

SINGAPORE AND THE THAI RAILWAY

EXPERIENCES OF CAPTIVITY

1942 - 1945

Edward ("Ted") Chaplin

Singapore Royal Artillery (Volunteer),
Straits Settlement Volunteer Force

Written October/November 1945



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Sandy Lincoln (daughter of Lincoln Page, SRA(V), "D" Battalion) for the difficult job of typing the original typescript. My father's handwriting was difficult to read, and the account was written in pencil on both sides of thin airmail paper. Page numbers in the body of the text refer to the pages of the original account.

In compiling the index, I have referred to "A Nominal Roll of the Volunteers", compiled by John Brown. This excellent reference source has clarified many of the names. I have included in the index additional information taken from the Roll, in the belief this will be helpful to readers. A question-mark used in square brackets indicates any uncertainty about identify, although context points to these being the people mentioned in the text. Corrections or confirmation would be gratefully received:

Elspeth Chaplin
9a Oakleigh Gardens, Whetstone, London, NW1 4RY
elspeth.chaplin@zsl.org

Part 1:

Written on board HMHS "KAROA" Between the Sunda Straits and Fremantle Nov. 2nd 1945.

Journal of Events from Dec. 1st 1941

Dec. 1st 1941. I was visiting De Vries the Dutch Jew manager of the Cathay Restaurant and he announced that the volunteer mobilisation order was issued at 10.30 am. He himself had been in "B" Company with me and was then in the Local Defence Corps. I learnt years later from Major Bennett RAMC whilst at Tamuan in Thailand in April 1945 that both Mrs de Vries and De Vries were on the counter espionage black list. I know that Mrs de Vries was a German and whilst they were running the Cyrano (?) Restaurant in Orchard Road there had been leakage of information of use to the enemy due to Army and other Service officers talking too freely whilst in the restaurant. The bar tender - an Austrian - was also a suspect.

Page 2

The particular information concerned the transfer of Bristol Blenheim bombers from Malaya to the Middle East to counter German attacks in Egypt, but which left Malaya practically without bombers. De Vries was mobilised in the L.D.C. and I saw him a few days later on duty outside Guthrie and Co.'s office in Battery Road. I shall be interested to learn if the suspicion of his pro-Axis views were justified or not.

I left the Cathay and went home, changed into Volunteer uniform and reported to the Drill Hall, where we all joined together in the Mess and had a discussion. HMAS Canberra was first off the Drill Hall in the Outer Roads. We were allotted several hours to report to our firms and to make any necessary arrangements. L.P. Sly of Guthrie and Co. had left at 4.30 am for Australia by flying boat. P.J. (Peter) Bennett also of G. and Co. was on a ship sailing for home to join up in England. He was a Lt. in the Volunteer Armoured Car Coy. and was ordered to mobilise with the rest at the Drill Hall. So off the ship he came, bag and baggage. Larry

Page 3

Sly got to Australia all right and returned to Malaya by the next 'plane. He joined the FMS Volunteer Armoured Cars in Kuala Lumpur in which he was a Lt. having passed out of OCTU in October. He was killed in Geylang Road, Singapore on the afternoon of the last day (i.e. Feb. 15th 1942). He was in charge of the armoured car on patrol and was proceeding at a very low speed, about 4/5 mph. A Jap mortar section had been set up a few minutes before and was ranging on the road. All this was observed by some men and an officer of the 9th Coast Regt. R.A., who were in a drain nearby. They did not fire on the Nips - "So as not to give away their position" according to the officer. The Nips dropped a mortar bomb right on the armoured car. All inside were killed. Their deaths were

Page 4

due to the incomprehensible action of the officer in charge of the section of 9th Coast. These men could have wiped the Nip mortar team out without trouble for they had a Lewis gun. Peter Bennett died of cholera at Kanu in July 1943. I was in a neighbouring camp and only heard of it from John

Craig who had been with Peter cutting bamboo at the time he became unwell. He died in about 12 hours.

We moved out to our beach position on the afternoon of the 1st Dec.1941. Our section of 2 18-pdr. guns went to "The Grove" Katong near the Seaview Hotel. Colthart [Coltart] , our officer, was on leave so we were under Sgt. Ritchie. We included:-

Gunner Welsh (John), died at Chungkai, Thailand	
Bdr. Beohm (Arthur)	Sgt. Ritchie
Gunner Helps (Harold)	L/Bdr. Hoops (Dick)
" Page (Lincoln)	L/Bdr. Colchester (Tiffy)
" Nassim (Arnold)	L/Bdr. Butterfield (Charles)
" Baker (Sam)	Gunner Davy (the Welshman) - from Muar
" Stogden (John)	Bdr. Jennings (Charles), died in Chungkai
" Evans (Tom)	Gunner Whitehead
L/Bdr. Kennedy	Gunner Hough
Gunner Webb (Charles)	myself

