the Army". This was the remark passed by an officer on Friday when he was taking me down to Port Arthur at the entrance to the port of Hobart. It was indeed a lovely drive; mainly along the northern shores of Hobart's lovely harbour and then across a narrow sound which led us to the rather lonely Port.

I met Major Fortune (in charge) and his R.O. - Dr. Bean - an old soldier and now in the vicinity of seventy. He is a brother of Major O. H. M. Bean who wrote the War History.

Captain Dorney walked me all round and the view from the top observation post was wonderful - the whole panorama of Tasmania's eastern coast line being visible.

I have covered nearly a thousand miles by car this last ten days, including over to L.gravity and back and one or two shorter drives round Hobart with the various doctors. To-day I went down to Nanton Bay with Dr. Sandell Reid and his family and saw some of the coastline towards historic Fort Arthur, notorious for its bad treatment of convicts in the old days.

To-night I returned home to a comfortable bath and a dinner of braised pigeons, which was excellent. This really is a wonderful war so far, but I have a feeling that it is not good to last although the Army seems quite satisfied to have me with the passing of the holiday period before proceeding to Brighton.

Major "Bun" Rogers and Captain Chalmers - both Tasmanians and good fellows - have now been appointed to complete our team. "Bun" lived in the Club and, I am told, he has been like a dog without a tail since he lost his wife last year. Originally he was greatly devoted to her and last year when she died, for he is as happy as a schoolboy because he feels the new activities with the C.O.S. will help him forget his troubles. He seems a cheery soul otherwise and I think he will make an excellent base President. He is said to be rather weak on the surgical side but in very energetic, and I can balance things there myself by taking a hand with his surgical team.

I met Col. Alfred Chilin the other night. He is most interested in my suit as he led the first Tasmanian C.O.S. in the last war and did great work on the beach at Cape Coop in 1916.

I mentioned this in my broadcast appeal for recruits on Friday over the Tasmanian National Stations and feel that it will give the unit a definite Tasmanian tradition. In fact, it wouldn't be hard to become a pro-Tasmanian. Hobart offers the stranger an excellent welcome and the strawberries, raspberries, loganberries - and cream - have to be seen to be believed.

Everyone in Australia has heard of the famous Batemans's Sweep which is run from Hobart. As a (more or less) distinguished visitor I have been invited to draw the first prize of £28,000 in the Sweep. It will be drawn at 3 p.m. tomorrow, so some early bird is going to catch the lovely worm - in short, a fortune will depend for some lucky one on my particular whim tomorrow morning in selecting a small marble from a large barrel.

Captain Bingham, our new and very young Coastal Officer, reported in this morning. He is a clean-cut boy, doesn't smoke or drink, and is very keen to learn all the military routine. I like his looks and, as I find he is good at his clerical work, I shall probably be lucky to have another good officer. The three clerks are still in unknown quantities, but we have initiated some string-pulling through the D.A.A.F. Department so that we will get good men.

My first few days travelling allowance has just come through and it will cover my extra expenditure over Christmas very nicely.

Signing off till next issue.
Holiday time in Hobart. Now I wish Edna were here to share it with me. Still, only fourteen more days and she is flying over to join me. Meanwhile, lots of my new friends are interested in her arrival and are going to call on her and show her round. I have shown them her photo and Harriet's snapshots from home and I feel sure she will have a very enjoyable time.

No one seems to want to work here at present. The Barracks and Brighton Camp are reduced to skeleton staffs and positions at the holiday beaches down the Bay are the order of the day. I visited Kingston with Major Rogers yesterday and saw the golf links.

There is a pretty river hole about 180 yards over which I'd love to try a niblick shot. I must try and get my sticks over here.

Bruce Hamilton asked me to Christmas dinner at Great Point Hotel. His mother was sick, so we dined quietly together and cracked a bottle of Tasmanian Claret in honour of the day. I'm glad he took me out. Otherwise I should have been homesick for my home and yesteryear. They had filled my thoughts all morning and I could picture them racing down the stairs at the first peep of daylight to inspect their stockings - or was it-pillow cases?

After dinner I went home with Bruce and helped him to sort and pack his military kit. What a lovely kit! Everything a military tailor could pack over on him plus suicide gifts in leather from friends - writing cases, money belts, sheath knives, his uniforms were the last word in finely woven gabardine - God help him when his batman gets to work on them or when he sits down on a grossly bench.

He was very grateful for my help and I have arranged to take him to dinner next Kees if we happen to be near one another.

Sunny day. Had a swim down at Kingston Beach.
New Year’s Eve in Hobart and a town addicted to mild prohibition became a good deal brighter. It is apparently an old Tasmanian custom for the police to go temporarily off duty and for the local inhabitants to mount ancient horsed vehicles and parade the town towards midnight. The best effort appeared to be two brewery horses (magnificent Clydesdales) harnessed to a leader carrying about a dozen revellers.

Major Leggo invited me to a dinner party at Hadley’s (the Australia of Hobart) which he gave in honour of Captain and Mrs. John Coit and their guest from N.Z. (Mrs. A. Crell). Hamish Reid’s wife was also there and after dinner we went round to the hospital to see Ham who is having a hernia done in preparation for joining the A.I.F. Ham didn’t look so good (ena).

The evening finished at the Superintendent’s quarters at the hospital, where Dr. and Mrs. Parker were saying goodbye to Miss Jill Secretan, who has been appointed masseuse (military).

On New Year’s Eve at Hadley’s, every table was photographed and out of all the odd fifty tables they had to pick for that of Major Leggo to publish in the local “Mercury”. The result is enclosed and will serve as a memento for the file. It left me open to quite a lot of “reading” in the Brigade mess yesterday morning. We have not established our own unit mess yet (lack of good cooks) and are feeding at Camp Headquarters, which accommodates about forty officers under the command of Lt. Col. Payne.

Tonight I was invited to a farewell by the infantry mess who will be leaving shortly - home to bed by 10.15 - a very early creinal, with everyone in good spirits.

The publicity department at Head quarters are still advertising for our recruits. The attached ad. will be useful for the file, as it indicates how Tasmanians are being asked to join up. We have a corporal who graduated through Sandhurst and was an officer with the deserters for 10 years. A most useful man and looks like making a good sergeant.

To-day I held my first C.O.’s parade and our tiny unit looked quite well.

More in the next installment.
30th January, 1941.

Officer's Mess, No. 2 R.S.D., Royal Park—What a Camp!

Arriving today three hours late after a stormy crossing in the "Tarooma" (Capt. F. Blunzy) we marched to Spencer Street, waited half an hour for a train to Flemington and marched in to Royal Park R.S.D. a wind-swept ghost of units on the only hill in North Melbourne. We were mustered by the Camp Commandant, received us, although the guard turned out (without the orderly officer).

I sent for him afterwards and pointed out that a little personal attention wouldn't do any unit any harm. He then dug out the second-in-command who was apparently doing his duty from an armchair in the mess and loaded us on his back as a cold risk. He taught us for ourselves.

After Brighton the men were disappointed to find no cold welcome but we soon hustled round and shot the camp staff into some sort of activity. They had a poor midday meal, but this one will be better or I'll know the reason why.

The Orderly Officer at Brighton (Capt. T. Perry) was wonderful to us and we enjoyed our stay there. Although we left at six-fifteen a.m., the whole staff, including the cooks, came down to see us off— even in the pouring rain. We left Brighton in a funny little box carriages with no seats, and as it was a long journey, we pulled up twice in the bush and dropped. Everyone sat on the floor of the carriage and did their duty at the side of the line—except the two nursing sisters who kept discreetly to their carriage when some of the troops called out functionally "My ladies aboard!" They then said, "My eyes are dim I cannot see, I did not bring my specks with me."

In the "Tarooma" I was O.C. Troopship. We had a mixed bunch of troops including draft dodgers, three prisoners and escorts and reinforcements for infantry.

Only four or five of the forward group gave any trouble until I closed the "bars" and then they got sea-sick and that took the shine out of them.

Capt. Turner was accommodation officer and evidently decided that my cabin wasn't good enough, because he booked me an hospital bed after we cleared the Tarooma and said he had secured quarters "worthy of the O.C. Troopship". The quarters were a suite of two rooms—one of them a large room filled with air con. The suite contained a large bathroom and a large double bed with two bedside tables and a lovely bathroom (a place I didn't have my wife travelling alone). There were eighteen switches and well furnished with dim lights and the sheet in the lav. was spread in a delicate shade of orange— a pleasure to sit on.

A mark on the hit was about midnight and from then on my room looked as though there had been a free fight in it.

The ship rolled to a thirty-degree angle, passed and then the same on the other side. I got fed up with being rolled out of bed and having to climb back up the sloping floor against a mass of suitcases and chairs, so I wedged myself in on the bottom but ordered my neck there, put the bed clothes in the marble bath and thought that would trick the rolling, but the bath was too damned cold, so I then ordered the next bed and was so tired by then I slept till dawn—what a night.

Major Rogers was rotated with the R.C. Cadet Unit and apparently he used some very forcible language and appeals to the Almighty when being selected, and we all reminded him this morning that extra masses were being said for the good of his soul.
On reaching Melbourne I turned the troublesome part of the draft over to the Southern Command Officer as soon as possible. To my amusement he told them to report at Royal Park by midnight and then turned them loose in Melbourne.

There was apparently method in his madness because he drily said "The Military Police will pick them up later and they can't get into much trouble in Melbourne on a Sunday."
2nd February, 1941.

A Thrilling 21 Hours. The train column marching out of Royal Park yesterday was in my ear. We went out with the band playing and some of the lads (Victoria) with lamps in their throats at the thought of leaving their home city. Lt. Col. Rawson and his staff took a farewell salute as we left.

Rushing through the long night in a silent troop train, with rain pattering down, made me reflect on the tremendous changes made in a country at war - or perhaps I was mad myself. At any rate something happened to make time at least Yalta as the troops were breakfasting and got my beloved wife and youngsters on the long distance phone. It was wonderful to hear their voices. Even little Anne’s timid “Mum’s Vaddy”, and I felt much better afterwards.

Then came Harling Harbour with the Navy in charge and a ferry trip to H.V. B.I.I. What a ship! Or rather, a floating city. Here I am with a cabin right up on the top deck and about eight thousand men underneath, basking on ten great decks. The main rooms are untouched, but we use the tourist dining saloon as the first is too big. It has been fitted with more tables for the men - all 30 in three sittings.

The men are in great spirits - beer is only five pence a pint and cigarettes five pence a packet. So they are making the most of it.

The ship’s main leaves one gazing with wonder, and the yachts which have been sailing all day long, look very tiny from the height of the tall decks.

Bill, Jerry and many other old friends are on board, and we met in the lounge - a magnificent room with lamps in gilt as big as baby bath-tubs, and almost knee deep in rich carpets. An officer remarked: “Fancy me travelling like this and getting paid for it.” Troops are still pouring aboard. The embarkation officer called out "Here is your berthing ticket and your mess ticket, and one of the trains expected with ‘And where is your return ticket?’ They have a joke for everything. Coming along the train we crawled past an isolated deck furnished with an untidy looking girl in the back-yard. As it was near 6.30am one of the troops yelled out "Ulla Mabel, where’s Bave!"

I was very unpopular because I confiscated all the beer they brought aboard the train at Benalla. However, I changed it into cigarettes at the bar at Tanglewood and gave the bar-drinkers the beer instead.

And so to bed. I had little sleep last night and this is the best luxurious address I have slept on for a long time. I share a private bedroom with Major Walsh.
4th February, 1941.

One of the greatest days in our lives! A convey of three huge ships leaving Sydney loaded with troops.

Firstly the preliminaries. A morning parade in preparation for the arrival of the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie’s slow walk down the long length of the armed decks - a simple salute and a handshakes. “Good luck, gentlemen, both to you and your unit.” Good luck later.” We leave tired, but not too tired to inter accompany us to the ramps in our green uniform and stand at the salute as the troops gave him cheer after cheer.

So arrived we were leaving them, as the tide was full and the ship twisted out her steam whistle. At one o’clock the officers went to stations and the troops started lining the decks.

I was lucky to secure a position on the front of the lower deck, right under the Commodore. What a sight it was. First the HMT “Aquitania,” with her four black funnels belching smoke, led the way; then we followed in the famous “Queen Mary” leading the “New Amsterdam” - a huge S.S. Atlantic ship, said to be full of New Zealanders.

As we gained the House every launch in Sydney Harbour seemed to be around us. The regimental bands were playing cheer and joy, and everyone seemed to be yelling at once with excitement.

Then the “Queen Mary’s” huge whistle nearly broke our ear drums. In the rush that followed one of the troops on the forward deck yelled up to the bridge — “Hey, cut it out Skipper, we can’t hear the bloody head.”

Then the ship’s sailors started to lower the parapet across the bow, aided by all sorts of warm advice from the soldiers, until the chief officer was red in the face with embarrassment.

After clearing the deck a troop cruiser - the “Dunbarton” — raced up and passed us. Then a large number swooped down and picked up fore and aft by a yard. Little dim waists were already swept the homed and the “Aquitania” hung back while the “Queen” assumed her rightful place at the head of the convey. Sydney slipped astern and we had the wonderful sight of three huge liners following a cruiser - all within half a mile of one another.

In the morning we are blocked out but the “Queen Mary’s” huge lounge is crowded with officers in khaki and nurses in their scarlet cloaks. Everyone is linking the marvelous grand piano and the astorias — all in white — we are going round with loaded troops. Beer at five pence a pint is the favourite drink, and to the view of the pure distinguisshed and very English stove, but everyone is happy and the huge seated room with its lovely marble and glass, setting off the beautiful paneling, is a very colourfull scene.

Several Newcastle men came up and shook us by the hand to-day, including Blight, Fred Lucas and Michaelson, and also Y. J. Hutchinson — an old eager from the 2nd Regiment.

We are now plumbing along at a steady twenty-one knots and the huge bulk of the “Aquitania,” just half a mile to starboard, can be always seen in the moonlight. She seems to be rolling a bit but S.M. is as steady as a rock and no one seems to have even thought of sea sickness.

Some of the officers were quite visibly affected at leaving Sydney and I felt sure of getting a lump in my throat when I looked north along the coastline with my binoculars and reflected that just two or three hundred fathoms on the horizon all that I held dear were still standing looking out to sea. God guard them while I’m away — and that’s an honest prayer if ever there was one.

And so for a turn on deck and then bed.
The Commodore has expressed the wish to meet
the following officers at lunch at his table at 1315 hours
today:

Lt. Col. Hamilton
Lt. Col. Coates
Lt. Col. Gauleson

Lt. Col. Kirwood
C.O. Troops.

Received 6/2/41.
F. Hamilton
Lt. Col.
2/4 3, U.S.
9th February, 1941.

Sunday at sea in a troopship. Lots of happenings since my first entry. The new "Queen Elisabeth" came up astern four days ago and joined us towards evening. A stately ship all in grey.

So figure now that we are due to turn round Cape Lion in this evening and hit Freemantle tomorrow morning. Orders say "No shore leave".

The Saturday night dance in the main lounge last night was a wonderful night. The beautiful furnishings, the lofty room with its soft lighting and exquisite paneling, the dash of colour from the red names of the Army Sisters, all made an unforgettable scene.

My insomnia kept me quiet but we discovered that Champagne (the genuine Veuve Clicquot and Camille Ruysse of 1928) could be purchased at 10/10 a magnum as against 22/6 on shore. To bad some.
10th February, 1941.

One day out of Fremantle - Heading North.

We left Fremantle last night after being anchored for three days in the blazing sun. The "Empsey" is not built for the tropics and below decks was hot and stuffy. The hawser areas down in "H" deck were almost unbearable, but most of the troops slept on the promenade deck at night. There was no shore leave and I was lucky to get a telegram home to my wife.

All the letters were censored by the Unit Officers and it was sometimes heartening, and at other times not so good, to hear the men's opinion of their officers. I was lucky and had a good run.

We left in the quiet of the evening with horns playing and the "Aquitania" pulling out and taking the lead. Then came the "H Favorite" the "Queen Mary" and the "Oaklandian" with her New Zealand contingent. The New Zealanders were wearing their heavy cloth dress and must have been hot. Our class are dressed in shirts and shorts with golf stockings and light shoes. On the deck we kept on the move and were acquiring a fine sun tan.

A typical day is to wake at 6 to the sound of the deck bugles and open the blacked-out port-holes. Although the air conditioning makes life comfortable, the morning sea breeze is generally refreshi- - then the duty officer reports, fully dressed, carousal with us on the day's orders as I drink my morning tea, and then departs down to the lower decks to bring the men up for the early parade.

I join them on parade and then they go to breakfast and I go back to my cabin, Ace nothing to do but read five decks in the elevator and step into the first class pool. With the hot weather this is becoming very popular, and even the morning suites are getting up early and using it too.

Then come a smoke and breakfast. Then drill and lectures follow until lunch at one. Although I break off at 10.30 and accompany the staff Captain on the ship in one of the ship's inspection groups, which all assemble, complete with buglers (teams and caps and sabres) in the main hall off the promenade deck. For one group to inspect the ship for the day and one of them addressed us as "Yeoman" (Big white chief). "Yeoman" means "Belly", but so far I haven't learnt more myself.

Our destination, Aden, was to-day given to the troops and they are all excitedly reading over little booklets which the Army issued telling them about the language and customs of the natives. Some of them are already trying out the strange new words and one of them addressed us as "Tassie" (Big white chief). "Tassie" means "Belly", but so far I haven't learnt more myself.

We have concerts every night and before dinner, on the games deck a Big Scotch engineer induces his happy hour and we dance Scotch night time reels for exercise under the tuition of the officers from the Sydney Scottish Regiment (Capt. Robertson). At the end of the recital everyone, including the piper, is in a bath of perspiration.rau follows another bath or a swim, fresh clothes, a dry martini in the forward cocktail bar, and then dinner.

Veinily a full day.
16th February, 1941.

British Ocean

A Kneehop with the Navy - Convoy Farewell.

We were told to-day that, at 1215, the 'JX' would leave from the convoy and proceed independently with another cruiser.

Promptly at 1200 the Navy appeared on the horizon and came up with the convoy dead on time.

The troops manned the decks, with speeded bands awashings on the quarterdeck. Then the 'JX' clapped on full speed, swung out from the head of the convoy to port, went down the line of ships and came up behind them on their starboard side. The two commanders exchanged greetings while our ship, travelling twice the speed of the others, passed them slowly, and all flags dipped in farewell.

It was an amusing sight to see four huge trans-Atlantic liners accompanying in mid-ocean, everyone listing to the side with the weight of thousands of troops, all hoarse with excitement and giving cheer after cheer for their departing comrades-in-arms. Then we had passed them all we fell in behind our new cruiser and headed for Singapore, while the 'Somersa' led off the other three to port bound for Colombo.

17th February, 1941.

To-day we are getting gear packed, ready for disembarkation. The sea is in an oily calm and the only breeze is the 20-foot one made by the ship. Volcanos ash from the Suma islands covers the water, surface here and there are sharks (very varieties) and large sea snakes are very numerous, swirling on the surface. So are in the Volcano Islands and one can almost sense the Far East. It promises to be interesting country.
The native life here is still of unwaning interest to us. On Saturday, R. O. W. Brett, O.C. Malayan Police, entertained Earl Harvey and me at a "curry tiffin".

We arrived about an hour before the "stingaha", smoked and tarred until two under his paint and then sat down to the meal. Then we were shown into another room and seated around the table, where a fine "curry" was served. After a good Indian soup, "yam", the Malay sauce, brought round a plate of finely flaked and beautifully cooked rice. This is laid in a wide circle round the plate and into the central hollow one drops two or three pieces of curried meat and gravy.

Here in Australia one would stop and be satisfied. Not so the Malayans. They serve some ten more circular dishes from which one takes a small helping of sultana, samosa, string, pepper, Malay nuts, chilli and so on. These are also dropped into the hollow and the whole lot mixed together.

The result is magnificent — something like a mild terrahole soup, one would think, without any unpleasant after-effects. Each one was home and asleep soundly until tea time.

We have another one to face with the local Native Chief or "Dato", who also acts as District Officer. On Saturday, although the fact that he is a strict Mussalman and therefore a teetotaller will probably help a lot.

The boys are getting ready to bargains from the shops, and my hatman — private McDonald — comes home and reports how he got pockets put in his pants and the length altered for one dollar (3/6).