Page 5

The gun positions were close together in concrete emplacements and the search light position 150 yards to the East connected by a telephone wire. We worked hard at getting ammunition and stores together and dug slit trenches, which we revetted, and afterwards covered with wood, which we got from around the position including a number of wooden doors. Mrs MacPhail, who was running "The Grove" as a boarding house, complained that were breaking up the house and she did all she could to obstruct us. We were given very poor quarters to sleep in and were not permitted to use parts of the building. Things got to such a stage that she was evicted and the whole building taken over by the Army for our use. On Wednesday 3rd we saw HMS Prince of Wales and Repulse, together with several destroyers, go past to the Naval Base. The feeling that, now we had a strong naval unit for protection, Malaya could withstand the expected onslaught, increased. We spent several days in

Page 6

perfecting the arrangement of the meagre equipment at our disposal. We tried digging slit trenches whilst wearing gas-masks, in which I was a failure. I sharpened my army jack knife to dagger sharpness. We did rifle drill and gun drill for long periods and retired early after a few drinks. One evening on the order "Unload" Hough nearly blew Stogden's head off by clearing the last round through the barrel instead of the rejector! Stogden is 6ft 7 ins tall and was on Hough's left. I was behind Stogden at the time and my first reaction when the round went off was to feel the muzzle of my rifle to see if it was warm and the round came from me. Stogden staggered back into my arms. Colthart [Coltart], who by then had returned from leave, was in charge, but was quite unperturbed and merely insisted in the future that we should do rifle drill with the magazines in our pockets. We did 2 hours on guard and 4 hours off throughout the day and night. We used to sleep with all our clothes and boots on and have our rifles and equipment in bed with us. We tried several practice alarms and managed to get into action within about 4 minutes. 2 minutes was the officially allotted time. My job was to race up to the Lister

and start it myself, and then rush up to the searchlight to be ready for the order, "Expose". I was the operator on the searchlight for sweeping the sea to search for Jap landing craft. We at the searchlight - that is Bdr. Kennedy, who was i/c and changed carbine and myself were in a very exposed position so we asked for additional protection from machine gun fire, and we spent a couple of days building up an earthwork in front of the searchlight, and behind which we could crouch and still operate. On the night of Dec. 7th 1941 I was in bed as usual with clothes and boots on when the alarm sounded at about 4.30 am of Monday morning, the 8th of December. We rushed out to our positions and, as I went, I saw going up into

the air from the direction of the Naval Base strings of Bofor tracer. I thought they were 'flaming onions', and that we were having warlike games with some realism. And then came the whistle and crash of bombs from the direction of the town, and we knew it was an actual air raid. We got ready for action and then, as the planes were coming overhead, we went into the slit trenches. The AA searchlights picked up 2 planes, which passed right overhead, but apparently the AA fire was too short for they did not seem at all troubled. The AA still seemed to be bursting at least 10,000 ft. too low. We heard afterwards that this was indeed the case. So ended the first night of the War on S'pore, and the next morning we were told that the Nips had landed at Kota Bahru at 1.30 am and yet all the lights of Singapore were fully on 3 hours later. Fifth Column was suspected. We heard on the wireless at 9.30 am Shenton Thomas announce the

declaration of war. We also heard of the attack on Pearl Harbour. We were keyed up to expect an attack on Singapore from the sea - nothing came. On Wednesday, fateful day for Malaya, we heard the terrible news of the sinking by 70 Jap 'planes of the Prince of Wales and the Repulse. Our spirits fell - and it was cold comfort to be told by Churchill over the wireless "our hearts go out to you in Malaya tonight" Duff-Cooper spoke on the wireless and we were told to expect even severer blows. We all felt that this could only mean the subjection of Singapore and how right we were. But our spirits changed as the war went on. News was 3/4 days delayed in reaching us and we learnt of the fall of Penang, Ipoh, Slim River, Kuala Lumpur, Batu Pahat, Muar and then finally of the retreat onto the island on the night of the full moon - Feb. 1st 1942.

When we evacuated Penang - without warning the local population of our intention - our beach post was reinforced by several of our Battery that had been working in Penang. They had indeed a grim tale to tell. The Jap air raids killed about 3,000 civilians and there were about 4 Brewster Buffaloes only to oppose them. All were shot down. The Japs tried repeatedly to sink an ammunition ship - without success. Looting started in the city and all services stopped when the civil population deserted the town and ran to the Hill. The dead bodies in the streets began to decompose and the Volunteers were detailed to dispose of them - which they did. Then suddenly the order to evacuate and not to tell the civil population. This was a disgrace. The town was left undefended and for 3 days the Nips bombed it without opposition. Dicky Hoops prophesied, and how right he was, that we should be

unable to defend Singapore successfully. He was not regarded too favourably for his opinions, although no one could doubt his determination to do his best in the forthcoming action. He wisely got his wife away to Australia whilst the going was good. Singapore was raided daily by Nip bombers flying in formations of 27 (sketch of 3 groups of 9 planes in arrow formation, 1 group in front and 2 behind). They bombed Kallang Civil Airport, which was ½ a mile from our position, frequently, almost always between 9.30 and 10.30 in the morning. We got to expect them. It was obvious that the Brewsters could not reach them and that they were far too high for most of the AA fire. I once saw a direct hit on a bomber, which disappeared, and we learned that 19 had been shot down by AA fire that day - which was good - very good - but not good enough. The first bomb that fell on Singapore demolished Guthrie and Co.'s

office in Battery Road - so we moved into the Yokahama Special Bank. I had several days on which I was able to go to the office for the afternoon. Everything, of course, was v. difficult. I sub-let the house at 10, Nathan Road to the Malayan Tin Dredging Co., to be used by their staff being evacuated from Batu Gajah and on one occasion I went there for dinner and found 10 women and 12 children living in the place! They all seemed very cheery and on the next occasion I went there on Jan. 30th there were about 6 men and one woman, all the other women and children had been evacuated. This woman, a Mrs Thompson, redheaded and v. attractive, said she would stay with her husband come what may. She was probably interned in Changi Jail when the Nips took S'pore. On the last occasion I had leave I had tea with Daisy and Scott Cumming at the Oak-Rhind's house in Cable Road. Daisy had produced a baby about a week or 10 days previously. I saw the baby and must say that I had

to conceal my real feelings as to its beauty. Daisy, of course, was enchanted. Scott was proud in a mild sort of way. I'm glad to say that Daisy and babe were safely evacuated to England. I saw Scott at Changi and again at Non Pladuck in Thailand in January 1945. He had recovered from the wounds in his legs with only a slight limp. I saw Guthries on this last day too - at Draycott the big house behind the Tanglin Club. They had been bombed there, too, and Osman the head tamby had been killed and Johnny Horne badly wounded in the stomach. Altogether, G. and Co. had a bad time and it almost seemed that the Nips were making a dead-set at them. On that occasion I saw Cooper, Esson and Hardman. Cooper told me that G. and Co. had sold all their stocks to the Army and Navy and so there was little work to be done, and all that I could do

was to look in occasionally to set right any queries that arose. He also told me that there were considerable stocks arriving for us at the SHB [Singapore Harbour Board]. These did arrive, in time for the Nips to make full use of them. When the Nips took K.L. things really did look serious for us and there was talk of establishing a line from Mersing through to Batu Pahat - to be held at all costs by the Australians (who had not been in action up till then) and the Indian 7th Division. In theory this was alright but in practice the plan was nullified because the Nips were able to land in

rear of our positions on the West Coast using boats they captured in Penang and landing craft they brought down by rail. The British troops of the 18th Division, who arrived in Singapore about 25th January - 30th January and some even as late as the 7th

Page 15

February were not of much use. Most of their equipment was lost on the "Empress of Asia" which was bombed and set on fire by the Nips, whilst a few miles off S'pore. They had been about 3 months on the water coming from England - having travelled via Halifax, Trinidad, Cape Town, Bombay (they stopped for 3 weeks at Ahmedmargah [?Ahmadnagar?]) then through Colombo to Singapore. They had been trained in East Anglia for open warfare in the Middle East and knew absolutely nothing about jungle warfare. Some of their Battalion did well but the majority were quite useless. They were just thrown away. On the evacuation to the mainland there was a lull of one week during which the Nips repaired the Causeway and brought down their heavy guns. The coastal big guns were swung

Page 16

round when possible and fired at concentrations in Johore. Unfortunately only 2 out of the 5 15-inch guns could be brought to bear and the shells for them were Armour Piercing so that the damage was not great. The Nips bombarded the West Coast all during the night of February 8th and disrupted the 2/20 Battn. AIF opposing them at Kranji and they landed in force that night and took Tengah Aerodrome. The 2/20 beat a retreat - they ran too far back and the Nips made tremendous headway. The Argylls and Loyals retook Tengah the next day and were then driven out and deployed in Holland village. The Nips attacked

Page 17

using low-flying 'planes and mortars and a big battle took place at Bukit Timah on the golf course, and in the woods and around the reservoir. We were withdrawn from the "Grove" on the night of Thursday 12th February and as we passed Kallang Aerodrome we saw that it was completely shattered. The Hurricanes that had arrived a week before were piled up in disordered heaps. Two were crashed with their props. and engines stuck in the ground. We set up our no. 2 gun in the 25 cents entrance to the Alhambra covering Beach Road. The other gun covered Middle Road. We slept a little that night but during Friday and Saturday sleep or rest were impossible due to the bombardment and shelling. Headquarters was hit several