"Peter Jackson" Croydon "h", and the best English cigarettes sell at 10 cents for "60" time, i.e. just over one-third of the price they are in Australia. Good cigars are also very cheap. After that, I hadn't tried them out yet. We find it hard to get good tea — largely the fault of the chlorinated water — and coffee is not available.

More next time.

Yours,
28th February, 1941.

We have now adopted the daily time-table of troops in the Far East. Reveille at 6 and then the usual Australian Camp time-table until 1, when the troops have a warm meal. They then have a rest period until 5.30, followed by a lecture until 4.30, and then high tea. From 5 until 7 they play organized games, generally football or soccer, against local teams. Cricket and rugby are also being organized. Tennis is available for the officers and at 8 until 7 are the social hours we have visitors dropping in. They watch the football and then we adjourn to the mess and give them a cup of tea or a drink until it is time to bath and dress for dinner, which is at 8. The local hour is 8.30, but we found this was a bit too late.

Dinner and a yarn afterwards generally finds us near bed time. All day we are in a lather of sweat with the humid heat, but are standing up to it surprisingly well, and the nights are not unpleasant for sleeping. The insects at night are much the same as at home but more playful. Flies are non-existent and mosquitoes are much fewer than in Kowloon, although we sleep under nets always as a precaution. A small green and red snake was killed yesterday outside our quarters and we always examine our slippers before putting them on, in case of centipedes.

Small lizards come out at night and race nervously over the walls of our sleeping bunks, some of them are quite friendly. The bats are bunched with "attah", thin layers of palm leaf, and when we want a coconut we get a native to shoot up a nearby tree and pull one down.

The nights ago we went to a Chinese performance at the local picture show. The performers were most amusing and went on for hours in the high singing-song music so well known to radio-listeners. The local Chinese band accompanied them with a weird cacophony of jingling bells, crashing cymbals and squeaky string music. About two hours was as much as we could stand.

Here next week.

Tom Hamilton.
4th March, 1941.

Join the Army for care-free motoring!

Petrol restrictions have now been brought in in Malaya and also "black-out" practices. All the motorists are grumbling, just as they did in Australia when it first came in there. The natives are so poor at fancying that they estimate that a lot of "cheap" petrol coupons will soon be in circulation. The Army is exempt. Yesterday I motored 100 miles on a fascinating trip through the western part of Malaya on a visit to the building parts of our unit. I saw lots of old military friends, also Sergeant Major Pat Lowry (Sydney's old time playboy) and called in at the base at Seremban in the evening for a bath and a feed. The roads are all bitumen and it was a joy to go over mountain ranges and through cool jungle glades. On the way home the driver and the orderly in front wore they saw a tiger cross the road in the glare of the headlights, but Capt. Chalmers and I were half asleep in the back seat as we missed it. Capt. Chalmers asked them what they had to drink at Seremban.

Seremban is the capital of the State of Negri Sembilan, and while we were trying to find the Camp hospital we pulled up at the Sultan's palace by mistake. The Sultan is an Oxford graduate and did not seem to be at home. There were two bearded 61st policemen on guard at the gate.

The main street of the town is like a "set-up" from Hollywood, say in a picture such as "Chang Lii" - gaudy, fierce, two-storey shacks painted green blue and white - half naked Malay girls lounging in doorways, venerable Indians spitting on kerb-stones. Chinese women all in black, their thin hair pulled tightly back from a yellow waisted sarong, laughing Chinese school children in blue suits, almost like Indians, and big comic hats, and Malay school kids in brightly coloured sarong, brown velvet caps and neat white shirts. The women seem to do most of the work in this country. All along the road we passed them, swinging sickles in road-side quarries, carrying big bags of wood balanced on one shoulder or carrying a big basket or load of green stuff on their heads. Here and there we passed gaudy Chinese trucks and little sarongME Chinese, although the Malays don't take religion very seriously.

Writing under my fan is a curse. If I blow it down it stops and the room becomes insufferably hot. If I set it going full speed the papers all blow off the table.

Yesterday we had a Tamil class up our coco-nut trees and threw down the nuts to me. Some of the natives have trained monkeys who do it for them. None of these notes should be useful for Warjoke and Jen for school compositions.

On Saturday I had a ceremonial "kiffin" with the Dato, or native district officer. I didn't feel so comfortable than the C.O. Police - also a guest - gruffly picked up one of the dishes, smelt it and said "I am recommending this Colonial" - decayed prawns in a high state of fermentation. We also added - "The Dato has a native taste in eggs - these eggs should be at least two years old." They looked it too. The curry was extra hot and I hesitated to acquire what was in some of the stuff I just. Although I had a mouth like a bird-cage all evening, I woke up next morning feeling very fit, so the stuff must have been harmless. The Dato - who praises himself on being very English - praised his wife - a shy, slender Malay with almost a touchstone cast of features. She was evidently not brought out often because she was like a frightened gazelle and glided round the walls of the room as though seeking protection. She could not speak English and seemed scared stiff. I passed her all the doubtful dishes before tucking them myself. Her features were something like my drawers, and she was dressed in a pyjama-like outfit of rich heavy silk. I tried to make conversation through the native magistrate but she just nodded in reply, so the going was rather heavy.

More next time.
8 p.m. and a still, humid dark night, just before dawn.

The whole of Malaya is on a full alert and the civil population is "turned out". The civil population is all darkened down and, in this area, has done it very well. I'm a bit fed up with my guards and piquets. In their first war practice and posts and orderly round are supposed to be manned. I decided to take the first all-night duty myself and waited till the moon disappeared before doing a round.

Orderly Round — orderly serving peacefully under a mosquito net; feeling pleasant feeling about in the guard room and looking suspiciously like a sleeper just awakened; main sentry — no challenge, rifle still at the "slopes" — I could have stolen his rifle or stabbed him easily; outpost on vehicles also casual: "Who didn't you challenge me?" "Oh — I thought it must be you, sir." I shall have to teach them that similar carelessness may some day cost them their lives.

That's growth! Probably I shall laugh over it when I've had bath and breakfast.

Really things are so pleasant round this part of the world that no one would think there was a war on. British and British-born officers still look the last word inattitude with broad badges and buttons. They are all very decent shape and most obliging. We like to hear them talk in their precious clipped accents. They are invariably efficient and have done a great job in smoothing down the "teething troubles" of the Australian units.

I was to have led a cricket team yesterday on the padang in an inter-unit match but our usual five o'clock tropical shower (about an inch in half-an-hour) wiped it out. One can almost time the daily rain here, it is so regular. I'm told this is the secret of the country's economy with its rubber plantations. The planters are fine people and we see quite a lot of them. There is a big proportion of Scotchmen and Yorkshiremen among them. They and their wives entertained the men at the Club the other night with a sing-song. The men sang the "Road to Damascus" and made us all homesick.
Lamap, known as it is familiarly known, is the "leave" town of oil troops in this area. It is a sprawling city of 120,000 inhabitants (about as big as Newcastle, only more densely crowded) and is approached by good bitumen roads. The heart is Circular Road, which winds round the town through pleasant gardens and fine homes belonging to wealthy Europeans and Chinese. The Singar Mael Road takes one in direct from the south and is a medley of tumble-down native buildings, native smells and the native shopping centre. Passing the fish markets (with old-time fish) one almost has to wear a military gas-mask. The streets are crowded with native nationalities at all hours - Europeans driving in cars manned by tam-bowed Indian oars, Malays in old "bongs", Chinese in jinrikishas pulled by frail but wiry coolies in big conical, straw-plaited hats. The shops, with their faded signs, green and red have overhanging bedroom balconies, where crowds of native children peep through shutters as to the street below. Each shop has a gay sign outside, generally covered with large Chinese signs, and, in smaller letters, translations in Malay and English. Some of them are amusing - "Long Foot, Fan Specialist"; or "Aram Ali, DENTIST, Toilets," all of them seem to be specialists in something or other. Shrewd, shifty Malay police, in all-box caps and hanki short after each traffic intersection, bicycles are legion, and venerable sikh and muscled, tattooed brown lounge on fibre bed-frames in the shop entrances. Then Captain Lee and I, garbed in shorts, tin helmets and large revolvers poking out of hip holsters, stand in the streets yesterday exalting our car. I'm sure most of the crowd thought we were military policemen. In fact, several rickshaw drivers held out an indicating hand as they pressed round us.

K. L. is the capital of the P.N.J. and has many fine examples of Indian architecture.
15th March, 1941.

"Tea" has been added to the unit strength. As it is a little Malayan monkey of uncontaminated sex we have to refer to it as "it". Its sleeping quarters are a tree outside my bat door and it climbs about on a long wire which gives it plenty of freedom and eats an enormous quantity of bananas and pineapple daily. The H. C. padre is its official keeper and we excused him of taking it to early morning mass.

Last night we had our first official "guest" night in the mess and it went off quite well. As a special compliment to our guests, The Duke of York, Capt. O. A. Williams, Capt. R. C. Brett (Malayan Police), and Mr. Frank Toynbee, the District Engineer, we opened the case of Cascade Blue Label which we carried carefully all the way from Hobart labelled "Medical Comforts."

We spent about having to wear collars and ties and button in the band hut, but after dinner slipped the ties off and had quite a pleasant evening. The padre and the Duke played "Chinese checker" and Brett, Fisher, Rogers, Simpkin, Lee and myself played poker for 10 cent. prizes. The poker was amusing. I started them with a Royal Flush which I had only, but so strong enough to beat Brett's "flush" to a high hand.

I'm off to Singapore by bus in the morning with Capt. Lee officially to gather in the rest of our store convoy but unofficially to have a look at the place.

We haven't had leave for a while and two days seaside touring will be a nice break. I am anxious to see the famous Malacca Straits and Chinese temple. If the prices at the "tea" are too high we shall stay at the ruined hotel backpacks which have very luxurious quarters for touring officers and since cost us nothing. "Then the army and sea and the world."

Our D.R.M. (also of Newcastle Hospital) is very enthusiastic about it and he has turned out a great asset to the unit. Sergeant Lewis (also of Newcastle Hospital) is teaching the orderlies to set up the operating theatre and it looks quite well. It may not have to use it, but its good practice in setting up the gear.

Next week I'll be able to give a commentary on Singapore.
Hooked in Singapore.


The 2-0-0-0’s voice came over the phone—"Colonel, I think your 0-0-0 should take the car to Singapore on Friday and vacate the remainder of your hotel rooms. He will be there before 10:00 a.m. tomorrow morning."

"Good idea. I’ll do more than that. I’ll go with him myself. It’s time I had a day off." Bill N. answered. "Anyway, have a good time and give my love to the Brigadier."

Nothing is better than an unexpected holiday. Could I do it on 30 dollars. I’d try. Singapore or not.

And so down the main road in the heat of early morning, we passed widows and the sun glaring slowly over a fine birch road. The roadside scenes are all of interest. Little Tamil and Malay children on their way to school, rubber-tappers cycling to early morning muster, villagers with lacy eyebrows standing in the windows, patient Malay women pulling the gleaming native sari, Chinese women with heavy loads on a shoulder stick, all combined in a medley of colors against the green jungle below. Then were the houses of rubber plantations, then cafes with their leafy palms and pineapple plantations. Could we pitch a couple of pineapple and slide a growing thirst. We did, to the delight of a waiting Chinese girl.

Jebora Salam arrived with lunch time. Capital of an unfederated State. Its Sultan keeps a private army and is busy building a new palace for his latest unmarried wife. He must have one of the wealthiest States in the world and his take-off from his custom services (one on every main road boundary) made by muddy little, calling brown-faced police must be enormous.

Over the causeway lay Singapore Island, about as big as the Isles of She and Brunei on the map, covered in man-made tree, covered with. A fine highway leads into the city proper and we decided only to report in at Fort Canning.

Could we see Major Neisse? Not only did we see him but found the 1-A-0-0, the seat of hospitality. "You must meet the Brigadier," I said and we promptly asked him to dine with him the following evening. "Would Major Neisse dine with us?" I asked not, but we should be his guests at Salam that very evening. But the 1-A-0-0 is a hotel.

Raffles, a name to conjure with - Raffles on the fringe of a glorious dance floor at 8.30 - the fine orchestra playing my signature tune as we entered ("Raffles Hotel", if you please) - a cherry wine from the bar-lounge as we acknowledge his effort. Major and Mrs. Neisse leading the way through the pretty terrace to a small lawn lined with shady palms (no hairpin), dinner on the lawn served by noiseless Malay "maids" ever table served up with the salt of a central table lamp. The too-too Macassar fountain sounds us ("Half of the dog that bit me, my desk") - the champagne, the liqueurs and cigars afterwards - make us wonder how our host could do it on a major’s pay. Later on, when we dined. "Good-night," as he leaned over the wheel of a sparkling Silver Streaks model, we decided that the tennis and Lycostan lines most his was probably only a flash-bite. Mrs. Neisse was the only lady we had to dance with - with my wife and been there.

On the way home a yellow-turbaned Hindoo sneer pressed into my face and said - "Sahib. I come see you are lonely, you love deeply someone who is far away. She is not with you, but what say you will return to her. I will tell you more if you pay me 100 rupees?"

Well, I could have told him that myself, as I didn’t want the two dollars.
Dining with the "Somebody" of the Medical Service.

Dinner at Arles I said to Mrs. Haigey - "That's the formula for dinner with the R.N.M.S." "Oh," she said, "don't be alarmed, his wife will baste him all evening, they will quarrel mildly, and then you will be rushed off to a cinema." And that is exactly what happened.

Being brought up on strategy I took no risks and sent my driver out beforehand to York House, Alexander, to reserve the room and be able to find it in the dark. While he was doing this I visited the Chinese temple (photos coming later) and had a comfortable bath at the Adelphi (2 dollars, bed and breakfast, and not bad either).

On the way to dinner I managed to arrive thirty minutes of eight and was met by the Chinese "boy" who escorted me into a very fine military bungalow. The Brigadier (who is a most kindly and distinguished man) gave me a warm welcome, a cigarette and a "shangai." So then introduced me to Major Chopra of the Indian Medical Service, a fine looking Indian, and then to his wife, who smiled pleasantly, talked a lot, called her husband "Charlie" and advised me to hurry up and draw my drink as she wanted to rush dinner and be in time for the "Gazette" at the cinema.

We had a lovely dinner, over which I could easily have spent about two hours, all in thirty minutes, and served by soft-footed Chinese. Then Charlie was told to go up and change his trousers, as the khaki drill did not quite match his taste (I couldn't see any difference and felt horribly conscious of my somewhat grubby tunic - thank heavens the lights were well shaded). So then piled into Major Chopra's car, although Charlie wanted badly to take his own, but the movies - at which all the design circle audience were in full evening dress - and was dropped back at the hotel with a bright smile and no supper. Charlie had to go back to the office.
23rd March, 1941.

"Eva!" our little monkey mascot, has been joined by a boy friend, a big agile cheeky monkey (Joe) who sits around and sits on anti-tank sitting anti-ages until the anti-tank round hit him backwards. He is very tame and comes down and watches the criket in the afternoon. The other day he jumped on to the knees of a private who was stripped out on the greens. The private growled out "Joe, Joe, don't be greedy" upon which "Joe" the monkey promptly ran a long hairy knoll up the rise leg of the private's shorts, much to everyone's amuse.

Last evening, I paid my official call to the Residency, which is the equivalent of Government House, for the State of Selangor. The Resident was kind enough to call informally at the camp beforehand and told me to bring some of my officers as well. We had (pronounced "poles") from 6 till 8 p.m. Issued a great scattering and cleaning of smart drill uniforms and finally four of us looked so smart that as I remarked, we "out-counted ourself" to which Major said "You better go next - F launched out - "But the game, Vala!"

Thank the staff car, with the driveraclassed up and trained to get out first and open the doors for us - much cursing when he did this and we found out that it was the Sultan's house and not the residence - fortunately the Sultan was not at home - arrived half-an-hour late and slightly flustered in the huge porch of the residence - was so startled by the sight of a huge, bearded Rajoji, sharfig and gunning, he marked how one gets on with Mrs. RajaRaja or General Boustie, and if he sees that one is not at ease he takes a look and says "Saint, I want you to change clothes with Major So & So. - you really must meet everybody."

Major So & So then gives on the salt-water and we one moves round until you find a group right corner the same gay-length in light conversation. "Stengah" nose automatically. We see an old glass emblazoned as it was refilled by saltless bottles in the half-sandal State Library - velvet cap, white shirt and the red and yellow curving in Selangor colours - a Malay in deep purple shirt and white sarong, whom John Shalamar nicked for the band buttter, was subsequently introduced as Sultan Salam Shah, a prince and son of the Sultan. He seemed a quiet, shy shop under his brown skin and spectacles.

From our day book - "Private J.V. (M19) Infantry - blew in the main gate of the camp this morning and said he was trying to get back to Malacca. He was dressed in white with a blue shirt, and his trousers and had his uniform and pay-book placed at a fancy-dress ball." Some ball! I should say, judging by his appearance, I put him, nominally under arrest, and gave him a good before passing his R.A. to send by a truck and escort for him.

Speaking of depolice, Brett, of the Malayan Police, told me that he hasn't a chance of hiding himself in this country, nor had he had a chance of committing a misdemeanour and getting away in tracks around the town. Someone or other is picked up by native police and patrolled to A.D.

23rd March, 1941

The orderly officer is very bad tempered this morning. He was going over at Berlile to house out the Sergeants and "Joe" the monkey, jumped on to his shoulders from a box and emptied his bladder over his nice clean shirt.
Sunday Night at the Kalmar Club

"I'm fed up with this quiet camp; who wants to come into K.L.?"
"We all do. Who gives us leave and what do we use for money?"
"I'll give you leave - at least, terms with the best money - and we'll fix up the balance at the club till next pay-day." Everyone is about this pay."*"

The idea catches on and in no time the physician, the houseabout (surgor) and I, are on route to Kalmar camp in a hired and very rough lorry taxi - four dollars for the night - as we didn't have a reasonable excuse for leaving the staff car about the streets on a Sunday. We left the quarter-master lamenting behind, as the choky hadn't brought his cap and only drill tunic from the wash - a frequent happening; still, it's nice to see a Q.M. get caught occasionally. Ladies are "de rigueur" in K.L., after sundown and the lad get picked up by a Staff Major last time he was in without one. He's still having vengeance.

On the way in we argue ways and means of dining fashionably, either on credit or with the least possible expenditure. My suggestion that we might ask someone who would "shout" us is dismissed with favour, but without much hope. It came off.

Enter the Club (commonly known as the "Spotted Dog" from its early and hygienic origin). I point out that our honorary membership expired seven days ago and has not been renewed. The surgeon says he must have a "5", but says he will pay the secretary the 75 cents we owe him. We have one with the surgeon, but can't find the 50. Very well, we will go to the main lounge and see if we can find someone to know. We do. I find myself in a huge lounge, orchestra playing, daily "boys" filling about, till K.L. Society in evening dress sitting round little tables singing "whats". I see a familiar face. "Dear me, isn't it Major and Mrs. East when we met at the Bungalow?"

"Colonel, how nice of you to come over; you have a remarkable memory for names. So sit down."

"Well, really, we were just on our way to dinner. Won't you and the Major join us?" (That's right)

"But look at it, we've just heard mad Australians and you must dinner with us."

"Oh no, Mrs. East, we couldn't dream of it, especially in a Club where we are not members. "(Hold us back)

"Then that's settled - you will, and Reggie will take care of everything."

We forgot about the Kalmar Club (Reggie did too) - and a lovely time was had by all. We did try to reciprocate by bringing them to the English Theatre afterwards. (This is the famous K.L. entertainment place and admission is free. It will probably form the subject of a further note as it deserves a column all to itself.)

So Mrs. East was elected hostess for the evening and the Major paid out boldly and seemed to like it. These Dublin Irish majors certainly are charming folk.

Mrs. East has four sons and liked the photos of my wife and four daughters. I get homily when I see a bloke enjoying himself in his wife's company.

A Club dinner is a leisuredally affair. So went easy on the strogasie ("French Julia" is always good; its small and easy) from 6 till 9.30 and listened to the Club Concerts, composed of Jewish refugees from Long Kang. Give a wonderful program.
Then we adjourned across to the Mess Hall, a huge vaulted dining hall manned by Chinese waiters in immaculate whites, and black felt slippers. Selecting the menu took another half hour and was done round another "Steakah" in the annex. Good meals remain a pleasant memory. Why write these by describing the details.