Page 18

times and it was obvious that the Nips were having things their own way. 16 Bofors were set up along the reclamation and loosed off at low flying planes without much effect. I was stuck on the slope out of HQs in a lorry during one raid and nearly caught it by machine gunning. Fires started in the SHB and of course the oil tanks on Poelau [Paeloe] Samboe and Paeloe Bukom and Kranji were simply tremendous. At night the glow from the fires lighted the whole foreshore. On the night of the 12th the whole town was covered by a thick pall of smoke, which completely hid the moon. Stragglers by the hundred came down Beach Road and we took over 6 Norfolks. The MPs moved into the Alhambra under Pinkey who used to run the Grove.

Ernest Carr, who had left G. and Co. at Medan, turned up as a Captain in the R.A. in charge of field security. Seeing that he had been sacked it did not do him much harm. On the afternoon of Sunday 15th, men could be seen going out to sea in small boats and some of the MPs shot at them as deserters. It was all very deliberate and looked very bad to me. Then one of the Gunners shouted out that these were men from his own unit who had been ordered by their C.O. to escape. On this they stopped shooting at them. All sorts of contradictory orders came through. We set up our guns covering Kallang Aerodrome and at 4.00 p.m. there came the order "Cease Fire". This was passed verbally from the right from unit to unit. No written confirmation came so the

122 Field Regt. RA who were next to us decided it was 5th Column work and fired off their remaining ammunition. We did not fire officially but Webb loosed off an 18 pdr. on his own. Then at 8.00 o'clock there was a lull and the news came thru' that we had capitulated. The Adjutant of the 122 made the announcement adding that we were not to attempt to escape. About 9.00 o'clock Colthart [Coltart] called some of us, who were thinking of escape, together, and said we might have a go at it in his yacht B7. We chose those who had some experience in handling yachts -

Colthart
Ryecroft
Hoops
Hough
Webb
Myself

Ryecroft, Hoops and Hough and Webb were to get the sails rigged and the boat down to the water from the slips where she had been for 2 months and Colthart and I were to organise the water and food. We were to meet before 1.0 am and get to Bukom or one of the nearby islands before dawn. I got water and biscuits, bully and soda water and Colthart got a 15 cwt truck. We loaded up - said good bye to Tom Evans, Chas Butterfield and Whitehead and off we went. The streets were deserted except for lines and lines of transport - 100s and 100s of lorries, trucks, cars, etc. There were some fires blazing but we got to the yacht club alright and loaded up, and then with the assistance of about 25 others pushed the yacht into the water down the sand. We immediately saw that she was

making water. We watched and in about ½ an hour she was waterlogged, so it was useless to use her. Webb found a kolek and went off in her and came swimming back in ½ an hour. We then decided, as there were no other boats, to keep B7 under water all night and Monday, to allow the hull to expand and fill up the cracks. Colthart then decided to report back to HQs and all of us except Ryecroft and Hough and Webb went along with him. Next day the Nips came in at about 12.00 o'clock. They behaved very well to us and caused no trouble. We had to stack our ammunition and park the guns in the square which we did - we also handed in small arms. But it

was impossible to get back to the Yacht Club to get away. Ryecroft, Bill Walker, Sabine, Robinson and 2 Regulars did get away to Sumatra,

Page 23

and finally to Java, Australia and freedom on a motorboat. They left in broad daylight under the Nips' noses. I heard of their escape a few days afterwards and of their safe arrival in India by letter in August '43 whilst at Hintock, Thailand. Webb and Hough made off on their own to escape up country but after about 2 weeks they were rounded up and came out to Changi.

Feb. 16th 1942

The Nip Military Police were in control and although there was a bit of sniping things were fairly quiet.

Feb. 18th 1942

We marched out to Changi. The Chinese were very sympathetic and helped us with water.

Feb. 19th 1942 - May 12th 1942

I was at Changi together with 43,000 other POWs. The Indians were

Page 24

at Farrer Park and except for the Gurkhas were released. We spent 2 of 3 days resting and bathing and then strict regulations came into effect. Our rations were, for about 1 week, about 6 biscuits each, and a 16 oz. tin of milk and a 12 oz. tin of Bully between 21 men. Some units had brought lots of tinned food out in lorries and fed well. We handed all our stores into the general stores and had to live on the rations. We were put on to 12 oz. of rice daily, plus 3 oz. of meat, and a little milk and salt. A lot of the rice was bad and in fact we seldom got more than 8 oz daily. I lost 4 stone in 3 months. We realised that the QMS were robbing us and feeding from the reserves of tinned stocks. They got fat - we got thin. There was much feeling against officers who were living very well. A Black

Page 25

Market started and a tin of milk or of jam was sold for \$8, Bully Beef was \$4 and sardines \$3.50. I had only \$12, which was my last pay, and so could not afford anything. The Gordons and Manchesters were breaking out of camp and getting in food from dumps nearby, and selling at enormous profits. Some made at least \$10,000. Stealing became v. prevalent. Like many others who were living on the bare rations, I became v. weak and could only just manage to climb the stairs. I did not move about for more than an hour daily. The dark evenings we spent discussing the "News". Rumours soon started. On the 27th March it was rumoured and confirmed that we had landed in Holland and rapidly taken Hamburg, Stettin and Breslau, and the Russians had taken Warsaw.

On April 10th or thereabouts, a party went to Singapore to work and brought the real news - few of the optimists believed it and bets of \$500 or \$1,000 were made. Some men lost thousands in bets that the war would be over by Sept. 15th 1942. Nassim was one of them.

On April 13th we saw 46 Japanese warships pass S'pore towards the East. 5 battleships and 5 aircraft carriers were included. The biggest concentration I had ever seen. If only we had had such a force in Malaya 6 months before!! We surmised that this was the fleet that had attacked Trincomalie unsuccessfully. News from hidden wireless sets began to be circulated. We had to turn out for Japanese victory parades on several occasions.

The Japanese, to our surprise, did not once search us and in fact we very rarely saw them. There was much indignation when a Sikh Indian Army Officer collaborated with the Japs and beat up one of our soldiers for not saluting. This was the 1st of many beatings I witnessed. Apart from the perpetual hunger we were not too badly off. There was water. We used to read a great deal, play cards and listen to lectures. The Japs did not bother us. There was keen competition to go down to S'pore to work as food could be stolen or bought. The first party to go away was one to Japan consisting of 2,000 technicians (all of them volunteered to go), who ended up, I suppose, in factories. Then 3,000 AA men went to Saigon. Then 1,500 to Tengah and Kranji and then 1,500 to Pasir Panjang oil dumps. Then 1,500 to River Valley Road. Then my turn with 2,000 to River Valley Road on May 12th 1942.

We marched the whole distance of 20 miles in the one day carrying most of our kit. I was surprised to feel quite fit at the end of the trip.

May 12th - Oct. 12th 1942 at River Valley Road in quarters consisting of attap huts intended for bombed out civilians, which were put up by the British just before the war. We soon improved the camp. We did work - building godowns 8.00 am to 5.00 p.m. Our guards were Jap conscripts and they were good. They were very amenable. They had only been 6 months in the army. We had a company (L10) of 200 volunteers (Malayan) and our guards' names were Moriama, Okajacki, Hoja and one we used to call Gumboil. Gumboil was the stooge. He did whatever the other guards or we told him. I had \$2.00 when I arrived in RVR camp. When I left I had \$350. We were paid 10 cents a day. Dick Boyes [Boys]

and myself started trading on a capital of \$4.00 the second day we were in camp. We used to buy bread at 11 loaves for a dollar and sell at 10 cents each. By saving the profits we made additional capital. We bought salt in bulk and sold in 10 cent packets and made bigger profits. When the volunteers arrived at R.V. Road, the regulars were intent on squeezing the money out of them. Within 2 weeks we had got all their business and our hut developed into "Change Alley". We soon had over 20 shops selling such things as:

Ducks eggs at 10 cents
Bread rolls at 10 cents
Local cigarettes, 20s at 18 cents to 25 cents (we forced the price down from 30 cents)
Tinned cheese, milk, bully, sardines, jam, etc. at 55 cents - 65 cents
Java tobacco at \$4.50 a katty

Page 30

Cigarette papers (Rizlers) 7½ cents to 10 cents
Matches 3 cents - 5 cents
Beer 60 cents a pint

also there was a big market in stolen Jap goods brought in by parties from the docks. The guards did not seem to mind stealing as long as they had a share. Boyes and I used to buy all our supplies from Chinese nearby. Maurice Gulliford and I worked together for a while and we used to break out at night and buy in the village. We were caught by an Indian collaborator one night but bluffed our way through. One of our best lines was peanut toffee at 3 bars for 10 cents and peanuts (full of B1) at 10 cents a half pint. Maurice and I met Song Kheng and Omar in the village and they gave us \$25 and some food. The money helped to build up our capital. Then Maurice decided to spend his time reading

Page 31

instead of in the shop and so Boyes and I were alone. We found that the work kept us extraordinarily busy, especially when we had Java Tobacco and peanuts, but it made the time pass very quickly. I spent what free time I had with Joe Potter and Lincoln Page playing cards or talking. We made ourselves comfortable at RVR. Most of us made beds and chairs and tables and we got books from outside and such things as buckets, bowls, kitchen knives, extra electric light fittings (these were prohibited), all of which helped to make us more comfortable. I got my weight back and was 12 stone 10 lbs just before we left. I played 7 a side rugger 10 minutes each way on several occasions. Joe arranged this of course. Cricket was popular on Yasumé Days.