Seeing home in the call the Surgeon waved gently. Ted suddenly burst out laughing and said, "The old sod's (that's me) lucky bunch came off again. Seeing we get a free dinner we'll reward the driver with an extra dollar." The Malay eyes grinned.

P.S. I did not brush my teeth with shaving soap and wake fresh as a daisy on Monday morning.
31st March, 1941.

H. B. Talisala, a wealthy Indian in K.L., threw the A.I.P. a party — what a party! An Indian festival.

Our crowd arrived about 11.30 in a convey of ten ambulance wagons and a staff car. The grounds were laid out with marqueses, and there were two Indian orchestras, a troupe of dancers and jugglers and the Malay police band — very smart in white uniforms with blue facings, all-box cars, silver stars and blue sarongs.

All the troops got a bottle of beer each and a curry tiffin. They ate to the point of exhaustion and even then only made a slight impression on the entrees available. About seventy cameras were in action snapping the novel scenes, and the Talisala family, plus numerous cousins, made a picturesque group, the ladies being garbed in lovely silk saris and the little slave girls in all the finery of tiny Indian dancers. They had as much fun as we did, photographing the troops.

I had to do the heavy and represent the General at the senior officer's press. It involved a reply to H.B. T’s speech of welcome, but with extracts from the value’s sermon of that morning and a profound bit about the brotherhood of Australia and our great Indian Empire — plus the troops ready to cheer anything and everything — it went off quite well. It tiffin, which the officers had in the main lounge, Cast, Chalmers and Simpson had a contest to see who could eat the most curry. I decided I’d won, but we let me down cold, fading away in the middle of the second platable. Chalmers, then second up, Major Rogers, cleared up two plates besides ossally and then tackled the "nail's sallago" — no mean feat.

I returned home ready for a siesta in the boiling afternoon heat, but, being my birthday, had to go and eat afternoon tea with the General, then go to the pictures in K.L., then to the Selangor Club — listen to the orchestra and have a Malay dinner about 10 o’clock in the Clubroom. To bed at 11.45 p.m. after an interesting birthday. Call on breakfast, Indian lunch, Banish afternoon tea (George) and Malay dinner. I’m happy to say that my stomach is standing it well.

Next week and I shall have a quiet game of golf — I hope.

Yours attached.
April 5th, 1941.

A Villager Recently

Yesterday a large Indian Army convoy was passing the camp gate, vehicle after vehicle, decorated in the dark green and gold. The drivers were fresh from India. They are poor drivers mentally, slow to act and think in the head. In addition they do not seem to have had much mechanical training and are newly arrived in Malaya.

Suddenly a "Dob Hy" (motor cyclist) dashed into the camp and I saw the Orderly Officer send down a stretcher squad and a driver for our "Duty" ambulance wagon. He then came and told me that a native had been knocked down by one of the Indian cars.

I jumped into a staff car and went about a mile south to a little camp in the midst of the main road - a quiet clearing in the roadside jungle. Tall trees on either side and, lining the road, there was one of the scrawny native police or a group of Malayan and Chinese coolies. Strolling by themselves and looking impressive but restless and ill at ease were three Indian Sepoy drivers, their dark features and mustaches belying their youth.

Behind them and dead on stilts was the body of a poor native woman, quite dead and cold from shock. A nasty gash above the left knee seemed to be the only injury. She seemed to be near childbed.

The District police officer arrived and the usual long enquiry started. My own did what they could to help and took the native woman to the native hospital near the camp. These coolies seem just like animals at times - no intelligence, very little speech, insensitive faces and patient toiling like oxen from daybreak till dusk. Death and the Chinese driver could be seen a happy release from such an existence. I was relieved later in the evening, when the B.L. ordered me to send the driver not to blame. Malaya is hard on inexperienced drivers and the penalty of negligence involving injury is three months imprisonment without the option. Our drivers have all been warned to exercise care.
A MALAY "BUKATUANG" (WEDDING RECEPTION).

10th April, 1941.

Dato Uncle Mohamed Razali (Malayan Civil Service), District Officer of the Ulu Langat and a relative of the Sultan of Selangor, entered my office and bowed pleasantly.

I knew that the bespectacled, tall gentleman—a graduate of Oxford—had come about; but with true Oriental cunning knew that it wouldn't be brought up until well through the interview. Briefly: he had been "ticked off" by Mr. Wayman, the British Engineer, on a complaint by Major Fisher, our hygiene officer, that a night-soil tub had been left for the third time by his sanitary staff just opposite the camp gate until it became covered in maggots and nearly stank the guard out of house and home.

So talked about the weather and the crops and then he tentatively mentioned his Health Inspector, a lazy Taali. I therefore took the initiative and suggested that a man in the Dato's position was too high an official to be bothered by such trifling matters as night-soil tubs and that possibly we could deal direct with his Health Inspector. However, if he could spare the time from his high position to occasionally interest himself in the collection of garbage from the camp, then we would be only too happy to co-operate by phoning him direct. This seemed to please him mightily, so I then shifted the conversation to praise of the Malays and their national customs. In fact, before the Dato left my office I had talked myself into an invitation to a Malay wedding and a Kromhong—the latter being a Malay Historical Day.

He was as good as his word and sent the Royal eyes with the car for us on Sunday afternoon.

We were driven to a Malay bungalow at the outskirts of the village and welcomed into the midst of a colorful wedding reception. Atop shingles sat with tables had been laid out for the guests and there seemed to be over a hundred Malay guests, all in their finest sarongs and song-kols (hats) and hordes of young children who looked delightful in their silk sarongs or pyjamas. I beckoned one smiling little boy—"Mari mimi" (come here). "Apanama"? (what is your nam
He understood my very poor Malay and said "Latif". Latif and I became quite friendly and he was the proudest kid in the village when we got him to pose for his photograph with us.

After shaking hands with the host and the Kathi (Muslim priest) and settling down to sweet tea and cakes, we heard the sound of Malay music (the orchestra seemed to be "swimming" it a bit) and the bridal procession arrived. The religious ceremony had taken place the night before and now the bride and bridegroom were on view. They became "royal" for the occasion and were dressed in Royal robes - the bridegroom in a bowl-like gilt turban and long yellow and gold robe and the bride, with downcast eyes and war-like features, in a robe of mauve with gold stars and three capes of red, yellow and blue - all richly embroidered. Her head-dress was magnificent and seemed to consist of flowers built up on top of a high coiffure. There was no bridesmaid but two wizened old women escorted her and seemed to be instructing her in the etiquette of the occasion.

The best Man's job seemed to be to fan the bridegroom all the time with a palm leaf fan and to mop his forehead at intervals with a yellow silk hankie.

They were received by the mother-in-law and placed under a floral canopy inscribed in Arabic "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet."

After a reasonable interval we were all invited to discard our shoes and enter on carpets to view the couple. They sat absolutely immobile, hands on knees and eyes on the ground. We conveyed our good wishes through an interpreter and were then presented with a packet of artificial flowers, a hard boiled egg and some rice - emblems of happiness and plenty.

I'm told that sometimes the bride and bridegroom are on view for as long as three days, if the family finances can afford the entertainment of the numerous guests. Occasionally, the ceremony takes so much out of the family funds that the unlucky bridegroom spends the next fifteen years paying it off.

The Dato and the Kathi seemed very pleased at our attendance and we should have liked to see the next part of the ceremony which
is the ceremonial bath, but it is taboo to all non-Mohammedans.

I got a bellyache from the strange cakes and couldn't go to the kranohong. Captain Lee said afterwards (as propo of the kris fighting) "If ever a wild Malay comes at you with a kris kick him quickly wherever you can and then turn round and run for your life."
13th April, 1941.

A.I.F. REDEPLOYED IN MALAYA.

The Camp bugler hasn't been himself the last two mornings. Normally he is on time and blows a clear, stirring call. Yesterday he faltered, tried again and produced a call all out of tune. This morning he didn't blow at all. We all said - "Ah! he's been on the sauce in K.I. Last night again", but as it was Sunday morning we forgave him. It subsequently turned out that the night picket had failed to wake him. Orderly Room for the picket at 0330!

After being on army routine for a while one automatically wakes around six. Here it is quite dark but, if five minutes too early, one can lie and listen to the night-jars doing their stuff. They produce a noise exactly like a carpenter...
18th April, 1941.

The G.O.'s orderly room has just finished. The usual wild offenders appeared, including the cook's officer, whose lurid language is constantly getting him into trouble. Then came a "shrewd head" who has been up three times but always produces two witnesses to say black is white for him. I've had to let him off previously for lack of evidence, but this morning he talked too much and let slip the fact that although he was in bed at "lights out" he wasn't there at midnight, so we altered the charge and caught him for ten shillings. I saw him limping as he marched out of the room with the escort.

Then came Private E., a gentle soul, whose Christian name is Harold. Harold is a willing worker, with a face like a moo-cow, and is quite unconscious from the ear up. Harold has been rescued from the H.O. clink after a bout of drinking at the Eastern "hoon long". He says that all he can remember is having a drink with an Englishman and then waking up next morning in a strange bed in a strange home belonging to a strange Chinese lady. (We will watch him closely on the medical inspection next week.) This morning Harold was not remorseful, as he is a faithful Catholic, I think padre Quick will probably have him better than I can. Fined 10/-.

Mrs. R. O. Brett, the Police Officer's Wife, told us a good story of the Australians. She has a very fat Chinese lad and a week or two ago the same one in out of breath and said, "I'm, these Australiuns! I go shopping down the street in K.L. and I meet five Australians coming in rickshaws. I set my face so that I shall not smile. They all wave and say 'hullo', except the last one. He say - 'Hullo, Mary, what's yer tugboat?' (A picture called "Tugboat Andrea" has just been showing throughout K.L.K.)

Easter: Up to the Hills on Easter Monday as the guest of the Resident at "Bea Lorna", Fraser's Hill. Beautifully cool and our first let up from the humid heat - thick virgin jungle over the last part - the gap - where the road narrows and winds as it climbs. Heard dogs barking in the tree tops and got out to look, but it was only a crowd of wild gibbons monkeys. We panned back and they did their Tarzan of the Apes stuff for us up in the highest tree tops. On the boat monkey - acrobatic displays I've seen.
21st April, 1941.

DEPRESSION OF THE ALLIES.

Major Fisher met me just outside the Medical Ward. After discussing the severe febrile rash of our first patient with benign tertian malaria (a dispatch rider from the Loyals) and showing me the confirmatory slides under the microscope, he casually shoved another slide under the lens and said - "Have a look at this one, you'll never guess who it comes from."

I looked, saw clumps of schizonts and gorged inwardly - "Surely not another of our chaps?"

"Nawp, we're lucky - it's young 'Angel Face' from the Motor Convoy. You know his father, don't you?"

I did know his father, a fine chap on the I.G. Staff. And what's more, I had promised him I'd look after his young handful of a son.

The troops call the boy "Angel Face" because of his looks. He is a tall, fair striped of nineteen and his boyish face has the idealistic quality sometimes seen in choir boys. Temperamentally he is a bit of a "lady".

The story is that he was in Kuala Lumpur on Good Friday - of all days - and, despite the care of a friendly old sergeant, got too much to drink in a cafe at the top end of Batik Road, slipped away for a while and when found again and brought home was so drunk that all they could do was put him to bed. Worse still, he did not have sense enough next day to report at our P.A.O. room for treatment. This is typical of many similar stories that we hear and attach to case-history sheets, but I'm proud of the fact that so far only one of my own men has been involved.

I saw the kid and found him suffering all the pangs of remorse.

"Better let me ring your father, son, and get it over." "All right sir, thank you."

I got his old man down and let him have a period alone with his son, then I took him down to the Mess for a drink. We talked about everything else under the sun, but when he was going I gripped my hand and said - "Thanks, Colonel," and I could tell from the grip he meant it.

"All right", I said, "I'll get him down on the night train to the Tanglin Hospital, Singapore, and I'll write a personal note to Major Jess to get him better as quickly as possible."

The train pulled out an hour later. Someday that Captains will do me a good turn.
My sleeping hut neighbour, the Quartermaster, has a menagerie in a big tea chest which is steadily increasing. His baby cobra escaped - I hope it's not growing bigger and brighter in the soil under my floor boards - and he now has a slightly bigger one. It wriggles round in the sand at the foot of the box like a young express train. He has a small with a shell as big as an ice-cream cone and a colour-changing tree-frog, which perches all day long on the perpendicular wall of the partition between our rooms. Last night my batman caught the father of all scorpions on the floor of the mess hut. It was as big as a young crayfish and comfortably filled a jam jar. He naturally gave it to Capt. Lee, and Major Fisher and I were called in for a demonstration of how an angry scorpion could "sting itself to death". In spite of prodding with a long wire the scorpion refused to do this, but it certainly swung a wicked tail at the wire. I suggested that, when the cobra grows a bit bigger, he stage a contest-Handdryad versus Scorpion.

This menagerie and two monkeys outside our verandah relieve the sleeping quarters of any monotony. "Toots" the little monk is growing a big girl now. She doesn't like the tail-less gibbon belonging to the Sergeant, but is becoming very tame.

Last night, just before dinner, I was sitting with Capt. Sheehan and the Padre, contemplating three lovely mugs of Cascade Beer on the table in front of us. Suddenly Toots dropped down from the rafters above, where she had been hunting the little choka lizards, bounded across my outstretched arm and, putting her head half way down the mug, took a drink of my beer. It's the first time in my life I've been done out of a beer by a monkey.

Tomorrow is Anzac Day and it coincides with the arrival of seven more officers and two hundred more troops - just fresh from Australia into my camp area. They are going into Indian Army tents, which are beautifully made and designed for the tropics, and we are busy making arrangements for their reception. Anzac Day reminds me of my last Yewd Ambulance celebration at Eatherford last year, when, being short of a flag we greasily stood at the "Silence" and salute to a Red Cross linen bed-pan cover on the flagstaff.
ATTENDING A DANCE — MALAYA.

"Would I care to bring Capt. Chalmers and attend a dance at the Lakes Club on Saturday night?" I said that I certainly would, but I did not realise I was in for a strenuous night.

Nicely doffed, we departed for Kuala Lumpur in the Hickory village taxi, driven by an irresponsible Chinese eye. By dint of saying "kiri" (left) and "tirn" (straight on) we managed to steer him to the Straits Club where our host, Mr. Churchill, a cheery publican and little Englishman, looking remarkably like a cross between a Koele Bear and his famous namesake, met us at 7.45, pushed a "strength" into our hands, and departed in search of his other guests. While he was away the Spotted Dog Orchestra struck up and we filled in the time pleasantly yarning and dancing with Major and Mrs. West. I found out from the latter that no one dreams of attending a dance before eleven p.m. When our host returned took time off for another stodgy, and rode with us in our Hickety car (four dollars for the night) to his bungalow on a knoll overlooking the gardens. Here we found the Hengulers (Anglo-Oriental Tin Mining Co., and sugar-millionaires) — very Swiss; Mrs. Tuck — very Norwegian ("We Husbren, he do not like to dance, he like to be alone") — the Corbo touch; Mr. Carr — very Cambridge; Miss Blum — very beautifully English and dumb; and a few Australian officers.

Then the hideously round of stodgy, small talk, and a beautifully served dinner at ten dished up by three grave Chinamen in spotless white and wearing bowyangs (as Capt. Chalmers calls them) round their shoulders.

Thence to the Lakes Club, looking a perfect picture with its surroundings of beautiful gardens and lawns. There the usual collection of Tamils and Natives, one or two generals, and a motley collection of officers from famous British and Indian regiments: they were friendly and funny — Major Hayward of the Royal Berks., (The Sarcasms, my dears!) an amusing chap with a slow Oxford drawl and a face like "goofy" of the Mickey Mouse cartoons, came over and said — "You know, old boy, no one will believe me, but a snake has just come to tell me a python is swallowing the chickence at the back of my bungalow. A man must realizh do something about that, old boy — shush!" I suggested a little more soda in his stodgy but got a shock when he turned up twenty minutes later with a fourteen foot python still warm and wriggling slightly. He
wanted to put it on our table ("must have somewhere to put it, don’t you know") but we wouldn’t let him so he tossed it out to the entrance porch and (nobody in the Camp will believe this, but I actually saw it with my own eyes) a lady picked up the tail of the python and, with the gallant Major swining the head and, they used that python as a skipping rope and, what’s more, a sprightly dowager, beautifully gowned, stepped in and skipped as the python swung round her — and didn’t miss a beat either.

A fine Malay orchestra was playing but nobody seemed to bother much about dancing, and it was very pleasant wandering from table to table meeting people. My bug included a full Colonel from the "Queens", the allied battalion to the City of Newcastle Regt., two ladies from Glasgow and another funny chap who insisted on telling me "how the Jodpur Lancers beat the Australians in the last War into Haifa by a quartet or an hour — and, do you know, old boy, the Australians were almost annoyed, because there was nothing left for them to loot."

John Chalmers and I made him tell it over and over again so that we could watch his false teeth wobble, and every time he retold it he gave John another stenpeh (I had long since retired on to "over lime" — lime juice and water) so John was very content.

Our Norwegian and Greek ladies had by this time lost their husbands (we rescued them from underneath the crowd in the bar) and said "Ah tink ah go home". Going home consists of everyone standing on the porch steps and yelling their screen names — "Hussein", "Latib", "Avan", "Jew Pak", etc. We didn’t know our bloke’s name so we trudged down the drive, woke him up, kicked the old engine to life and slept till we got home. He had looked after us for eleven hours for 4 dollars (12/-). We gave him an extra dollar for luck and called it a day.

Chalmers says, this morning, that dances are no b. good.
MALAYA, 5th May, 1941.

IN WHICH I VISIT KLANG AND PORT SWALTONHAM.

Having been detailed to send one of my trio of Padres to Port Swaltenham each Sunday in order to conduct a service for the A.I.F. details there, including the inhabitants of the clink, I decided that it would be a desirable Sunday trip to make myself. An additional incentive was an invitation to curry tiffin with Dr. Jones, M.O. Health for Klang, where the Sultan of Selangor resides. Therefore, away early in the staff car; a call in at H.Q. to pay my respects to the A.I.M.S. and also to "tangle" some extra mosquito nets; thence down the road to Swaltenham - a road leading past palm groves, native huts and tin doddges, including the great potting mill.

Port Swaltenham is more utilitarian than picturesque. It consists of the usual wharfage and jetties fringing the estuary of the muddy Klang River and is surrounded by low mangrove swamps harbouring many crocodiles and other slimy denizens of tropical rivers. The quarantine station is set on flat land amid palms and behind the mangroves. It is divided into compounds surrounded by barbed wire, one of which is used for the bad boys of the A.I.F., mainly gentlemen, who, in their caps, are given to the playful habit of basking sergeants. While the Padre was going his rounds I had a yarn to one of them and he seemed a nice, quiet, well-spoken chap. Incidentally, there were only twelve prisoners all told, so that is not bad for the A.I.F. in Malaya, and they are very well treated.

Thence to Klang and curry tiffin. Instead of slopping afterwards, as one should, Dr. Jones took us to the Sultan's palace or Astana, where we signed the visitors' book.

There is a big modern mosque below the Palace Hill, which appears on the Malay stamps. We were invited to remove our shoes and go through; the Padres being duly reminded by us that his Presbyterian ancestors would slowly turn in their graves if they thought he were there on the Sabbath. The mosque was most impressive inside and several Malays obliged by going through their praying antics while we were there - bowing down with lowered knees, and bodies pointed in the direction of Mecca, then touching their foreheads to the ground three times on the praying mats, to be standing just behind them and some was awarara "what a beautiful aspect".
Then the Rathi’s officers wanted to take us 187 steps up to the
Masjid Tower, from which the faithful are called to prayers five
times daily. We put over a call for our benefit—a most haunting
rendez—“Allah ilallah” and so on, but with some of the romance
taken out of it by the fact that it was done through a microphone
and loud speaker to save him the trouble of mounting the tower.
However, two of the younger officers essayed the tower steps, the
lad in the squads leading the way. I heard one whisper hoarsely
“Don’t go knocking up his skirt, Bill!” They assured me the view
from the top was fine, but I took their word for it as stair climbing
is too damn hot in this climate.

Then to a refreshing cup of afternoon tea on Dr. Jones’ lawn,
a cool run to Kuala Lumpur, a fine bath at the Selangor Club, suhi’s
and an hour and a half of fine music in the club lounge. This
programme, followed by a fine meal of fish and an early return to bed,
made what the New Yorker called a “perfect day”.

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8th May, 1941.

BERULAT (MALAY PENINSULAR).