Page 32

The pitch was mud of course, and the bats and stumps home made and the ball a tennis ball but there was considerable fun and interest. We played Test Matches. The Australians, of whom there were about 200, were the camp's biggest racketeers and richest men. Few wanted to go to work because they had so much money. The Nips were very lenient and only when on one occasion only 2 Australians turned out did they complain. All the others said they could not work because they had no boots. (Of course they had really.) Then the Nip officer turned out all the men without boots and made them run around barefoot for about 1/2 an hour chasing them round with his sword - it was

Page 33

very ludicrous. After that there were more men out to work for a few days. Our first real unpleasantness came when they took the Nip guards off and put on Sikhs. These Sikhs belonged to an Indian Army unit that had gone over to the Nips in Borneo and they were very bad. They demanded salutes and bows from everyone and would sometimes pretend not to see the salute and beat up some unfortunate. They were most unpleasant and I hope they have now been rounded up.

After the Sikhs we got even worse guards - Koreans. These Koreans are big men averaging 5 ft 10 ins and about 13 stone. They are very quick to lose their tempers and always ready to hand out a beating. We were sorely tried. After the Nip conscripts these guards

Page 34

were a most unpleasant change. We were almost glad to leave RVR to get away from them. Little did we know that it was a case of frying pan to fire.

At the beginning of October we had finished building the 15 godowns, and were working on the docks with some unpleasant Nips. South African Red Cross arrived and was stored in the camp. On the 10th each of us was issued with :-

1 pair boots

1 " shorts.

1 shirt

1 hat

3 tins bully

3 tins milk

3 tins meat and vegetable ration.

On the 12th we marched to the station. It was comic to see the comically over-loaded men. Some had made little go carts to pull their gear on. Some of the packs burst, and soap and tins went in all

Page 35

directions. Rickshaws were loaded up by some people and their pullers refused any payment. We got to the station and were put 31 in a 10 ton covered goods wagon. This was a crush but the Nips always travelled the same, usually more to a wagon. We had 2 gallons of water in our wagon and it had to last for 36 hours - needless to say we finished it in about 2 hours because of the heat and we were dreadfully thirsty by the time we got to Seremban. I drank the water they were putting in the engine, and so did most of the other 650. The sight that morning at Seremban at 6.00 a.m. was comical, if not very dignified. We were certainly giving the Tamils, Malays and Chinese a new view of the white man (till I next write)

on the back of last page and written in ink

When we got to Padang Besar, on the Malaya Siam border, there were many Thais willing to buy our clothes, watches, fountain pens, etc. Joe Potter sold his Carlisle Grammar school tie for 50 cents! I sold two fountain pens - a Swan for \$1.50 , a Waterman for \$1.75. With the proceeds we bought eggs, pomelos, etc.

On the way up, Joe Potter sat near the door of the goods wagon next to me. I was in constant danger of being pushed through the door by Joe's wriggles when he was nearly asleep. On one occasion a sudden jolt of the train sent Sidney de Cruz's haversack through the open door. As I happened to be pulling it off [?his arms] at the time, I replaced what I could from my spare belongings - toothbrush, towel, soap, etc.

Boyes ate too much and was sick. McNeill did not impress with his long legs and general lack of consideration.

Part 2:

(*Written in pencil*)

Rec 5/2/46

On board "KAROA" Nov. 10th '45 between Fremantle and Albany, Western Australia.

Page 1

Continuation of Journal

650 of us left River Valley Road. on October 12th 1942 for Thailand. We were not told by the Japs where we were going, but there were, of course, many guesses. Some thought, hopefully, that our destination might be the Cameron Highlands - Malaya's best hill station! Major Wilde [Wild], the interpreter at River Valley Road, bid us farewell. This man displayed marked ability in dealing with the Japanese. He was able to maintain a dignified manner in his contact with the Nips and on many occasions his knowledge of their character acquired through several years spent in Japan was extremely useful in preventing "incidents" . Gordon Selfridge, one of the Loyal Regt., which was

Page 2

particularly active in the stealing of Nip stores was on one occasion caught whilst raiding the stores between River Valley Road and Havelock Road camps and Major Wilde saved him from receiving the heavy punishment that we thought inevitable. He was put in the Nip guard house for a week on rice and water but was not beaten. Some of the men were very daring in their raids on these stores. They used to swim across the Singapore River which divided the 2 camps, which was at this point a tidal muddy creek. When the sentries - who were Sikhs - had passed they would dash across the floodlighted track and break into the stores. The return journey was made at low tide and they waded across in thick mud. Gordon Selfridge was caught on the return journey. He had miscalculated the tide and as he was a poor swimmer could not get across the River.