Three hundred and fifty lusty sons of Australia in the midst of rubber and jungle in Central Malaya have to be kept amused in their off hours from army routine. From a C.O.'s point of view it isn't always an easy task to visualise anything beyond the routine football and cricket games interspersed with an occasional route march. However, yesterday's brain wave was a distinct success. Dato Huda Mohamed Royali bin Hadji, to give him five of his eight names, happened in at the Officer's Mess. I offered him a glass of his favourite soft drink and said: "Dato, isn't there a village in the Manjung, about twelve miles away, where the Malays still indulge in musical sword play? If so, wouldn't you mind coming to the camp and giving my men a demonstration?" The Dato, who is a quick thinker, tied a knot in his headscarf, smiled and, after discussing details, said: "I will arrange everything." He was as good as his word. Promptly at five o'clock about a dozen Malays, of a more wiry and fiercer type than the placid town Malays, entered the camp and were welcomed to the ring, which we had roped off under the grassy bank of the Padang. Soon, they set up their iron gorge, six small ones and two large ones, which they suspended from the overhanging limb of a flame tree. Meanwhile the diggers, in informal attire - shirts and shorts, or just shorts - were gathering thinly round the ring. Now and then a bullet was fired to entice them to photograph the scene in the dull tropical light. A whistle blew and the ring cleared. Then the native musicians started the gongs throbbing with a rather pleasing "one in five" rhythm. Four natives advanced slowly to the centre of the ring, dressed in brown, green and red baggy and short sarongs worn over loose cotton pants. Two wore Malay fighting turbans and two the usual sung-hiea or cap. They circled gracefully to the music, crouching, swaying and diving in rapidly toward their opponents. As the gong music livened up they quickened their movements, drew a tambok (short knives) from their sarongs and plunged and thrust at their partners in the dance. They sprang past one another, delivering a high foot-kick so they did so, then wrestled together like lihne, agile wild-cats. The wrist work with the knives was remarkable. Each man disarmed his opponent in turn and then fought, in rhythm with the music, for possession of the knives.
A demonstration of a dance employing two long pedangs (curved swords) then followed, the two opponents circling and making wide, quick sweeps from a crouching position, as one digger said: "If I met one of them blokes on a dark night, I'd kick 'im in the guts and run for me bloody life."

A saucer dance followed as an interlude—a most expert business of twirling saucers and tapping them with rings on the forefingers, in time to the music.

To entertain our Malay visitors, we then got some of the "pugs" among our men to demonstrate boxing and wrestling (Australian style). This amused the Malay audience greatly, as seen by smiling brown faces and flashing white teeth. The Ulu Langat headman, just behind me, was so excited over it that he registered every blow by saying "ugh".

The delight of the Malays when two of the boxers turned their attention to the referee was very apparent. They are a happy, gracious, child-like race.

Prior to the last Malay dance, which was a circular "silat" or "boxing with knives", employing six performers, a very slow boxing exhibition by two diggers took place. The ringside made attempts to liven them up; one wit crying out "Come on guys, Mother's Day isn't till next Sunday"; then they yelled out—"Take them off."

Four of our nursing sisters have arrived now that our surgical work is growing. They are located in a bungalow half a mile from the Camp and are looked after by a Chinese Amah and a "boy" who cooks for them. Their presence in the Camp is always a good thing, as the men unconsciously smarten up when they are about—but the job of finding a "powder the nose" room for them is a fair b......!
11th May, 1942.

PADRE'S AND CORONET PARADES.

I have three padres in the camp and find it a hard job to keep them occupied during the week days when everyone else is busy. On Sunday, however, there is no difficulty as they all spring into activity from dawn.

The R.C. lad is up bright and early and starts his early morning Mass at 6.20. He used to hold it in the Sergeant's Mess, but the sound from the adjacent cook-house disturbed him so much that he came to me and begged permission to hold it down in the village church. So now the parade marches a mile and a quarter to Mass and then marches back again. This morning it didn't get away until 06.50 and I saw padre walking briskly round the tent lines rounding up the back-sliders, who, although religiously inclined, didn't like marching.

The combined Protestant service follows at nine a.m. This morning we had new V.M.C.A. hymn books and, in the absence of a piano, Padre Jones (rather deaf and very Welsh) started the congregation off on a hymn to which none of us knew the tune. He faltered when he found he was on his own, grinned sheepishly, and asked if anyone knew a more familiar hymn. I was in front of him and turned my book over hastily. To my horror I was confronted first with "Jingle Bells" and on the other page "The Old Grey Mare, she ain't what she used to be" by the time I had recovered from my amazement he had found "Onward Christian Soldiers", which is the great Army stop-gap at Church Parades and which the men love singing in great style. On investigating my hymn book during the sermon I found that it was a combined hymnal and community song book, specially got up for Australian troops. It reminded me of an incident three Sundays ago when the Padre announced that we sergents would sing a sacred duet. It turned out to be Samay's "There is balm in the Blood of the Lamb" and, to the great joy of the digger audience, the tune was the same as "There is Beer in the Quartermaster's Store". Padre Bestford's face was a study, but everyone had the grins.

The lads, spurred on by the padres, all wore white frigalbunum flowers today, in honour of Mother's Day in Australia. This was one occasion on which a Commanding Officer has to sit on eye to irregularities in the men's dress.
15th May, 1911.

Yesterday I travelled fifty miles to the coastline by car to attend the Sports of the A.I.F. at Port Dickson. They ran off without a hitch and it was spectacular to see one hundred and sixty athletes, including a team from the Malay Regiment, march on to the field to the stirring music of the A.I.F. bands. Except for the presence of the Malaya and the palm trees fringing the padang, one might have been at a Dunn Shield Meeting in Sydney. The spectators also were all in uniform, except for a small collection of local residents, European and otherwise. Among the latter was a wealthy Chinese lady with her husband. Her dress conformed to the Chinese floral type, slit down each side, and her diamond ear-rings and wrist watch must have been worth a considerable amount. She put the European ladies quite in the shade.

Wealthy Indians, Mr. and Mrs. Talalla, were also there, as they are on holiday at Port Dickson.

At the conclusion of the athletics, where the Australians easily outclassed the Malaya (and who can wonder, seeing that we had the Empire Games Champions competing), Mr. Talalla invited six visiting officers from R.C. and me to "take pot-luck at his little seaside cottage." This was a very modest description, as our car drove into fine grounds of a large bungalow bordering the beach. There seemed to be three or four garages and at least six servants. Every bedroom had a bathroom, each fitted with every modern accessory. The front of the bungalow led out on to a terrace right at the beach edge, and we sat out there and watched the Southern Cross rise over Cape Rachado, the nearest point to Sumatra - just twenty miles to the westward. It was a lovely starlit night - the Cross to the South and the Great Bear to the North. With the sea murmuring in on the shingle at the foot of the palm trees and the light-house winking from the Cape every few seconds, one could almost picture a T.S.W. beach on a warm Summer's night. We loll'd in the peace of it all until nine and then sat down to a fine meal of Indian curry, with numerous side dishes - fish, chicken and rice, with spices, - all mixed together and belying the modest claim of "pot-luck".

I slept all the way home in the car.
Since joining us in this Camp, George, our 21 stone Army Service Corps Major, has been complaining about the rations. In fact, at one stage the whole Camp was in danger of moving to the tune of George's voluminous intestines, and the Mess President - whose hackles had been steadily rising - was on the point of telling him he could try running the Mess himself. I thought it better for the C.O. to intervene tactfully, so I said last night - "George, if you can trot out your "Spitfire" at 9 a.m. to-morrow, we'll go into Subu Road and see the Supply Depot for ourselves".

The "Spitfire" is George's firmly camouflaged "Bomber Ships", a powerful job with a mean whine in the engine when it's revved up in top gear.

Actually at seven we sailed down the main road and reached the Royal Indian Army Service Corps Depot within half-an-hour. A dapper Indian Lieutenant came out and received us with a snappy salute, so I turned George over to an equally fat English Quartermaster, with the request that he be shown that all was fair and above board with the Camp supplies.

I then got the Indian Officer to show me round the Indian and Malay troop sections and found them most interesting. The centre of the depot consisted of a large godown (shed) containing a 90-day supply for all the fighting units. Our own ration-scale has been cut to the British one, inasmuch as we only have a choice of twenty-two items as against forty-four in Australia. I think this slowly dawned on George during his inspection. On the other hand, the Indian troops - whose food is largely rice and grain - had a most varied range of all the spices of the East, and I saw hundreds of bags of peppercorns, turmeric, cloves, garlic, ginger, cinnamon, cardamoms and many other items with strange names. Ghee, or clarified butterfat, was there in 25 pound boxes, and, behind the godown, a small mechanical mill was grinding out "atta", a coarse flour combined from many grains and used in the making of "chapattas", a staple Indian food. For the Malays there were various types of Malayan fish and fresh mutton, brought on the hoof from Australia and slaughtered according to the Muslim ritual.

George was quite thoughtful on the way home to breakfast, and his only remark was "What a pity I can't be on A.I.F. rations all the time, plus the Indian, plus the Malayan." What a stomach. No wonder he claims the Chinese girls call him "Tireless Master of a Thousand Nights."
I am sitting in the quiet coolness of a Head Master's office in a Malayan High School, now occupied by the A.I.R. It is Saturday afternoon and there is a restful atmosphere which seems to be part and parcel of quiet Saturday afternoons the world over. Somewhere I can hear the orderlies moving about in the room now equipped as hospital wards, and from the nearby padang faint shouts from two inter-unit teams engaged in a tense Rugby Union struggle, under a golden sky, and pouring sweat in the humid heat. An electric fan purrs overhead, and I have to adjust the blotter frequently to prevent the paper becoming stained by the drops of perspiration from my forehead. One has got used to the constant sweating, the mould on the leather parts of equipment, and the daily routine of the camp. We have been nearly four months away from home and I find myself looking back to find if they have been wasted.

To my satisfaction I can answer "no". Apart from the fact that one feels one is filling a useful part in the war game, there is the awakening that has come with it - an awakening to the finer things in life - love of one's family and home, now intensified a thousandfold; freedom from the base business of money grubbing, in which I was fast becoming self-centered and selfish; freedom from the petty happenings and gossip of a small town and, best of all, the command of men - over three hundred of them.

What fine men they are, and what a soul-saving glow one gets from earning their friendship and respect. When one becomes lonely from the enforced isolation from home, there is the simple remedy of looking round for someone in a worse plight. There are men on five shillings a day with many greater responsibilities than I have. Knowingly or not, they carry their troubles with a grim. Businesses have been sacrificed and homes broken up temporarily. Young fellows have stopped their education and careers mid-way. Ask some of them why and they don't appear to know. But mention the comradeship of the A.I.R. and the understanding expression on their faces tells you the answer.

The gramophone in the ward below has been switched on to "Home, sweet Home." Six months ago I would have sneered and called it hackneyed. Now I'm not so sure. The simple melody seems to have
taken on a new dignity.

I stopped in at the Quartermaster's Store of the 2nd/3rd this morning, wiped the sweat off my face and lingered for a cigarette and a yarn with the crew - two brown-skinned men from New South Wales, both stripped to the waist and shining with perspiration and grime. One grinned and said - "How would you like to be coming in on the fourth breaker at Bar Beach now, sir?" I recognised him as an ex-King's School man who had gone in for motor engineering in Newcastle. His assistant came from Newman College. Both dropped good prospects to join up as privates and are liking the life. They are almost young enough not to worry overmuch about the after-math of the war - "Tidapa", as the Malays have it - "Let to-morrow's worries wait until to-morrow." Analysing my own thoughts on the future, I find I am without fear. I have a wife, children and home. What a sheet-anchor they are for a man to fasten on to. What an incentive they give one to work, live, and look forward to. Without them, nothing would matter much; but I have a "bunch" - and never have I had a better bunch - that the miracle of peace will come again and one can resume normal life, enriched by the experience andpower of one's soul. Yes! It has been worth while coming away!

Last week my unit had its first typhus case. The Orderlies worked day and night, steered him through his crisis, and left me with the feeling that we had at least one good Australian life to our credit - for never have I seen a man look so near death and yet recover from such a deadly disease.

The football game seems to be over and I hear the men pass along the balcony below, some whistling noisily - all in search of a shower and a cup of tea. I note that the ink is running here and there where the moisture from my hand has dampened the page. I've been writing as I've been thinking - much to my surprise - but now the thoughts are down on paper they seem to form the first link in my "After the War" Sheet-Anchor.
GOLF IN MALAYA.

Cf I had I heard of the delights of the Selangor Golf Club. On Sunday morning last I sampled them as one of a bankers' and planters' four-ball. It was what might be called a "de-luxa" game. Arriving at the Club House, amid a contingent of Malay coves andadies, our clubs and personal gear were taken to the dressing rooms by a Chinese "boy". We changed while cool, soft drinks were being brought, and sat comfortably in lounge chairs in a shady lounge commanding a comfortable view of the course. No rude jostling round the first tee in Malaya: the starting times are announced by numbered discs, plainly visible from the lounge. Then one plays over perfect railways to well-bunkered greens and, by the time the fifth hole is reached and one is feeling wornish, a cool drink此前bobs into view in charge of a Chinese steward in immaculate whites. Here a "pangung" orange crush sustains one until the 9th is reached, and a ten-minute retirement to the cool shade of the lounge is in order.

There are three separate courses and they all seem to converge so that the drin programme is never interfered with. If you lose a ball, no one dreams of helping to look for it. This is exclusively the job of the "tuans", and the "tuans" do not even hand to pick the ball out of the hole or lay a hand on the flag-stick. The language and general demeanour of the players are also on a more refined scale than in Australia; one was tempted at times to say "tut-tut".

Then the nineteenth, to which one is lured by the laughter and splashing from the swimming pool. Undress, plunge into the pool, sit under a shady umbrella by the side, while a quietly-moving "boy" places stencils on the marble-topped table, and one feels at peace with the world.

Being a continental Sunday, the very excellent band of the Frontier Force Regiment was in attendance.

Need I mention the presence of talcum powder, brilliantine, ear drops and other toilet perquisites in the dressing tables in the palatial change-room, plus a "boy" to remove the grass seeds from golf havers, brush one's shoes, even bath the "tuans" if required.

What a game! What a hot-house life!
Col. Kay, noted Sydney surgeon, commanding the General Hospital in Crete, has been reported severely wounded, and missing.

The above cable from Australia was laid on my desk yesterday, just as I had concluded a wearying inquiry into the nocturnal activities of two drivers from the Motor Ambulance Convoy. They had stolen a car, broken through four police barriers and, finally, using a steel telephone pole as a springboard, piled the car up in a patch of jungle as a mass of tangled wreckage. Marvelous to relate, neither was injured beyond a few contusions.

I was in no mood for further grievous news. My mind flew back to big, handsome,ailing Bill Kay, D.S.O. from the last war and one of the best army friends I’ve ever had.

When he was given command of the 5th General Hospital I wired him and said “Take me with you.” Over a noggin in the “Northern” at Newcastle, a week later, he grinned and said - “No, Tom, stay on and wait for a command of your own” - advice which may have saved my life, because to-day I am in peaceful Malaya and he is in the maelstrom of Crete. Archie Cunningham was with us too, and Archie’s scarf is now in an oasis near Benghazi, where his first Field Ambulance was badly bombed.

I passed the cable over to Captain Newton Lee, my Adjutant. “Newton, I’m fed up! I’m going to accompany you into Kuala Lumpur to-night, and see if I can get my mind off a depressing day.” Lee suggested dinner at the Selangor Club and a visit to the pictures or the Bukit Bintang, a Chinese version of Luna Park. I didn’t feel like watching the “March of Time” and War Gazette, so we decided on the R.I.

We were fortunate, for a Chinese Dragon Festival was in full swing. Covering four acres, brightly lighted booths and three Chinese theatres supplied open air refreshment and entertainment for many hundreds of Chinese, Malay, and Indian visitors. An amazing variety of dishes, from blatchang (fermented prawns) to eggs of great antiquity, were on sale at the booths, and rice bowls and chop sticks were in constant action.
Cymbals clashed and gong clattered incessantly, while Chinese dancers and boxers sprang into the air with agile, wild grimaces. At another theatre a stately Mandarin play, beautifully costumed, was proceeding dramatically, while the stage manager strolled about behind the players - in his underpants and with a cigarette dangling from his lips. The hearty laugh at the strange sights did me good and I returned home wondering at the weird ways of the East.
3rd June, 1941.

OIL, LOYAL & LADY, KLOWER OF A THOUSAND DELIGHTS.

Choo Kia Peng, Chinese Towner and Millionaire of Kuala Lumpur, entertained us to a Chinese dinner in lavish style on Sunday night. For days beforehand it had been an amusing topic of conversation and perusal in the mess. The Dental Officer, who is very young and innocent, was regaled with tales of slant-eyed damsels sitting on his knees and feeding him with chop-sticks, and our elder and staider members were gravely informed that the correct thing to do after the 12th course was to belch loudly and appreciatively and, after the 15th course, to visit to retirement, subsequently returning to the feast.

Our host, however, relieved all apprehension by restricting the dinner to six main courses. Shark's fin soup led the way, followed by various types of dried fish mixed with the chopped up entrails of animals whose names I did not enquire. The dishes were served in little china rice bowls and flavoured by dipping the various pieces into soya bean sauce.

The pièce de résistance was a beautifully cooked "ikan hangas", a red mackerel fish somewhat like our snapper. We let ourselves go on this, but dodged the hundred-year-old eggs, and then tackled lotus seeds served in a fruit sauce.

The Chinese servants - bare-footed women in black silk trousers and blue shirts, fitting tightly up round the neck, entered into the spirit of the dinner and wore broad grins on their otherwise impassive faces, at our efforts with the chop sticks.

I was seated on the right of the host and managed to get some coaching, but even then I made a hell of a mess of the table-cloth owing to the gravy not being under control. The Dental Officer, on whom I had bet a dollar as the champion eater, was manifestly uncomfortable with the sticks and, when he was seen surreptitiously substituting a spoon at the fish course, Captain Chalmers - his opponent - claimed a forfeit.

Major Campbell, our 21-stone gourmet, was in his element. He had been chief leader in the tales of the lovely Chinese ladies, so the juniors took their revenge by getting the head "boy" to park his seat next to Choo Kia Peng's youngest grand-daughter - aged nine - who could not speak English.
After dinner, we stayed at the little tables in the huge marble dining hall and Choo announced that we would have some chamber music. Major Campbell was heard to growl - "It's wonderful the instruments they get music out of nowadays." I don't think our host heard him, for he produced a huge cello on which he proceeded to grind solemnly, after explaining gravely that he had only been learning viola music for two years. We had all been warned about his 'cello music, so we listened with a great show of interest, helped along by coffee and some lovely Chinese liquors, and cheered him on to two or three encores. The lads, by this time, were ready to cheer anything, and we all got up feeling rather replete. We wandered through the huge mansion inspecting Choo's treasures and household gods - lovely lacquers, teak cabinets set with mother of pearl, Chinese silver ware and priceless bronzes. In one alcove we came on Major Campbell and a couple of Indian Army Officers inspecting an oil painting of one of Choo's ancestors.

I said "Well Major, how do you feel after dinner?"

He drew his great stomach in with a tremendous effort and said - "Fine, Sir! Getting thinner every day."

The effort was too much for his waist band. It slipped down over his indrawn belly and his pants fell like a stone to the floor, leaving him standing, in amusement, in his little white underpants and anchored by a mass of trousers round his ankles. We howled with joy and the ladies, stifling their mirth, bolted discreetly for another room.
"Malay Mail", Bangkok, 3rd June, 1941.

"A Foreign Office spokesman gave Reuters an
unfinished version of what an Axis report
occasionally dramatised into a frontier
"incident". The spokesman said two Australian
officers, armed with revolvers and cameras,
strayed across the Thai-Malaya border by ear.
The local Thai authorities seized the revolvers
and cameras and detained the officers, who has
since been conducted back across the frontier
and released. - Reuters."

Incident (1). Two little innocent subalterns from Lt. Col. Verley's
squad went up to the Frontier on holiday. They found it so interesting
that they wandered over and were promptly interned. Was M.Q. annoyed
or was it? The General nearly had a baby!

The subsequent Court Martial was all hushed up, but our under-
ground wireless, via the Quarter Master's Store, tells us that the
two bright lads are now on their way back to Australia labelled
"Servicemen no longer required".

Incident (2). Two other officers from the "Anti-Tanks" are the envy
of the whole force. They have been entrusted with the task of taking
home the returning draft and bringing back reinforcements. It is
believed they will have eight days leave in Sydney. When we heard
the rumour our minds turned over rapidly the possibilities if we
had eight days leave at home. Major Fisher said he would have a hot
bath in a cold bathroom; he would strip of all sweat; he would
visit the pub and let it blow on the prickly heat of his back;
he would enjoy the warmth of an overcoat on a B.B. Wales winter night and
he would wear five shirts instead of sweaty khaki drill. Another Major,
moved, said he would emulate the Tired Gunner from Dunkirk
(N.B. This story is for married folks only and will be retailed on
my return). Another said he would be like the Broadcaster (also a
very common jist and unfit for the tender ears of maidens).

Incident 3. Our Nazis "boys", Lim Ah Tong and Loe Ah Tong, are picking
up Australian quicker than we can pick up Malay. Ah Tong was serving
in our improvised bar the other night and an M.A. Convoy Lieutenant,
wishing to order four drinks, was stammering out the order in Malay to
him. Suddenly the Lieutenant burst out - "What the h... hell is
Malayan for 'four's'?" Before any of us could answer him, Ah Tong,
Incident (3) Continued: grinning all over his bronzed dial, and his slant eyes looking up at the roof, said - "Zaphat". This correct answer brought a loud laugh all round and confusion to the lieutenant.
POWEDER PLAY ... THE C.O.'S PANTS.

Personal

1. The C.O. - a Lt. Colonel
2. The Major - El Stone "Gargantua"
3. The Padre - Q. of R.
4. The Quartermaster - A Chinese Tailor - Ah Nam (No speakers English)
5. Bateman - Paddy Malone
6. Another Quartermaster - Cope - Company Sergeant and Interpreter

Narrative: At Royal Park the Camp Q.M. tossed me a pair of drill pants as I passed through his store in a rush. "They'll fit you like a glove, sir." On route to Malaya in a huge transport I found they wouldn't meet round the middle. My Q.M. had 'no larger' pairs in stock. On arrival, there seemed to be none in all Malaya.

The Padre has been hustled aboard the "Queen Mary" at three days notice. "Could the Quarter Master give him a pair of drill pants?" He couldn't, but I gave him mine and they fitted well. We kept them on the understanding that he signed for another pair and gave them to me.

"Gargantua" arrived in camp on Anzac Day - waist 64 inches.

"Godamn the Army! They make me a pair of pants at Sydney on a special order and they won't meet on me." A great chance - "Will they fit me, Major? You can have my 'little boy's pair' in exchange." He laughed - "Take the bloody things; I hate that sight of them! My Q.M. Sergeant will make the necessary exchange."

No sooner said than done. I fellawed in them. One round the major, twice round the gun-works. I summoned the batman. "Paddy, get a hold of Ah Nam and we'll get him to take these pants in a bit." Ah Nam arrived, grinned at me in the elephantine pants and said - "I fix, fitten cents." His first move was to take in the waistline. This left the seat of the pants dangling round my knees like a rhino's bottom. The interpreter was called in. Ah Nam returned with the surplus seat folded over and stitched in a flap. This produced an astonishing Dutch peg-top effect. Paddy got the interpreter again. Ah Nam went away and came back two days later. The pants fitted marvellously well - but somehow looked different.

They were not the same pants - only the same regimental label. I said, "Whatsit?" Ah Nam smiled sadly. "Old pants cut too much; we give newel new pair." "Oh Yeah? And for how much?"

"Fitten cents." And so everybody was satisfied. Ah Nam probably sold the original bags to a Tamil for three times the amount he charged me.
17th June, 1941.

THE CHINESE CIRCUS.

Great excitement prevails in Kajang. A Chinese Circus is visiting the village. The Ten Sleen Girls Circle from Shanghai—complete with elephants, tigers, and a thirty-feet long python lying asleep in a steel cage, his fifth coil coated by a partially digested sucking pig.

The village air reverberates in the daytime to the noise of the big drum supported by an inharmonious cacophony from a battery of Chinese gongs.

Of course the Camp must visit the Circus! For a modest sum of 50-cents (1/2d) we gained admission to the ring-side seats and seemed to be the only Anglo-Saxons in a vast crowd of Malays, Chinese, Tamils and Indians. Never had I seen a "big-top" so closely packed. There must have been at least two thousand natives of all shapes and sizes, and all neatly dressed in freshly laundered sarongs, saris, or Shanghai gowns—according to their racial origin.

The children attracted no less, particularly two little Chinese girls with neat hair ribbons and impassive faces. Never have I seen children sit throughout a circus without a change of expression or a restless body movement; they did it. Not so the Malay children. As the graceful performers (all Chinese) twirled on the trampese bars, rode horses, dried through knives protruding through the sides of a hoop, and finally through flaming hoops, they cheered loudly with many "Saus!" and called out "Bew! Bew!" (more, more!)

Here and there in the humd gloom beyond the glare of the flood-lights could be seen groups of Tamil children. They were quieter than the Malays, but the whiteness of their teeth and eyelids, gleaming against their dark faces, testified to their enjoyment of the scene.

Not the least picturesque part of the audience were the Australian "giggers" in the front row. Going to the crowd they floored over the sides of the ring but quickly cleared when two Malayan tigers, in beautiful condition, were brought on—much to the amusement of the crowd.

The performance gave an excellent show; even the Chinese clowns were good and played and tumbled with great dexterity. A band blew manfully on a raised dare in melodies varying from the shrill tunes of old China to the tuneful semi-swing of modern Malaya.
21st June, 1941.

SCHOOL CONCERT - KALAYA.

Miss Hess, priz and capable Headmistress of the Rush Girls' English School, wanted to entertain my men.

Leaving George, our burly Transport Major, to curse the convoy drivers and get them along the Kuala Lumpur Road on time, I took the staff car round by Sungei Besi and enjoyed the drive in the cool air of early evening.

The Malay scene is particularly attractive at that time of the day. The peddling kiasu are off the roads, the Malays in their kampongs are sitting round the street-vendors' stalls eating concoctions of fish and rice, while the Chinese are chattering the events of the day round low tables and plying busy chop-sticks in huge bowls of rice. Smoking oil-lamps light their open shop fronts and, against the red glow of dusk, the huge wooden sentry of tin mines rear their ugly shapes.

It was dark when we reached the large group of school buildings on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, but the glow from the assembly hall enabled us to watch the Convoy of fifteen army lorries pull in and park in formation on the padang.

George had made it, with one minute to spare, and he was all smiles; the men were in good spirits and marched up the stairs to the hall, eying with friendly interest the crowd of Chinese, Indian and Eurasian school girls who, dressed in their brightest saris and silks, and with a liberal allowance of rouge on their impassive oval faces, were peering over the verandahs and displaying an equally intense interest in the Australians.

A Chinese girl, beautifully dressed in her national costume, showed us to the front seats and the show opened with a Chinese farin in which the junior girls took the principal parts. Among them I could pick out two Indians, three Chinese and three Eurasians - the latter distinguishable by their thinner lips, fuller busts and lack of the broad oriental nose. The engravi, in English, as the girls sang, was at the piano, and their soft voices, with here and there a little memoriam of the Orient, made the singing most attractive.

Next came an Indian temple scene, the musicians and dancers being all as graceful as gazelles; Southern Indian and Tamil girls grouped
round their own native string instruments. With flashing eyes and
white teeth showing as they smiled, they sang soft Indian love songs.
The troops must have understood, despite the difference in language,
because they cheered them again and again.

Behind me I heard one love-starved "digger" mutter: "Gosh,
they are getting whiter every minute." His pal advised him to keep
his mind above his waist-line.

The schoolgirls part of the concert finished with a fascinating
little Chinese playlet, in which the authentic Chinese costumes of
long-ago were presented. Then the troops were asked to contribute
a few items.

"Alf," our low Canadian, took the stage and played his mouth-organ
from all angles, in between "gags." Fortunately, he remembered my
instruction to "keep it clean." His rendition of "I'm for ever
blowing bubbles" brought the house down, especially as he sang it
first as a psalm and then as a Salvation Army hymn.

I enjoyed watching the Chinese and Indian children instead of
"Alf." The little Chinese girls laughed loudly at his grimaces, but
the little Tauri girls seemed shy and more reserved. Only their
rolling eyes and kept expressions gave any indication of their amuse-
ment. I don't think any of them had ever seen anyone like "Alf" before.

Our top dancer, Private Garland — nick-named "Judy" by the troops—
then bounded on to the stage and further entranced the schoolgirls
with some intricate foot-work. I saw one Indian girl, who had danced
most gracefully in Indian fashion, follow his feet with eyes which
shoved her was counting and memorising every step.

As C.O. I made a short speech of thanks to our hostesses and led
the convoy home.

This morning I found a Major and a Captain, garbed in both towels
and sarongs, doing an Indian dance in the shower room.

**Extract from a letter to George from an Officer with the A.I.F. in Libya**

"You b-----s in Malaya are having the cream of the War. May all
your little troubles be half-castes!"
CHOO HIA FENG

THE STORY OF CHOO HOCK TAI.

Choo Hia Feng, whose actual autograph, written on a leaf from my field pocket-book, is above, leaned back in his chair and pointed over the valley to the high escarpment of Pahang. My eyes followed.

From the terrace on the east of Chinting Bungalow, where we were looking round cups of fragrant Chinese tea, could be seen the wild sweep of the Bentong Valley bounded by jungle-studded hills surging up to 3,000 feet.

The mist cut crazy patterns on the deep green of the forest background, partially obscuring the topmost peaks.

"A lovely view, this one," I commented, "I suppose you stay here very frequently." He shook his head slowly. "No, Colonel. I visit the bungalows on odd weekends but I never stay after dusk. I have not slept on the estate property since I bought it some seventeen years ago. It was the scene of a great tragedy in my life which might have been averted had I known what I know now. As you are a medical man, it may interest you to hear of it."

I did not interrupt his train of thought but signified my interest in his story by settling back more comfortably in my chair and lighting one of his excellent cigarettes.

I admired old Choo Hia Feng. He had risen from a long lineage of peasant Cantonese and, by hard work and ambition combined, had achieved education, great wealth and an honored position in the community of Malaya. The letters O.B.E. after his name had been well earned.

Quiet-voiced, and speaking in faultless English, he related to me the sad catastrophe which had overtaken his family and the rise and fall of Chinting Bungalow.

His marriage was a happy one and his happiness was increased by the arrival of three children—all girls. He and his wife longed for a son because it is an ancient Chinese tradition that the son shall perpetuate the family name. To his great joy the fourth child was a son and his proud father gave him the name "Choo Hoock Tai". 
The boy became the apple of his eye and grew to be a fine, sturdy child of twelve years of age. About this time Choo Kia Pong, who meanwhile had prospered, purchased a tea estate perched high on the top of Mount Sidayong. On the summit of the hill was a humble attic house. A winding stone-stopped path led up to it, overlooking a waterfall and a brook of crystal clear water. Choo Kia Pong was so thrilled with his new estate that he took his family there one weekend to see their new country home and the place where he planned to replace the thatched hut with a fine summer bungalow. The children were delighted with their new surroundings. The girls planned a swimming pool at the foot of the waterfall, and young Choo Hock Tai spent a good part of the day going down into the clear rippling water of the brook and Dreaming of the fish he was going to catch.

The family slept overnight in the attic house but found their sleep broken by troublesome mosquitoes, and they suffered many bites. They were unaware that among the mosquitoes were many which carried virulent malaria, being named by Scientists *Anopheles Maculatus*.

The family returned to their fine city home but, later, all became ill with malaria, young Choo Hock Tai suffering worst of all. In forty-eight hours from the onset of his illness he lay dying and, despite the prayers of his father and mother and the skilled aid of the best physicians in the land, little Choo Hock Tai died.

His father was also very ill but recovered. His mother was deeply grief-stricken so that she could not rest by day or night. Against the advice of her friends she insisted on sleeping each night in the little boy's room, saying that, according to the teachings of Confucius, the great Chinese sage who lived nearly two thousand five hundred years ago, her dead son's spirit would come back to visit her.

incense was burned, and food, money and flowers put out each night in readiness for her son's return. On the first two mornings when she arose heavy-eyed with weeping, the food had not been touched, but on the third morning the bereaved mother was refreshed and pacified, for the food had been touched and the flowers disarranged.

She told Kia Pong, her husband, that her son had at last returned to bid her farewell before departing to join the spirits of his ancestors.
In her vision the boy told her that, on being freed from his earthly sickness, he had wandered back to the lovely garden of Cinting Singang and had awakened by the bank of the little stream. He played on the grassy bank in the sunlight and then felt drawn to cross the narrow foot-bridge to join the spirit friends who, he felt, were playing on the other side. As he stepped on to the footbridge, the mimics starting about in the sunlight and shadow of the clear pool attracted his attention. Boy-like he bent down and placed his hands gently in the water. To his amazement he saw his fingers and hands disappear as they went under the surface of the clear water. He realized then that he was a spirit and no longer in the land of the living. Having died, he must immediately return home and say the traditional farewell to his parents. Hurriedly he returned, to the great joy of his mother, and bade her a tender farewell before journeying on to the spirit world.

As a memorial to Choo Hook Pak, his parents then decided to turn Cinting Singang into one of the loveliest gardens in all Malaya. First it must be freed from the dread malaria. Experts were given a free hand. Sweeping areas were drained and cemented; bad patches of jungle were cleared; quinoline was given to the Chinese coolies; streams were oiled and fresh water kept running by means of suitable locks below the water-fall; goldfish were placed in the lily-pads to feed on the mosquito larvae, and then a fine stone bungalow was built incorporating every modern anti-malaria device.

Choo Kia Peng then sent to Australia and England for the finest rose plants, and Malaya supplied orchids and tropical shrubs, until the whole place assumed the aspect of a lovely mountain garden, a fitting memorial to Little Choo Hook Pak.

Choo Kia Peng leaned back in his chair. "And even yet, Colonel, I cannot bring myself to stay long at Cinting Singang."

The End.
RETURN TO SINGAPORE

FIVE DAYS LEAVE, OBTAINED AFTER MUCH VANGUARDING! AS SOON AS I HAD
EVENTS WELL IN AID TO ALLOW ME TO PULL OFF WITH COMPAREASY EASE,
THREE GENERALS, INCLUDING THE A.D.M.S. MALAYSIA, DECIDED TO VISIT THE CAMP.
HOWEVER, AS I EXPLAIN TO THE A.D.M.S. "GENERAL OFTEN DECIDE TO
VISIT AN AREA WHEN I PROPOSE TAKING LEAVE. BESIDES, I HAVE THREE VARY
COMPETENT MAJORS TO RECEIVE THEM IN MY ABSENCE." THE A.D.M.S. AGREE
I'D BETTER GO. THE MAJORS WERE NOT AS ENTHUSIASTIC. "THAT A BLOODY
LET-OUT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE" THEY SAID. THEY WENT OFF MAMMAMING IN
THEIR HEARTS; BUT ONE OF THE TROJAN, AN HOUR LATER, PRESENTED HIMSELF
IN MY OFFICE WITH A LEAVE PASS. "CAN I HAVE TWO DAYS LEAVE IN SINGAPORE,
SIR?"

I GRIININ AND SIGBED HIS PASS. "HOW ARE YOU GOING, CAR OR TRAIN?"
"CAR, SIR, WITH BRETT, THE O.C. POLICE."

"THAT'S STRANGE; BRETT ASKED ME TO GO WITH HIM."

"I KNEW, THAT'S WHY I HOPED HIM FOR A LET-OUT. I DON'T MIND SITTING
IN TRAIN WITH THE BYRE. OH, INCIDENTALLY, SIR, I'VE ALSO BOOKED A BED
IN YOUR SUITE AT RAFFLES. I THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE SOME HELP WITH THE
EXPENSES."

I GULPED. "OF ALL THE COOL CLOTH! I SUPPOSE YOU'VE ALSO INVITED
YOURSELF TO BRETT'S PARTY AT THE TANGLIN CLUB ON SATURDAY NIGHT?"

TED LAUGHED AND GAVE ME A NOD. "NOW YOU MENTION IT, I HAVE."

I WAS GLAD OF TED'S COMPANY. HE HAD A PROPER APPRECIATION OF THE
FINEST THINGS IN LIFE AND THE SAVINGS GRACE OF A SENSE OF HUMOR WHICH,
ON FIRST ACQUAINTANCE, IS NOT SUSPECTED.

SINGAPORE GREWED US WITH OUR FAMOUS SEVEN SMELLS - THE DRAIN
ALONGSIDE RAFFLES BEING THE WORST. RAFFLES IS NOW A WOK BI DISAPPEMIN
AND NEEDS PART REBUILDING AND PART REPAINTING. THE SERVICE WAS GOOD
AND IT WAS A PLEASURE TO GET A HOT BATH AT WILL AFTER HAVING LIVED FOR
FOUR MONTHS IN AN ATTER MILITARY BATH.

AS WE LAY LANTH NUND ON SUNDAY MOrNING - NORMALLY A BUSY TIME IN
CAMP, TED LOOKED UP AT HIS MOSQUITO NET AND CALLED SOFTLY ACROSS THE
ROOM - "THERE'S A GENERAL VISITING THE CAMP TODAY, SIR." THEN WE BOTH
SAID - "OH..... GENERALS!!"
Unlike the remainder of Malaya, Singapore has been tainted by tourists, as evidenced by the novelty shops in Raffles - Sona's selling wonderful examples of Chinese craftsmanship in silver; Japanese photographers; an Indian "Bombay" shop; and lastly, the team of Indian snake-charmers lounging in the sunshine on the approach drive. We admired Sona's but did not buy. One cannot do too much on army pay. For a modest dollar, however, the snake-charmers turned on their show and we were quickly surrounded by a motley crowd of Malayan and Chinese youngsters.

The snake-charmers offside acted as a "stooge" while the snake crooked - "Nice cobra, pretty cobra, see cobra dance." - interlacing his speech with testimonials on a flute shaped like a blunted oxygen syringe. The cobra did dance too - a nasty brown piece of work with black spectacle markings on its distended collar. A python found itself tied in a knot and then wriggled its way round the ring and flicked its tongue out at the bare legs of the brown urchin, who didn't waste any time getting out of its way, calling us they did so - "war besar!" (Big snake).

The Indian then turned to conjuring, calling "Up Charlie," "Up Willie," while the coloured bells on a stick obeyed his bidding. He then turned an egg into a live pigeon and produced an amazing variety of articles from the most unexpected places.

Apart from the snake-charmers, we avoided the stereotyped tourist resorts. The R.A.A.F. Aerodrome; the Singapore General Hospital - a modern development of an old cantonment hospital; and the Gap at sunset; combined to fill in a busy and instructive day. The Gap is lovely if one arrives around six-thirty and watches the sun drop over the Siren Island, producing all the soft pinks and blue greens of an early evening in Malaya. As we sat in cane chairs with the inevitable "stegah" close by, we could look down on the Singapore roadstead protected by its unruly minefields, and watch the lights come up on Pulau Ularan Island, and Raffles Lighthouse winking in the gathering gloom.
The Saturday night dance at the Tanglin Club (Singapore's most exclusive) should not be missed. Never have I seen so many generals and admirals in one room. A brilliant refugee Hungarian engineer said: "Colonel, I feel so good, but not so hot". On analysing this remark it transpired he was referring merely to the cool weather.
I found him interesting and he pointed out all the personalities, including the icy-looking blonde who had formerly been the "great friend" of Count Ciano and was now the wife of the Manager of the French Bank. Brett, of the Malay Police, pointed out all the prominent Fifth Columnists in the immaculately dressed throng. Later, I ran into C. C. Deskin, a Colonel of the 2nd. Punjabis and a damned good soldier, who had formerly been G.S.I. "One" with a New South Wales division.

An air-force squadron-leader told me of a much-decorated pal who, after Dunkirk, was sent out to Malaya with his squadron. He horrified Singapore society by attending the Tanglin Club one Saturday night dressed in a tiger-skin and wielding a kris, which he proceeded to stick into the anatomy of the guests through the gaps in the seats of the cane chairs. Although he protested that he was only trying to liven up the party he was sent back to England in the next ship.
The R.A.F. did not approve such antics.