Page 3

The goods which were stored in the godowns were very assorted. Marmite, Capstan Tobacco, writing paper, handkerchiefs were some of them. They were sold to the natives for high prices. Tins of Capstan tobacco were \$3.00 per tin. I used sometimes to buy these goods for re-sale to the Chinese. One of the most daring thefts was of a box of glass-cutting instruments. These were sold for thousands of dollars. The result of all this selling of stolen stores was that a great deal of money was brought into the camp and the men were able to supplement the Japanese rations by buying such things as bread, tinned butter, meat, milk and eggs. Eggs were the most important food item throughout our POW days. Boyes and I on occasion sold as many as 450 a day. Our average would be about 250 a day. We bought at 12 for a dollar and

Page 4

sold at 10 cents each. We guaranteed our eggs and replaced bad ones. Boyes and I used to settle up the accounts daily and draw equal amounts whenever we wanted spending money. Maurice used to keep books of accounts for us, but when he left we just had a record of cash and purchases. When we left for Thailand we split about \$700 between us.

Now we go on to May 1943

* We were at Wampo, which lies on the Minam (?Menam) Kah Wei river about 50 miles North West of Kanchanaburi in Thailand. We had arrived on Oct. 27th '42 and the 1,700 in camp had completed the track of railway for 7 kilometres North and South, including 2 very long stretches around precipitous cliffs 300 feet high in a sheer drop to the river. I had worked on both track and bridges and kept well except for a slight attack of malaria in April. The Nips provided quinine and

Page 5

and I very soon recovered. We had a difficult march up to Tarso from Ban Phong, a distance of 86 kilometres, which took us 5 days. We carried most of our kit, what we left behind was largely stolen and looted by the POWs that came afterwards - in particular the Argylls, the 9th Coast Regt. and some Australians. This stealing of our kit placed men in a very difficult position and it is impossible to forego the contention that the lack of their blankets and those few tins of Red Cross food we brought from Singapore contributed largely to the heavy death rate in Thailand. The thieves stole the clothes, mosquito nets, etc., and sold them for high prices to the Thais. Prices at first were about \$10 or rather 10 ticals for a pair of trousers, about 20 ticals for a blanket. As large quantities

Page 6

of clothes were offered for sale the prices of course dropped. The most fortunate of the POWs to go to Thailand were the Australians. The Nips had told them that as Australia was taken they would soon be sent back to their homes and it was not till April '43 that they were brought to Thailand, although 4,000 had gone in May '42 to Burma. Whilst in Singapore they had the full benefit of the Red Cross supplies from South Africa including, of course, our share, which was not sent to Thailand. When they arrived in April '43 they were very fit, and found the British in poor condition as they had already been in the jungle for 6 months. Our first 6 months at Wampo from Oct. 27th till April '43 were spent in good weather. After the wet monsoon ended in early Nov., the weather became dry and for six months there was barely a wet day.

Page 7

The nights were cold and the mornings clear and invigorating. In better times with good food and plenty of clothing and adequate medical supplies the place would have been positively a health resort. The camp was on the banks of the river and we soon cleared the site of trees and small bushes and erected attap and bamboo huts. Attap is a thatch of palm leaves, which was brought up the river in barges. We slept on platforms of crushed bamboo. Mosquitoes were not common and we slept well. For the first 3 weeks we had very poor food. There was a small supply of poor quality rice, a little salt and a few snake gourds (a type of vegetable marrow). Breakfast was 1 pint of boiled rice pap and plain tea (1 pint). Dinner was 1 pint boiled rice and marrow stew with salt about 1/2 a pint very thin with 3 or 4 small cubes of marrow and plain tea. Supper was the same as

dinner. We formed a Kongsí - Tony Mills, Joe Potter, Lincoln Page and myself. Dick Boyes went in with MacNeill (both dead now - Dick at Chungkai dysentery, MacNeill drowned on the way to Japan). I was glad to join Tony and the others. Dick Boyes was not quite so much a friend as an ally, I had many more tastes in common with the others. We agreed to pool our resources. We all carried up from Ban Phong some tinned stuff and drugs. I bought quinine from D. Graham who had kept it from before the war. This used up all my ticals. The quinine was to be used in emergency, luckily the emergency never came. I also had brought aspirin, iodine, bandages, M and B 693, zinc oxide ointment, zambuk, cottonwool and potassium permanganate. Tony was the fortunate possessor of several 4 oz jars of Marmite bought