Our next party was even more interesting: dinner at the home of Lee Chean Suan (pronounced y'wan) - Singapore's wealthiest Chinese widow and an O.B.E. highly regarded by His Majesty's Government.
The lawn of her home was lit by Chinese lanterns and we enjoyed the cool sea-breeze, although one was bemoaning the loss of her seventy-thousand dollar beach pagoda which the Admiralty had blown up recently, because it obstructed the range of the search-lights. The old lady was beautifully upholstered in Chinese velvet-silk and had more diamonds than I've ever seen before on one person. Her ear-rings, alone, were worth a small fortune. Her house was a weird mixture of Oriental treasures and Western Continental bad taste - the latter exemplified by third-rate oil paintings of Vienna and Switzerland, which she had evidently picked up on her travels.
I managed my chop-sticks fairly well and kept off the Chinese brandy. I gave due thanks to my previous experience and also gave the decayed fish-and the hundred-year-old eggs a "miss!"

The old lady, accompanied by her nephew — Lee Chin Tyan — a Legislative Councillor from Malacca — later insisted on taking us to the New World Cabaret, of which she is part-owner. There we saw another side-light on Singapore: the play-ground of the troops on leave from ships and camps, the "swing" ground of the taxi-dancers and the "Bomber Babies from the Kinta Valley"; in fact, every racial type from Negrito to the almost-European.

It closed promptly at twelve and Brett and his wife wanted to show us the clubs of the Jalan Besar, but we were firmly determined on bed and said "Not in this uniform, son! Take us home to Raffles."
"Joe", our favourite camp monkey and mascot of the Sergeants Mess, killed himself last week, and caused much sorrow in the Camp. His relatives (the Sergeants) received many letters of condolence from the privates.

He had grown into a handsome big gibbon and had the free run of the Sergeants' quarters. However, his mischievous soul caused him to start mixing their boot polish and tooth paste together, and when he finally got into bed with the Sergeant-Major it was decided to curb his activities. They tied him on the end of a long, light chain, attached to a little collar. He enlisted for a few days and then got excited one day and took a long leap for the hut roof. His chain caught in a beam, tightened in mid-air and dislocated his neck. Poor old Joe - everyone liked him.

"Facts" the other monkey is still thriving and is going to have a baby. This has rather confounded the biggers who, when they first got her, christened her "Donald".

The A.I.F. in Malaya, after five long months of the trying climatic conditions, have stuck it well and their morale is still good. We expected trouble with them after two months, but it has not turned up. In fact, my Camp is now much happier and more comfortable than when we first arrived. A move is due soon, but it will not be out of Malaya for the time being, unless Japan starts something.

Health has been good and the lads are wonderfully fit, tackling tremendous work and sport with a zest which is surprising.
MALAYA, 31ST JULY, 1941.

MEDICAL BOARDS.

To-day I have to sit as president of a medical board and, with two A.M.C. majors as assisting members, decide the fate of eight other ranks whom the A.M.C. has decided are medically unfit.

It is a wearying job. In order to be fair to both the Army and the man, one has to assess not only the physical health of the patient but also his mental health.

The latter is sometimes the great unknown quantity, like the mystery letter "I". In selecting the men for my own unit I tried to overlook physique a little, provided I was of the opinion that the man could "take it" mentally. "Taking it" means that the man must be able to stand physical strain - monetary, separation from home and womenfolk, poor living conditions and lack of social amenities. This reminds me of a colonel, under similar conditions, who said - "My men, are you capable of withstanding ridicule, contempt, ingratitude and abuse?" The applicant said - "Yes, Sir. I was an army cook in the last war."

About twenty of the men under my control had "cracked" already. Fortunately, not from my own particular unit. As soon as they found the job hard and monotonous they rediscovered old ailments which had been relegated to the background during the glamour days of their enlistment and voyage on the transport. Two of the Officers have been near the breaking stage but we have been able to detect it in time and a four-days' "leave", plus a change of duty, has worked wonders. The morale of ninety per cent of the personnel is still as high as when they landed. The wiry, little fellows, and some of the older men are chiselling better than the big, brawny chaps. One in particular, when I passed over in the preliminary selection at Royal Park Depot, but went back and selected because I liked his Scotch accent, has turned out one of the most reliable and popular men in the unit.

In spite of his forty-five years "Sally" can rough it with the best of the younger lads, and on Anzac Day I found him modestly admitting to having been present on the beach at Anzac Cove during the famous landing in 1915.
On the other hand, a well educated chaplain, ready for Ordination in the Methodist Ministry, was found himself in the wrong groove in the Unit, and this after travelling 700 miles at his own expense to enlist under me. His first break was to go on a "binge" in Kuala Lumpur, challenge the veracity of a Scottish Sergeant-Major's birth certificate, and come home with a lovely black eye. I sent him down as a Medical Orderly to Port Swettenham and he settled down there. Now he has asked for a transfer to the Provost Corps, where they think so highly of his work at Swettenham that they are prepared to make him a Sergeant - truly a strange transposition from a Methodist parson to a Military "Jack".

I find that the best method of dealing with misfits, from a C.O.'s point of view, is to get rid of them. Many do well in other units, others are hopeless no matter where they go. I suppose they finally drift back to Australia and the constant care of the taxpayer.

If a man has a controlled sense of humour he is worth his weight in gold. One learns to pick them out in preference to the introspective, brooding types who never smile unless at the expense of a good deal of muscular effort, as somebody once said - "It takes all types to make an Army."

As I was writing this, an Officer from H.Q. entered unannounced and asked me if I would receive Sir Hubert Wilkins, the explorer, who was paying a visit to the A.I.F.

I found him a likable, interesting personality, and it was a pleasure to show him round the hospital and converse with him. He noticed my aides on "men types" and said he agreed with me that mental stamina ranked of even prior importance to physical stamina. He should know! He's been isolated himself, in Arctic and tropical regions, with a crew of men, for months at a time.
MAISE, 30th August, 1941.

THE LEPA SETTLEMENT.

Geddie Crow, a frequent visitor to the House, told - "Why don't you take your Medical Officer to Sengai Pulih, Colonel?". Knowing Geddie's flair for making interesting statements about Malaya, I waited for him to continue. He drained his glass and I refilled it.

"It's the biggest leper settlement in the Empire; has about two and a half thousand patients, and is exceedingly well run by Dr. Eyrie, a friend of mine."

"All right, Geddie," I said, "please arrange it for us."

One week later found us shaking hands with the Medical Superintendent at the entrance to the Settlement. Along the road in front of us lay a vista of a rather pleasant looking valley, fringed by low jungle-covered hills. Sprawling along the lower slopes of the hills were five or six hundred tile-covered huts and buildings of the bungalow type; on our right the staff bungalows and, all around us lay bare. A staff of thirty - the only of whom are Europeans - are the only non-leperous members of the settlement. Nurses, orderlies, postal and other workers in the community, are all beyond hope or eventual cure, but with many years of life ahead.

Although our medical training had given us an elementary knowledge of leprosy, never had we seen so many cases at once, literally by the thousands. In our clinical excitement we kept firing questions at the Doctor did he believe in segregation, or was it any more dangerous than T.B. in the community? were his patients allowed to marry and bear children? what was the expectation of life once the disease got beyond the reach of Chaulmoogra Oil? all these and many other queries he answered by conducting us to a clinic specially arranged so that we could see for ourselves.

On the way, down a long concrete corridor with open sides, we saw a racial smorgasbord of Chinese (in the majority), Tamil, Sikh, Malay, and one European patient. They lay or lounged about everywhere. Here for years Chinese men sitting in the middle of a patch of shade, gazing their small pittances away at mah-jong; behind them, lounging in the shade, a group of Malays, waiting for the nightly tropical cooler on their legs and arms to be dressed; squating in smaller groups, Asiatic style, and completing the
Oriental picture, were numerous Todds of all ages and sexes, from little brown, smiling children to dignified, grey-bearded elders. All had a smile or a friendly greeting for the Medical Superintendent.

"They depend so much on us", he explained, "it is so hard to get others to take up work of this nature. When my wife and I came here ten years ago the patients were little better than beasts. The medical officer used to do rounds with an armed guard of Sikh policemen; no patient was allowed to come within ten feet of him." He smiled wryly. "That means he must have had an X-Ray eye and a damned long tube on his stethoscope."

"It was common knowledge that each new woman patient was put up for auction as soon as she arrived. Patients were allowed to lie in their beds after death until the stench proved too much for the other occupants of the ward, when lots were drawn as to who should move the body."

The Doctor gestured towards the distant huts. "Now I try to give them some sort of communal life. There are just as many babies born whether they intermingle and marry or not. In the placid philosophy of the West it matters little. Now I marry them when required and get the family up in their own little hut, where they are happy in their household tasks. There is a grim brotherhood among lepers; in fact, a high compliment when I received from one grateful patient was —

"It is just as though you were a leper yourself, Doctor."

I had been musing at the changes which the Doctor deplored as we walked along, and wondering why he stuck it so courageously. As though reading my thoughts he said — "This work gets so damned interesting, it grips one. There is no particular danger in it. We have ordered who occasionally steal into the hutsmen at night and sleep with women patients, but they do not seem to come to any harm — until I hear about it," he interposed with a twinkle. "When I first came here I found a patient who had been wrongly diagnosed and had been incarcerated here for eighteen years; yet in that time he did not contract Leprosy and was discharged as a healthy patient."

"Shades of Santa Christa" I thought, "and this actually happened only ten years ago. What does cause Leprosy?"

The Medical Superintendent lit a cigarette. "No one knows. There are other factors besides the Bacillus Leprosus. Heat—estates don't get it, miasma does, especially the children. Speaking of children,
we must not keep them waiting. They are waiting for us ever at the school."

We drove round in case to an open examination shelter next the school. The children sat in rows behind us. Each one marched up with his clinical case and the boys took their shirts off to show us their lesions. Each one, in fairly good English, said—"Good afternoon, Doctor." He had a smile for all of them. I felt sick at heart when I thought of my own children and the contrast afforded by the sight of these poor little mites, some with their faces already scarred and twisted into caricatures by the ravages of the disease. Most pitiful of all were the clean-lined, happy-looking boys and girls with perhaps only an early patch of anemia on an ear or arm—the tell-tale sign which the doctor stroked gently with a strip of cotton-wool. He looked up. "In ten years time they will have the scarred and twisted faces too," he said gently, "but they won't die. Chaulmoogra Oil will ensure further life for fifty years perhaps. The very early ones we may save."

What a future to look forward to. The sunshine and the smiles of the children seemed out of place. The strain of ignorance of their fate seemed more powerful. As they passed in front of us our trained eyes saw the life stories ahead reflected in the small harmless looking spots on their skins. There was one touch of Kastoria humour. The doctor's backward to a Muselman orderly, who came up wearing a fez and a loose khaki drill uniform. I was rescued from my reverie about the children by hearing the doctor say—"He knoweth not English. He is the only outside attendant we have who has contracted leprosy. He often sleeps on the sly with leprosy women patients, but I don't think that that has anything to do with his infection. He probably just has a poor resistance to the disease. Strange, because he is somewhat of a self-styled—"the type of man,"—he smiled ironically—"he, as it were, has to go home twice for lunch or he isn't happy. Isn't that so, Ali?"

He dismissed him with a playful pat on the shoulder. Ali grinned, looked at though he understood, saluted and departed.

"Now," said the doctor, "what about a cup of afternoon tea?"
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A COMBAT COMMANDANT.

After many months of camp training one learns to awake automatically as Reveille is approaching.

In Malaya, dawn is invariably at six and sleep, so that one's subconscious impulses are assisted by the grey light of a new day penetrating the dim night shadows of the sleeping hut. The mosquito net looks almost like a curtain of white fog, and it is not easy to visualize objects beyond.

Who wants to anyway? It is much more pleasant to stretch out, ease the ache in one's back - which a night on a narrow camp stretcher always seems to produce - and listen dreamily to the quickening tempo of camp noises.

The call from the Moslem preacher in the village sounds faintly in the distance. The Kama, or more likely his less somnolent assistant, is calling the faithful to prayer. Then comes six chimes on the steel gong at the little Malay Police Station not far from the Mosque. This indicates a quarter to six, for a reason which I have been unable to ascertain, and leaves me stretching out my arm for my watch. I yawn and rub a lazy eyelid. Woodchopping and a snatch of song from the cock-house are interrupted by the grind of self-starters and the strident roar of exhausts from the Mechanical Transport lines on the fringe of the camp.

This is unusual at such an hour, but I recollect that it will be the sub-section of five wagons getting away to an early start on the long drive to Singapore.

I hear footsteps on the wooden verandah and turn over. I see the legs of my distinctive batman silhouetted against the growing light from the open doorway.

"Morning Paddy. Bugle gone yet?"

"Two minutes to go, but here is your tea and the Orderly Officer is waiting."

Paddy's morning formula never varies.

"Thank you. Still smells of rubber-wood smoke. Tell the Orderly Officer to come in."

The Officer of the Day enters and salutes as I emerge from the enveloping folds of the mosquito-net. I note that he is fully dressed and that the Orderly Sergeant and Orderly Corporal are in the back-
ground. Although having them report to me at reveille is highly inconvenient, it gives me the comforting assurance that the Camp's day will start promptly on time and under supervision.

The recital of the guard and night exercises is interrupted by the cheery note of the bugle — cheery because on this occasion I've been able to anticipate it by rising, but not so cheery when one is suddenly aroused by it after a heavy "guest night" in the mess. What robust appetites these Malayan Fusters are!

I give him an outline of the projected activities for the day, and it being Wednesday, remind him of the C.O.'s parade on the Parade at nine — our weekly tribute to "spit and polish".

Then to bath and shave. As I dress, the rising sun sends long yellow rods through the branches of the palm trees in front of the hut. I whistle from pure joie de vivre. My whistle is echoed from the tree in a most unnatural way. "Toofs", our pet monkey, has returned after a week's absence from camp and is evidently hungry. She gives the morning-tea crust from sun-stretched hand, does not look a bit grateful, and retires to a tepidest recess. I make a mental note that Paddy must catch and tie her up before she gets amongst my toilet gear on the hut table. It's amazing the mess a monkey can make with a tube of tooth-paste.

A brisk walk round the Camp, noting deficiencies here and there; a look-in at the men's mess where three hundred healthy Australians are stirring away lashings of porridge, steak and strong tea, and a passing greeting with those who are not too fully occupied to notice me reminds me that it is high on eight. Simultaneously the bugle bursts into the joyous notes of the "Officers' Mess" call.

Breakfast in the long thatched-covered wooden mess hut is like most Officers' Mess breakfasts the world over. Twenty-six lusty men, clean shaven and with two hours of their daily tasks already behind them, have to be fed. A grin or a grunt and a brief "Good morning" is their prelude to an attack on plates of porridge and bacon and eggs; or, if the financial tide of the Mess should happen to be ebbing, timbale of porridge or bully-beef "hash" from the Army rations.
I find myself next to a fat Major - a jovial gourmet and chief
 critic of the mess fare. He is not loved by the Mess Committee on
 this account. This morning he waves the Asiatic Mess-boy away as he
 brings a plate of porridge. "Porridge is a subtle device used by
 boarding-house landladies to distract the boarders' attention from the
 more expensive forms of maltreatment." he remarks expansively to no one
 in particular, but just loudly enough to be overheard by the Mess
 President.

 The President, who always refers to the Major in private as
 "Cockney", is not biting this morning. He smiles amiably and
 pushes a jar of golden syrup down the table. "Try some 'Cockney's
 Joy' on it, Major; it's somewhat of a liver stimulant."

 I smile weakly and mentally congratulate the Mess President
 on his next report.

 The Major smiles as he points for a new opening. "Golden Syrup,
 referred to by the vulgar as "Cockney's Joy", is a cheap refinement
 of sugar-cane drugs, and is eaten in place of jam by the most
 impoverished classes in Australia."

 This brings a guffaw from two subalterns opposite. The thrust
 and counter-thrust of an argument between the two Majors always
 appeals to them. On this particular occasion it is ended by the
 entry of the orderly officer, who announces, with an eye on his
 watch - "Dinner time, gentlemen, is exactly 6.45 P.M."

 Baked buns arise from the end of the table as everyone checks his time-
 piece.

 "Where did you get that from - the mess buns?"

 "I'll bet he took it from the sergeant major's alarm clock."

 "The grade not fair! He's five minutes ahead of yesterday's
 time."

 The C.O. being used to all this, just snorts and slides into
 a vacant chair. "Pass the butter along and stop belly-aching. Next
 week I'll arrange a special time signal from the R.A.C."?

 Cigarettes are now being pulled out and pipes lit. One of the
 padres blows clouds of smoke from a Malayan cheroot. The Surgeon
 officer registers alarm - "No, no, you oughtn't to have a thing like
 that outside the gas shelter; and so early in the morning too!" His
assistance chimes in—"That's nothing. I saw him smoking one in the
shower the other morning."

The padre turns, evidently not ill-pleased by the indifferent
tribute to his smoking. "One cent each at Ali's in Kuala Lumpur,
if you're interested."

They are interested, as Cigarettes are becoming scarce.

The conversation becomes general. The Quartermaster twiddles the
wireless set, endeavouring to separate Melbourne from a mass of
"static" on the air. The others buckle on belts and other items
of equipment in preparation for the "five o'clock" parade.
We put "On Active Service" on the letter we write. It helps to make the folks back home think we have somewhere to fight. Our comrades in the Middle East must think it quite a joke when they get letters headed thus from some poor Nihon kids.

Mr. Justice names, just the legion of the lost. We’ve got to stay in this darn place no matter what the cost. We’ve read some tales about us by a girl from our home town. We wonder if she saw us with our transport well haggled down.

Mr. Justice remembers girls as gaily expressive in camp and with girls in multi-colored skirts or nates in saree. We think she was well suited right up the nates tree and held hair-raising stories of nurses on the ganges.

So that’s how it got started up, this story telling game. So couldn’t we be beaten by some darn newspaper chump? We’re just Melayan names, who can take it with a grin. So please don’t think the worst of us if awful tales we spin.

We’ve learnt this jungle warfare and all we can acquire. We know the range of every hill and every field of fire. We’ve glimpsed through the jungle with our bodies dripping sweat and slept out in the blunt western amongst the mud and pest.

We’ve marched through towns and villages and sickened at the smell. We’ve flashed until we’ve told our tale to go to bloomin’ hell! Natives have tried us and typhus, eye and heat. In fact we think we’re doing well to keep upon our feet.

We’d like to get near Jerry and wipe him off the map but as a mild apology we’ll polish off the Jap. But if Irwin should waltz us and send the transports here, we’ll drink his health with all our wealth in good old Aussie beer.

("Nihon" — original song name for Forces in Malaya)
A CAMP COMMANDANT'S DAY

The parade of all the personnel in Camp is always impressive. I watch the four hundred men assembling on their unit parade grounds; then, as the bugler blows the "Advance", they swing forward into "Close Column" formation on the Padang. The green field with its white goalposts and background of rubber-tread hills enhances the setting. The rising heat of the morning sun is noticeable through one's drill shirt, and I vow that I won't keep the men exposed to its glare for long. Their brown knees and loose strides convey an impression of physical fitness. "Not bad," I muse - "good fighting material - a trifle tough on pay-nights but, when properly handled, the easiest-going fellows one could find anywhere."

The bark in the Parade Commander's voice awakes me, and the snap and click of the rifle butts to the "order arms" follows. I reflect that the senior Major is doing his job rather well this morning. He approached and turns the parade over to me. I stand the troops "easy", remind them of a few points of discipline, appeal to them to avoid beer and women when on leave, and finally march them off in column of route to their individual unit training areas. Everyone is now perspiring with the oven-like sun glare and I'm glad to escape to my office and get under the coolth of a fan.

The Orderly Officer and the Regimental Sergeant-Major follow me a few minutes later and march off the "defaulters parade" outside on the balcony. I grin at some of the remarks, faintly overheard through the open doors:

"Get in line, there!"
"I'm in line, Sergeant-Major. (Sotto voce) "Stick me dead, he must think a man's a h---get square."

"Cut out the talk! Attention! Left well, quick march!"

In they troop, with the escort lops and all. I suppress a desire to smile or say something facetious ... wouldn't do in C.O's orderly room.

They are all on the same charge, overstaying leave on the previous night, and they all agree to be dealt with collectively and by me.

This cheers me up; evidently there are no "bush lawyers" among them. I mentally deduct half-a-dollar from their fines, and another half-dollar when the evidence shows that they missed the last "leave bus" from Kuala Lumpur by a whisker. "Fined a dollar". The punishment is milder than they expected and their worried expressions relax. Two, with previous
A.C.C. records on their conduct sheets, are fined two dollars. As
the latter clear the doorway on taking their departure one remarks
'to the other — "Fancy the old mark remembering."

I reflect moodily on my forty-two years of loneliness, and turn
to routine matters.
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CAMP COMMANDANT.

"Tumf" is the name given in not-so-polite circles of the Australian Army to all the routine orders, announcements and documents which a Commanding Officer receives from day to day via headquarters, unless that august establishment is otherwise engaged in the art and practice of war, when it all vanishes like magic.

I looked at the pile on my desk disinterestedly and selected one from the top because it looked interesting and impressive. It was marked "Secret" and embossed with three blobs of sealing wax.

"A possible order for a sudden move" I thought. Inside the outer envelope was another, also marked "Secret", I extracted from it a card, the content of which so amazed me that I read it aloud -

"G/5/406. Subject: - Your issue of -

Please furnish this office the number of fox drinkers on the strength of your unit. Please treat this as very urgent."

The orderly, Sam Sergeant, standing to attention nearby, laughed at my expostive. I turned to him. "Was every one in the Unit down, as the常说, Sergeant, including the eight nursing sisters. We'll have us at least, if we have nothing else! Give Captain Ellich the rest of the mail and ask him to do me the favour of disposing of it as best he can. I'm fed up. Any callers?"

"Yes, sir, the Dato's compliments and could you see him for a few minutes?"

"No certainly. Show him in."

I turned to find the Dato Raja Mohamed Royall bin Haji Hamid walking in the doorway. A Malay of the finest type, educated at Oxford and on the Continent, Royall had climbed through the staff examinations for the Malayan Civil Service and was now District Officer for the largest. Related to the royal family of Perak, he had been a good friend to the A.I.F. personnel in his district and had recently made me the generous gift of a finely-carved parang.

"Morning, Chief" I said, giving him the courtesy title of a Malayan Chief.
MALAYA, 30th August, 1931.

- 2 -

The R.O. beamed. "Good morning, Colonel. I want to enquire if Friday will suit you to have a visit from the British Resident. I should like him to see your camp."

"Why, sure! Tell him to come at eleven and he can meet the officers at morning tea."

This seemed to please the R.O. and he promptly invited five of us to a curry tiffin at his house on the following Saturday. The R.O.'s curry tiffin is always popular, because they are cooked and served in the best Malayan style, but one's imbibes always have a "burnt-up" feeling for a few days afterwards.

He brought me the latest gossip from the Village. Apparently the Tamil community are extremely upset over the discovery that two gold plates are missing from under their idol in the village temple. The idol weighs over a ton and only the High Priest has access to the holy of holies in which it resides. The plates were dedicated at a special ceremony twenty years ago and it appears that they are only produced at twenty-year intervals.

The time is now approaching for the ceremony connected with this event and, as there have been no less than five high priests in the meantime, it looks as though the robber will be hard to trace.

The R.O. Police, discussing the problem with me after the R.O.'s departure, were of the opinion that the present high priest must have a guilty conscience, because, although the ceremony is not for a month yet, he smoked all round the idol and claims he missed the plates while engaged in this task.

Meanwhile he has provided the Tamil cookie lines and the village coffee shops with a topic of conversation for displacing war, wages, and the most recent murder. And does the Tamil love to talk! He talks not only with his mouth but with eyes, head, neck and elbows. I often start them off with a few quips just to see the entertaining response.

A phone call intrudes, with the Asiatic operator's voice asking me to stand by for "Scengahpoomah" (Singapore). I wait patiently for ten minutes thinking it is a personal call from the Director of Medical Services, who had promised to ring me. However, it is only one of the Padres asking for an extension of his Singapore leave. He enfused
about the revels at the enthronement of the new Bishop; but I'm
tough-hearted and remind him he is already A.M.A. about twelve
hours. He admits he hadn't thought of that, so I win the argument
hands-down, and he promises to return on the night train.
We left Kajang at 2330 hours on the 25th, by the night train - a really comfortable outfit with "sleepers" and conveniences that would make a N.S.W. train blush for shame. The men, in charge of Major Hobbs, had gone by the earlier train and the convoy had departed by road at 1200. The convoy looked imposing - forty-three vehicles (3-ton trucks) - and covering about four miles of road when spread out at anti-aircraft distance.

Our calculations proved correct; not a truck wasted and not a spare inch of room. I felt like a successful furniture remover and circus proprietor combined. One of the Asiatic mess boys - Leo Ah Tan - wouldn't part with his bike, so it was decided to take it on the early train.

Major Hobbs has just reminded me that the bike and four chickens (alive) belonging to the Nursing Sisters' mess, caused the R.A.S. Railways to add him a surcharge of four dollars. Capt. Lee, a very efficient quartermaster, had said afterwards - "How the hell can a long-suffering C.S. be expected to read the minds of nit-wit Celestials?"

All our planning functioned efficiently and within 24 hours of the convoy arriving at our new base site (the southern wing of the Asiatic Mental Hospital) we had 50 beds established and were ready to take in patients.

If one can visualize what shifting a modern hospital really means, and realize that it was all done in thirty-six hours, one will realize that our men work like tigers and do a very efficient job.

I feel sure that they could do just as well under fire. Fighting and bombing planes from Singapore Island circle and zoom above us all day long, so that we are steadily getting used to the noise and can distinguish two types of planes by their peculiar engine "drones" already.

The men are all bucked at getting some harder work to do and they had quite a glow of pride in their new hospital when they carried in their first case yesterday. He happened to be our own
Sergeant disperser who had been away on detached duty in an unprotected area and had contracted malaria. Fortunately, it is a mild "benign tertian" infection and he will soon recover. He is the first man in our unit to go down with malaria, so that we have been very fortunate - and careful, because we insist on the men rigidly following all the precautions. A man who is careless in the use of his mosquito-net at night is punished and promptly fined 10/-; each subsequent offence doubles his fine.

We were sorry to leave Kajang, where we had one of the liveliest and best appointed camps in Malaya. Here we are miles from anywhere and the only worth-while leave the men will get in an afternoon and evening in Singapore, once in a fortnight. However, they are happy, while there is work to be done and the ladies have promised us a few extra amenities. It will take about a month to get the lay-out of the surrounding country and, if they are the buggers I know they are, it won't be long before they've made a home-from-home for themselves.

Four of the privates in another camp, tiring a little of the monotony, wrote to Sir Itzhak, the local Sultan, and invited him to their camp concert. He set the whole camp - from Lt. Col. Foster downwards - into a flurry by accepting the invitation and drove up with an escort of Johorian motor-cycle outriders and three sides-de-camp. They thoroughly enjoyed the concert. I'm told, and history doesn't relate what the C.O. said to the four privates.

I'm happy and proud that my unit has carried out its first "move" so successfully. Apparently the H.Q. staff were watching us pretty closely because within three hours of our arrival I was visited by two "Full Colonels", two Lieut. Colonels, one Major and one Red Cross Representative. The R.A.M.S. asked me where the men were getting all the building materials to construct duck-boards and side-wings for the tents. Fortunately, some one interrupted my reply. I didn't want to tell him they were pinching it from the Contractor's dump on the other side of the fence, but, being an old soldier himself, he probably won't inquire too closely. Our haul to date is nine bags of cement, two loads of bricks, three of sand and heaven knows how many planks. Why worry! The Contractor probably is more than covered by Government grant.
Our new camp site in Johore is located in the southern extremity of a mental hospital - an Asiatic one at that. There seems to be only one human being madder than a mad Chinaman and that is a mad Tamil.

We are fenced in with them by a steel fence, spikes on the top and twelve feet high. Fortunately, the authorities intend removing our portion of the fence and replacing it between the "Giggle Palace" (as the troopers call it) and our tent lines. Although I have been trained in mental diseases I've never experienced mental hospital sanitary convenience before. We are using the latrines at the ends of the big empty yards. They are of the "Asiatic squat" type, and are a bit of a strain on unaccustomed knees joints, to say nothing of one's powers of balance.

The bare cell windows, high up on the bare walls, supply a pleasant touch reminiscent of a penitentiary. At three minute intervals the whole system flashed automatically. The troopers call the sound of rushing waters "Niagara Falls". Even a Lieutenant-Colonel finds it difficult to retain any dignity in such surroundings. The showers are high up in the ceiling. To operate them one stands on a brace plate in the floor and waits for the deluge to descend, like the sword of Damocles. Still, it's all lots of fun! Major Fisher, our newest Medical and Hygiene Specialist, is building individual partitions.

To his great annoyance we have christened him "Chic Sale", after the famous author of the "Specialist".

During the day our hours are salved by wandering and happy Tamil lunatics who poke their noses into the cook-houses and the garbage bins - principally into the latter. They don't understand the cook's phrase Australian "Get the 'allot'are!", or the Orderly Officer's Malayan "Fergi Fahn-tahs". They just smile sadly and stand still, like children who have been wrongfully reproved.

One simple Slauun has a piece of gas-pipe and appears when the R.A.A.F. planes roar over. Standing on the small mound (bakit) near our flag-staff, he alights his pipe, like a Malayan blow-pipe, at the planes and counts solemnly - "Batu (one), Suat (two), Tiga (three)", as he brings them down in fleets. He then runs over to the wreckage of the crashed planes and "shouts" the crew with his pipe.
MALAYA, 1st October, 1941.

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This is number one favourite vaudeville act with the denizens
of the cook-house, and they delight in pointing out the planes for
him. The first time I saw them at it I thought the whole Army had
gone "nuts".

We haven't seen the Tamil editions of Napoleon or Julius Caesar
yet, but we are hoping.
KARI RAYA.

Yesterday was the Musulma festival, hari raya, which marked the end of the Fast of Ramadan. Since the first of October all devout Moslemadines have been fasting between sunrise and sunset——"too scared to swallow their own spit"——as one Digger put it.

I decided to visit Lt. Colonel Sheppard at Serangoon, and set off after lunch in solitary state, with a driver.

After waiting for half-an-hour while the bridge at the Johore Causeway was raised to permit the passage of a pleasure steamer filled with gaily clad Malay---all in their best sarongs and bright bangles---we joined the throng of holiday ears filled with "boonga", as our men call the Asiafics, and eventually reached Serangoon.

There I met Mac and many old friends from Newcastle who had served under me in the old militia days in New South Wales—swapped a few jokes and had afternoon tea.

On the way home we found ourselves in the traffic stream blocked by an Air Force funeral—band and all—so I got out of the car and was joined by a Naval officer who seemed to take me for a mourner and had arrived late himself. Finding that the funeral was a State event in honour of one of the Wing Commanders who was killed in the crash in which the C. in C. of the Netherlands Indians perished, I decided that I might as well represent Australia, so I settled into a slow march, with the Naval Officer, on the tail-end of the Official Service representatives, passed it between the ranks of muffled drums and then woke up to the fact that I was only dressed in shirt and shorts, while everybody else had on tunics. A somewhat similar feeling to finding oneself naked in a ball-room; so I retired gracefully behind the firing party and beat it back to the car. The driver said "Must have been a quick funeral, sir!"

It was, for me. Gone through Singapore where most of the big shops were shut and all the people on fete.

- The streets were colourful with young girls in bright pink and greens and the Indian women wore magnificent sarongs of all colours embellished with beautiful embroidery in gold and silver.
ROAD SIDE GROUPS OF MALAYA IN EQUALLY GAY ATTIRE WERE PASSING AS THE CAR SWEEP INTO JOHORE ALONG THE FINE BROAD HIGHWAY. PASSING THE SULTAN'S ILMIRA I WAS STARTLED TO SEE TWO CARS AHEAD MEET IN A TERRIFIC HEAD-ON COLLISION, ASSUMING DRAMATICALLY INTO A SWAYING ROLL AND FINISH WITH A CRASH IN THE ROADSIDE GUTTERS.

I STOPPED AND PULLED INTO THE KERT. FROM THE FIRST CAR THREE SCARED INDIA NO CLIMBED OUT AND SEEMED TO BE FREE FROM SERIOUS INJURY. SO I TURNED IN THE DIRECTION OF THE OTHER TANGLED HEAP, FROM WHICH CAME A WILD AND HIDEOUS WAILING.

LYING IN THE GUTTER WAS A YOUNG MALAY WITH HIS SKULL BASHED IN AND BREATHING HIS LAST. SURROUNDING HIM WAS A SMALL CROWD OF PASSERS-BY AND THE KNEELING INDIA NO, WHO WERE FRANTIC WITH GRIEF AND KEPT UP A FRIGHTFUL DIN, BUT DID LITTLE ELSE. BLOOD TRICKLED INTO THE GUTTER.

I TURNED TO THE OTHER INJURED YOUTH LYING NEARBY AND WAS JUST IN TIME TO PREVENT SOME MALAYS FROM PULLING ON HIS BLOODLY FRACTURED LEG.

AIDED BY A FEW OF OUR OWN MEN WHO, TRUE TO FORM, SEEMED TO SPRING UP OUT OF THE GROUND AS SOON AS THE EXCITEMENT STARTED, I FIXED A BOX-SPLINT AROUND THE LEG AND GOT THE PATIENT INTO A POLICE "BLACK MARIA" WHICH HAD ARRIVED MESASINE.

ONE OF THE ASSISTING DIASPERS TOLD ME HE DIDN'T THINK THE SPLINT WAS PUT ON RIGHT AS HE HAD JUST BEEN DOING AN 6-DAY ARMY MEDICAL COURSE AND KNEW ALL ABOUT IT. I ASSURED HIM I WOULD PROBABLY TAKE TIME OFF TO DO THE COURSE MYSELF.

THE FATALISM OF THE CROWD WAS MOST MARKED. WITH SILENT IMPASSIVE FACES THEY LOOKED ON. NO ONE MADE A MOVE TO COVER THE DEAD MAN UNTIL FINALLY AN ARMY DRIVER CONTRIBUTED HIS PULL-OVER. OUR LADIES SHOOK BY COMPARISON, BUT MAYBE IT'S THE ASIAN TEMPERAMENT, OR THE WILL OF ALLAH!

THE FINAL EVENTMENT WAS THE PASSAGE OF THE SULTAN, WHO DIDN'T BOther TO ENQUIRE WHAT WAS GOING ON, AND THE ARRIVAL OF A PALATIAL AMBULANCE CONTAINING EVERYTHING IN THE LUXURY LINE EXCEPT ELECTRIC EGG-HEATERS.

MALAYA, 23rd November, 1942.

MOVING CAMP

We loaded and moved Camp from the New Mental Hospital, Temboli, at an early hour this morning.

The 13th moved in. They are fairly green and did not seem to know much about setting up in tents, especially with the handicap of heavy tropical rain at intervals and a fair amount of mud.

We left our tents there. This was a good dodge, as it gave the 13th a welcome into tents already soundly pitched and secured for my unit on the new camp site fifty new Indian (I.P.) pattern tents fresh from the makers in Agra and Champore. The life of a tent in this humid climate is only eleven months and the ones we left were starting to leak from mildew seepage.

I told my mob not to skin the old camp site too cleanly. With a Scottish U.O. they've learned the old army trick of never leaving anything behind which may prove useful. Other units avenge up of a "searched earth" policy, but it makes for comfort in a move. Already we are very comfortable and it is only just 7 p.m. I am writing this in my office tent, already lit by electric light, and listening to a wireless set drawing power from the same source. The programme happens to be "Symphony" from St. Andrews Cathedral, Singapore. Sergeant Dixon, our diminutive little electrician, with the sly grin, is an expert at tapping any nearby sources of current, although his methods with "magnetoed" flux, which is as precious as gold here, make the Johore electrical authorities scream with rage.

About an hour ago an Asiatic contractor drew my attention to the fact that my men were "pinching" bricks and timber from the back of the hospital. I knew this long before he did. They wanted to keep their "Dunker, Soldier", off the deep ground and I didn't blame them. I restored a gleaming smile to his face when I assured him that he had but to send me a bill for his losses and he would be paid in full. I knew I had over 800 Straits Dollars in my Unit Trust Fund from the profits of our very successful canteen at Johore Bahru.

Tomorrow I shall check on the camp kitchen and see if the Hospital Cook, Private Harrison, has any new cooking utensils that he didn't have before. He passed me yesterday in the corridor at Temboli pushing a hand-cart filled with 13th cooking gear - all brand new. I knew he
MALAYA, 23rd November, 1941.

MOVING CAMP

didn't do jobs like that just to be nice and friendly to a brother unit, and he had a purposeful gleam in his eye. It is possible that some of the barang (gear) may have drifted our way.

"Waltzing Matilda", our unit newspaper, which we publish concurrently with the 2/2nd Motor Ambulance Convoy, was pushed out hurriedly before we moved. We are parted from the 2/2nd for the first time since we left Malaya. It was "easier" than usual owing to the fact that I left the production of it exclusively to Rev. Bernard Quirk, our R.C. Padre. I think, if Padre had been a little more knowledgeable and less innocent, he wouldn't have passed the item in the personal column stating that our bugler, Private Smith, was a well-known exponent of "He March Swing" and formerly played with Jack Strapp and his Elastic Band. This was in answer to an editorial query as to what Jazz Band the bugler played in prior to joining the Army.

All the personnel are chuckling over the item. At any rate we dubbed the issue "Christmas Number" and it sold five hundred copies before it was off the presses. I could have sold another five hundred easily but the Paper Controller stuck his nose in and wouldn't issue us the extra permit.

All this gives us lots of amusement and, most important of all, keeps the men's smiles up; or, as the Army ponderously puts it, "improves the morale of the Force."
THE DURIAN.

The sole came off my walking-shoe. I proposed to Major Hobbs that he accompany me in the one-ton truck to the adjacent town of Kuala and show me the shop where he vowed I could purchase made-to-order shoes for seven dollars. Arriving at the emporium of Ngai Roe Loo, we stepped over three or four Chinese archers playing among the food debris in the gutter and entered the shop. Seven Chinese were busily employed, squatting amongst piles of leather and shoes of all descriptions, plying their trade.

We ceased the most intelligent looking of the seven, and in a smattering of Halsey, Australian and Mandarin, managed to convey to him our requirements. "Would the teucn kasut (shoe-maker) make kasut basut (shoes) for the twain?" In voluble Chinese he intimated that he would. "Tujok ringit!" (seven dollars, £1/-); not unreasonable for hand made shoes.

Feeling like some exercise we dismissed the truck and decided to walk back to Camp, exploring the other Kedai Kasut (shops) on the way. One shop with a fine display of Halseyan fruits interested us, and we purchased litchi, rambutan and mangosteens. The latter are delicious, having a mingled flavour of passion fruit and pervicism. Near the entrance I spotted a big basket of durians. Durian is the prickly covered fruit of which Bruce Lockhart in his "Return to Malaysia" said, "If one can get it to one's mouth without becoming unconscious, and can abide the smell, the fruit is delicious." We smelt one and agreed that it was pretty wild. Alan Hobbs said he was game to join me in one at breakfast next morning, even if, as alleged, it did have aphrodisiac properties; so next morning our Chinese boy, with a wide grin placed half a freshly cut Durian in front of us. We watched the reaction on our Mess colleagues. The dentists seized the odour first and looked suspiciously at the Padre.

The letter shifted uneasily, looked under the table and sniffed. Major Andrews came in and said, "Sheepstooth, what's dead around here?" I explained with great gusto that we were sampling Durian. Meantime the fumes of the first two spoonfuls were playing strange tricks with his gullet. Major Hobbs suddenly pushed his aside and said, "I've had enough." Major Andrews made a rude allusion to the nocturnal activities.
of the camp out, which coincided with an extra strong whiff from my Durian. My spoon faltered, another whiff and I laid it down. The Durian had won easily.

It was lunch time before I got the taste out of my mouth. No aphrodisiacs effects have been observed.

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MALAYA, 31st December, 1941.

Tootsy, darling:

Yesterday was the anniversary of the day I left Newcastle. The Japs celebrated it by a sudden attack, caught Singapore with its pants down, lit up like a gin-palace, and plunked a nice big bomb plumb in the middle of Raffles Square. This annoyed everyone intensely and was like putting a stick in an ant's nest, the army being the ants, and everyone started to scurry about in a great hurry. I followed all the excitement on the radio up till about eleven p.m. and then started to be as busy as a cat having kittens. Would I move my C.C.S. into a rubber estate? With great pleasure. My situation wasn't too healthy in view of the bombing possibilities and I had a nice bungalow up my sleeve with plenty of cover around, and another for the nurses, which I was dying to grab in preparation to the patch of Malarial jungle which H.Q. were suggesting for me. Col. Alf. Darby coolly patted me on the back and then told me to get going with what transport I could beg borrow or steal. This was a tall order, as normally it takes forty trucks to move the unit and I had exactly three, plus eight ambulances. We did it—how, I'm not quite sure—worked well into the night, and boys! did that soft bungalow bed look good afterwards.

So now I am the temporary owner of a landed estate. It was the first time I've ever housed in on anyone's private home. Fully furnished. Fortunately the owner and his family are in India, and the Army will compensate him. I hope! I've warned the lads to respect the household Gods, and they are very good. There was a touch of pathos in seeing in the telephone diary "Dec. 8th—Children's Christmas party and tennis at Spatts". That, and the sight of all the youngsters' toys in the playroom made my eyes misty and my throat gulp, for it seemed to show out far as a grim business by contrast. It also reminded me of my own upbringing and I had to plunge into a fury of orders and quick work to regain control of the old emotions. I worked till I was tired and then I located a delightful smell of rum as John Chalmers came up and gave me a report. He saw me grin and said,

"A snifter might help you along, Sir." It did; on an empty stomach it gave me such a pleasant glow, that when I was making my final rounds before turning in, I leant over the verandah rail, listened to the sounds of tired men sleeping, kissed my hand to the moon and said,
"roar to the blunky days."

To-day, in our peaceful clearing, all is quiet, sunny and home-like. Officers in tin helmets and revolvers rush in and out and my staff makes 'em happy with big mugs of hot tea. I've had three impromptu conferences over the location map while I've been writing this, and I've asked my S.H. who is going South to bring me back a newspaper so that I can read about the war!

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I feel my diary would be incomplete without giving an impression of the impact of actual warfare on my own feelings. I started this war not with a feeling of pessimism engendered by the news that our fine Eastern battleships "Princess of Wales" and "Repulse", had just been sunk by the Jap 'planes, but discontinued after the first line and went out into the sunshine to see if I could shake off the "blues". Hard work, pitching tents in the Rubber, combined with the facetious chaff of the men—great lads all of them—put new heart into me.

Now, after a dinner of roast lamb, mint sauce and steamed pudding, I'm come to the conclusion that things could be a lot worse. Thank Heaven our Chinese cook, scared stiff by the war excitement, didn't carry out his threat to bolt into the "bun".

I want to write seriously about the troops; of how each chap is carrying out the first duty of a man, to sit, the defence of his homeland and kit and kit; of the feeling, deep down, that one would sooner pass out than let the beastly Japs get down on Australia; but the mood has evaporated and the those scene forgotten.

A travel-stained officer came up the bungalow steps while we were dining and flopped into a chair. His eyes bulged when we offered him a stengah. "Gosh," he said, "I haven't seen anything so good for so long time. How do you blokes manage it?" We didn't tell him of the toil and sweat expended to get ourselves dug into our new location, but enquired for news of the Infantry. "Fine," he said, "but I've just left a bloke from the Artillery who has got the jitters badly—you know, a sort of long streak of gloom, with a vertical breeze-up. Was starting to get like it myself when I left him, so thought I'd drop in and see somebody laugh for a change." We offered him another drink, but he declined and asked for a bath instead. "Got back to H.Q. by midnight and relieve the A.D.M.S." he explained. We told him the latest jokes as he changed, and saw him off past the picquets. "Thanks a lot," he said, "I'll let you take my appendix out sometime, for nothing!" We grinned.

The crowd are just coming in to my end of the verandah to listen to the Radio. It is a power set, and we've got it hooked on to the engine of the X-ray plant.
We signal to the engineer, Sapper Dixon, who has his power house installed in a youngster's garden play-ground; he starts his box of tricks up with a crashing "putt-putt" roar and, above the din, we try to hear the latest bulletins from Singapore. Outside in the darkness, our men cluster to hear the latest news of the war and to add their own comments—some jocular, some lurid.
Christmas Eve in a tropical country town with the anxiety of war did not appear a cheerful prospect. I therefore welcomed the invitation for the Adjutant and myself to drop in and have an evening at home with the Executive Engineer and his wife, and to do likewise with with the Estate Manager, Mr. Pratt, and his wife. Driving to the Engineer's house through the town-like, blacked-out native village was an eerie experience and a strain on the driver's ability.

Somewhat cheered by the soft interior lighting at the Engineer's house, the sight of his younger's "Stocking" and Christmas tree—all ready for the young hopeful in the morning—we wished them the traditional greetings and drove over to Pratt's, within our own estate. We met his car in the driveway, held up by two big Aussie sentries, grim-facing in steel helmets and anti-gas gear, but vital filled with the Kitch spirit. They wanted to know the pass-word, which happened to be "Coolibah", a difficult one for an Englishman. After teasing him a bit they said they would only let him pass on condition that he proceeded the twenty yards to the Sergeant's tent and drank their health in a pint of beer. I had the pass-word, which I so managed to avoid the usual by beer, but had to enter on a long, humorous argument with the Sergeant, a "Tommy" signaliser and two diggers, on the un sporting lighting methods of the Jap. The Sergeant clinched the argument by remarking, "And mark me words, Colonel, with all apologies to your rank, Sir, the flamin' -—-a might even drop "gas" just after we've 'ad our plum puddin' to-morrow." This menacingly statement almost moved the mutter of flase round the hurricane lamp to tears, so, to avoid were beer, we hastily slid away in the darkness, and joined Mrs. Pratt at the bungalow. I had a box of sweets for young Anthony's "stocking" and at midnight, before steering home through the long, dark avenues of silent gum-tree trees, we filled it up and laid it ready for him in the morning.

All of which reminded me of my own home and youngsters. It was so easy to picture their flushed, happy faces as they took part in the Christmas excitement.

Christmas Eve dawned with a burst of sunshine in the promise of a
cool morning. Daddy, by the way, had arranged to go to early Mass, so he let me lie in and didn’t rose me until 6:30. This pleased me mightily as I had’ve been looking forward to the bugle at 6 am, so I told him he’d better go to early Mass every Sunday. The Padres were up bright and early. They seemed to be having a contest as to who could hold the most services among adjoining units. The K.C. broke double-crossed his rival, a prodigious eater, by skipping breakfast, so I should say he won by a short head.

After breakfast the Quartermaster and I issued each man with his Comforts Fund hamper, and added a bottle of beer each from Unit funds. Meanwhile the cooks were busy serving up three fine pies, and the ladies had a pork dinner, nicely roasted, and topped off by plum pudding. After dinner we let them alone, apart from the picnics and plane spotters, who kept reasonably alert. The Sisters added to the improvised Christmas festivities by gathering blooms from the shrubs round the bungalow and adding them to the men’s tables.

The Officer’s dinner was a happy affair and we did not omit to remember our home folks and the youngsters. When the Chinese “boys” brought the turkey in someone remarked, “Did anyone say there was a war on?”

In the evening I was reassuring to hear Vickers, the powerful Dutch radio come on the air from Batavia with a re-broadcast of the King’s speech, and then the various greetings from Service men all over the Empire. One felt proud to belong to the Empire family, united as never before. The holiday has completely refreshed the men after their hard toil, and they are completely ready for anything the war can bring them. The Camp is a hive of activity, as the Chinese don’t do anything but work, even on Christmas day. A well is being dug, and the concrete slabs for the operating and X-ray tents finished off. One of my main worries is to keep the lady concrete-mixers from raiding the Unit garbage tins in search of toothsome morsels of pork. I never knew women so hard to chase away. They just grin amiably and “Go ahead.” In between bouts of concrete shovelling they sit down and do embroidery! Can you beat that!
It is just noon. At midnight to-night we close down on taking in wounded, pack up and start another "gun's rush" down the Singapore Road. Napoleon, in his retreat from Moscow, had nothing on us; but it is warm weather, with tropical rain; we still have all our vics about us; everyone is cheery and well-fed. Better still, our teams are handling the wounded well, and we don't look like losing a single stick of equipment. Our drivers have done marvellous work, halting along the estate tracks and congested main roads day and night. By making frequent trips they are overcoming the lack of transport and, with the help of ambulance cars, we are able to save loading valuable medical and surgical gear. The Japs seem to be "playing ball" with the Red Cross and haven't molested it unless it has been close to an Ammunition or Petrol Depot.

I chased an ammunition Column ride of my camp area yesterday. The Captain said - "Where am I to go?" - so I soon told him, and it was a warmer place than Kalaya. He knew down well he had no business hearing in near my wounded. In the last ten days we have cleared eleven hundred wounded and sick through the C.C.S., so haven't done so badly. A good many of them were cases of exhaustion, so the figure by no means represents a total loss to the Army. After my experience with Indians and Indian Units filtering through, I'm all in favour of giving Indy back to the Indians - for keeps.

Fortunately, a good many of the Auxilies who were cut off are managing to get back. We were overjoyed to see Lloyd Cahill, a Medical Officer, come through the other night. He was unwounded but had his bare feet badly cut about, and we didn't recognize him in the dim light of the hurricane lamps till we had looked under his whiskers and washed the mud off him. A plate of stew, a snifter, and a clean pair of pyjamas worked wonders with him. His party were all tired but cheerful - even young Lieut. Austin, with a bullet through his shoulder. They mainly wanted sleep. As one tent-ordinary remarked to me - "If they lie down - they sleep; if they stand up, they sleep; and if I bloody well sit 'em in a corner till I get a stretcher ready - they still sleep."
MAYALD.

25th January, 1942.

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We do get time off to laugh - more often than one would suspect - and it keeps us in good form.

Now for more work, even if, as I suspect, it is a Sunday.
STORIES OF THE BATTLE.

One advantage of being at a Casualty Clearing Station is that first-hand information of the front line is always available from incoming casualties. I'll give the first prize for courage to Major Jones, a Brigade Major who was brought in the night before last with a shattered shoulder and head wounds.

He and Major Hayes, an English Major, had encountered Japs in an ambush and had hopped into an Indian Army carrier. The carrier stalled and the driver "panicked". They shoved him out of the driving seat and Major Jones took over but stopped a shot on the side of his head. Major Hayes then lifted him into the back seat, where he stopped another one in the left shoulder, but Major Hayes managed to start the "carrier", got the wounded Major and the driver out, bound up the wounds and brought them to us. I gave Hayes a drink - he needed it badly, but he told me Jones wouldn't rest until we had phoned HQ.

and got a Staff Officer over to take down the enemy strength and position at the ambush. While awaiting the latter's arrival I went down and gave Major Jones what aid was possible. But he asked me for a cigarette and asked me to delay the anaesthetic till he had told his information, which was most valuable. He went off to the Ambulance Train last night in good condition and still able to grin faintly.

A cheerier story is that of the "digger" with a bullet in the left buttock. He said disgustedly - "I was pickin' them off nicely one by one, when a Jap up a tree potted me in the back-side. 'Ow the 'ell can I write home and tell me girl friend where I'm wounded."

Our cheeriest visitor of all, yesterday, was Peter Campbell, the Senior Supply Officer. Peter said, "Colonel, could your patients do with a truck load of beer and nourishing meat?" I said - "Oh yeah! They could also do with a movie show and a swimming pool for the convalescents." He laughed - "No kidding, I've got in over at the railway Station, and if you fellows don't take it, the Railway Maintenance Corps will drain it to the last drop." I then introduced him to the Quartermaster to arrange the details. Peter told us he was pulling 6,000 gallons of petrol out of Muar to save it from the Japs. While his fellows were loading the trucks, they heard shots from across the river, so they gave up their "snake-chin" to have a crack back at the Japs.
having done this they finished loading and got the trucks over the safety line. Then they parked by the roadside and discovered a case of brandy as they were having a "bite of tea". Peter let them have a double "tot" each as a reward for their good work. He said it was good brandy, because later on he had great trouble in restraining them from leaving the lorries and going back for a crack at the japs.

Cheeriest of all - he told us Air and Sea reinforcements were arriving.
MALAYA (SINGAPORE)
6th February, 1942.

Heigho! We've had to move again, even on the island. The Jap guns found our range yesterday and while they respect the Red Cross we found ourselves ringed round by Australian and British Artillery units, whose salvos were even more noisy than the Japs. So it seemed a fair thing to leave the gunners to it, for, as the Scotcherman said, "They might get a wee 'when careless", and we had no desire to see a 25-pounder lob in our direction. Every place on the island is so crowded with troops that it had difficulty in locating a nice quiet spot for a hospital. Finally I found a little country club, but unfortunately the R.A.F. were in possession—using it as a rest camp. When I reported this to the A.I.F. they smorbed and said the R.A.F. had been doing too much desired resting. This seemed with my own view so I breezed along and started to take possession, like the "suckoo in the nest. This annoyed the air force intensely—"Such utter cheek, what! What! I said—"I quite agree, wing Commander, but here I am, da join our Hess. The poor blokes in so dithered by being swamped with cheerful Aussies that he is thinking of abandoning all claim to the property. It is a lovely place—fine tiled swimming pool, a tropical glade, a skittle alley and a neat little clubhouse nestling among the trees at the top of a winding path leading up from the pool. One could imagine the colorful scenes of peace time—say a Sunday morning in the lazy summer sunshine, with Hess and their youngsters splashing in the pool and the Tuana sipping stongahs round the beaks, after a hard game of tennis on the fine courts.

To-day we bathed there in the lake, all the women have gone away to parts unknown.

My fellows flung themselves from the springboards with gay abandon, dived like otters and came up to the surface with roars of laughter. "See, the Old Man (that's me) sure picked us a good possie this time." It was their first swim for months and they've certainly earned it, and to think that this time yesterday I was nearly forced to land on in a gravel quarry.

The guns to-night are quiet and the whole place is extremely restful. We've seen given a 48-hour lull from taking in casualties—the first spell since the outbreak of hostilities—and it is most
welcome, besides affording us a chance to get the tents up, and a new
wards arranged. I felt so skittish yesterday that I "zagged it"
for two hours, skipt into town with the quartermaster and went to the
movies. We were as thrilled as big kids. It was back to earth
with a vengeance when we found bombs being dropped a mile away from
the Camp and had to bound into a trench for safety. As the Q.M.
said - "time a bottle of Bicocak for me nerves."

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Our 25th Annual Dinner on 17th April, 1971 was an occasion to gladden an organiser's heart.

The function took place in the Derwent Drill Hall at Anglesea Barracks, Hobart, per kind favour of Colonel F.H.G. Oxley, Commander, Tasmanian Command. Willing volunteers assisted the Secretary on the Saturday morning to decorate the hall and Stanfield deserves special thanks for getting up at "Reveille" to cut branches of the gum trees around his home and "freight" them into the drill hall. Those were placed around the walls and partitions and further decorated with large crepe paper flowers made in the Unit colours. We are greatly indebted to Len's two sisters, Misses I. and S. Stanfield for volunteering to make the flowers and also for their suggestion - which was adopted - to sell the flowers off for funds at the end of the night's entertainment. I have formally written to the Misses Stanfield expressing the appreciation of our Association for their generous efforts.

Whilst on the subject of funds, it will be noted from the accompanying financial statement that our balance is pretty good as it stands at $493.35. Our profit from the 1971 Dinner was $30 but a close examination of the statement will show that the profit was due to a generous "subscription" from one member attending the Dinner and to the sale of flowers - otherwise we would have been in the "red". I have always tried to ensure that the costs of the Dinner are met by those attending the Dinner and that the costs of that function are not borne by donations sent in by "absent friends". We have managed to do this to date but we may have to raise the charge a little above the $5.00 per head in future.

Back to the decorations etc: The Secretary had prepared cards on which were printed the place names of the various jungle camps where members had been located. Also, some of the cards had familiar names and terms e.g.: "HIGUCH", The "33", The "BB", "B.C.G.", "ASCIA", "NAGATOMO", "TICHLER, SUN", "BENJO" etc. etc. The cards were pinned around the walls and acted as memory joggers for the usual reminiscences. One area was partitioned off for the main dinner to which everyone, including wives, sat down, and another area was set aside for the subsequent short, but effective, session when members of the Unit participated in the formal toasts.

Lt. Col. M.D.B. Abbott and his wife attended the function as official guests representing the Tasmanian Commander, Col. Oxley. They were formally met by our own Lt. Col. Jack Coombs and his wife Cynthia. Jack officially represented Lt. Col. T. Hamilton who, as he was unable to be present, had asked Jack to do the honours on his behalf.

There were 51 persons who sat down to Dinner. Those included Lt. Col. and Mrs. Abbott, 30 members of the 2/4 O.C.S., 17 wives and 2 friends of Unit members. In addition, 2 more Unit members, Milton King (repatriated home from Kajang) and Garry Byrne were present for part of the evening.

The success of the night was further enhanced because of our mainland representation viz: Jack Coombs and his wife, Cynthia (Jack will kill me because he still claims he and Cynthia are Tasmanians temporarily seconded to the mainland), BIU Fisher, Milton Smith, Joe Long (and son Terry), Las Graham and Alan Clark and his wife, Betty. We really enjoyed having these people with us.

We were sorry more couldn't come, but we were glad to receive greetings and apologies from Lt. Col. T. Hamilton, Trevor Taylor (new address - 75 Upper Maude Street, West Ulverstone, Tas. 7315), Barney Mulgrew (now on an overseas trip to U.K. and Europe - lucky beggar!); Arnold Jordan, Major Syd Kentz, Major Ron Rogers, Bert Moreby, Harry Hill (new address - 35 Julie Street, Berridale Heads, Qld.), Tom Mann, Jock McIlroy, George Reid, Ted Oulston, Snowy Hawkins, Charles Paul (look right on the Dinner date - Hard luck, Charlie: We know you
The official toasts were proposed by Jack Coombe ("The Queen"), Reuben Boshall ("The Unit"), Rev. Browne ("Absent Friends") and Milton Smith ("Departed Comrades").

Lt. Col. K. D. Abbott, representing the Tasmanian Military Command, commended the Unit on its record both during war service and during the 3 months of captivity. He said that members had provided a medical service under extreme and deplorable conditions and, as a doctor himself, he recognized that our devotion to duty and necessary improvisations had resulted in many servicemen surviving the ordeal of jungle captivity and being returned to their families in Australia at the end of the war (Lt. Col. Abbott is the Tasmanian Minister for Health).

Those at the Dinner will remember that Fred Atherton of Launceston didn't look too well, and Fred is currently in the Repatriation Hospital at Hobart undergoing tests. Hobart members, who have not already done so, might like to visit him. We hope you will soon be up and about again and your old chum and self, Fred.

As part of our Anniversary Report, I am enclosing the current list of our mates who have passed on. The name of Fred Atherton has been added. His name was given to me at the Dinner. If you have not already reported the passing of Bill Benson, Lloyd Wicks and Jack Kemp since our 1971 Dinner, the list now totals 12. If anyone knows I have omitted any names I would be grateful to be informed. While we continue, these former comrades will be remembered.

As usual, a few of us marched on Anzac Day and here in Hobart, we carried the Unit flag and laid a wreath. We were glad Jack Coombe was here to join us this year.

Well, that wraps it up for another Dinner. The 1972 Dinner will be in Hobart on Saturday, 22nd April, 1972. You have been given plenty of notice so put the date on your diary and make it a must for 1972. We would really be happy to see some more of you maintainers next year.

Best wishes for health and happiness to you all.


End.

L/Cpl. Keith Anderson
Pte. Eric Ball
L/Cpl. Joe Barrow
Pte. Fred Bashford
Sister E. Belfour-Goldy
Cpl. Bill Benson
R.G.M. Max Bosward
Pte. Ted Brettell
Major John Clames
Spr. Ted Dixon
Matron J. Drummond
Sister M. Dore
Pte. Doug Dukes
L/Cpl. Eric Eggle

Major Ted Fisher
Sister E. Farnham
Major Carl Furner
Sister S. Gardam
Pte. George Gaulion
Pte. Ernie Greenger
Pte. Arthur Hamson
Pte. Hugh Jones
Sister K. Khinella
L/Cpl. Ron Kemp
Pte. Jack Kemp
Pte. Eric Lepchen
Pte. Charlie McDougall
Pte. Keith Miller
Pte. Eddie McLean
Pte. Les Fischer
Major Harry Phillips
L/Cpl. C. W. J. Peter
Pte. M. Raymon
Pte. Harold Raley
Cpl. Ken Roberts
Pte. Wally Roberts
Pte. George Rossiter
Pte. Clarry Seabrook
Cpl. Alex White
Pte. Lloyd Wicks
Sister B. Milnur