in River Valley Road. We used to have a small amount with our rice at dinner and supper in the early days at Wampo. I had 2 small tins stolen at Kanchanaburi on the way up to Wampo. Joe Potter had a 2lb tin of dripping and when 'Jumbo' our large kongsí Kit Bag arrived from Ban Phong we were lucky enough to get 19 assorted tins of food. Some had been stolen on the way up, by the bag being cut open at the bottom, but we were luckier than most in that we did get something. Many lost their all and most lost all their food. It was probably the small extras that kept us going in these bad early days. We were very bitter about the stealing that went on - particularly by the 9th Coast Regt. RA who were billeted with us. These men were the scum of the army, posted to Singapore

for bad behaviour in England - 35 of them were in gaol when Malaya was attacked. Some for car thefts, some for drunken brawling and 6 of them for robbing the R.C. church, and 2 for even worse crimes. They regarded the Volunteers as fair game and it was due to their depredations that we lost so much kit, which they sold to the Thais, spending the money on tobacco chiefly. I lost in one night my hat, spoon, mug, knife and a pair of boots. At other times I had stolen another pair of boots (which I recovered and, in doing so, discovered the thief a Gordon Highlander), tooth brush, 2 pencils, comb, scissors (which I had had since St. Erbyns), nail file, a new tube of toothpaste, soap and about ¼lb of tobacco. All these things were practically irreplaceable and the handicap was enormous. I ate with bamboo for a year before I was able to buy a spoon. I drank for 3 years out of

a dripping tin and when this wore out from a milk tin. I bought a bamboo Thai hat; John Craig gave me a toothbrush. As for soap and toothpaste - well I just did without. This stealing from comrades was probably the most distressing thing that ever occurred in our camps, not excepting the behaviour of the Nips. Men's blankets were stolen and, as a result, when they had malaria they suffered badly. Rice sacks were sometimes obtainable as a substitute. My covering, which was a car rug, wore out in Sept. '44 and after that I used sacks. Father Bourke, the R.C. chaplain, was most outspoken in his condemnation of this stealing, going so far as to rate the thieves as murderers. So they were.

Our kongsí always maintained a careful guard on its possessions. There was always

someone about to look after our gear. We of course slept in a row on the opposite side of the hut from the 9th Coast. Exactly opposite us we had Davey, Macomski, O'Connor and one other Irishman. All these men were involved in the R.C. church robbery. Davey subsequently became an informer and told the Nips about the secret wireless set and news service. I hope they are going to be dealt with by justice. It was not a pleasant experience to lie there on the dark nights listening to their conversation. Lincoln and I used to sit by the river after roll-call (Tenko) and admire the sunset over the mountains. The view was beautiful. There were 7 ranges of mountains between us and the sea of the Indian Ocean. We could see 2 or 3 ranges dark green and blue - thickly jungled. The River running between swiftly and clear. Behind us the parade ground, shortly before a mass of jungle, now a smooth bare earth

expanse. On our right the hut of the Koreans and on our left the Nip engineers. Behind, in a row, the huts of the POWs. The Korean and Nip huts lighted by coconut oil and kerosene lamps, and the POW huts mostly dark, but an occasional coconut oil lamp using blacklegged oil.

As we sat there we used to speculate on our chances if we tried to get across the mountains to the sea. We did know that there was a track leading towards Tavoy in Burma about 70 miles away. But as we were weak without proper clothes or boots we always came to the conclusion that escape was impracticable. Those that did try it later on, from further up the river, either died in the jungle or were caught and shot. An exception was Pierson's brother, an officer, who, with some others, was away for a week. They were not missed and when they found the

difficulties insuperable they returned to camp and carried on as before. The Nips knew nothing about it.

Our Kongsis used to spend Yasumé days in the jungle alongside the camp, where we would fry our rice and open a tin of corned beef. Our biggest feeds were on Christmas Day and on my birthday. On that day we finished all our tinned stuff. By then we were able to buy eggs in fair quantities and with a supplement of 2 or 3 eggs a day plus jungle "spinach" which grew around the camps we were doing better. Our tickets home were definitely in the bottom of our mess tins and we organised things to the best possible advantage.

Lincoln had a very bad bout of fever for 2 weeks and became very thin. I gave him aspirin and he went to hospital but he never did any

work and was evacuated to Chungkai when we went up further to do the rush work. I next saw him at Tamuan in Jan. '45. Joe Potter got dysentery very very badly and nearly died, but pulled through with some M and B 693 that Pavillard had got hold of. He was evacuated in April and I next saw

him in Nakom Patom in June '44. Tony stayed very fit and so did I. On the whole the 1,700 at Wampo kept good health because

1. Pavillard the Volunteer doctor in charge was very energetic
2. We bought drugs from the Thais secretly
3. Hattori the Nip Lieutenant in charge was not harsh and co-operated well
4. Lt/Col Lilley [Lilly] of the Sherwood Foresters was a 1st class man and succeeded in getting co-operation from the Nips.

Page 16

5. The weather was good
6. Lastly, and the chief reason, was that the railway work was up to schedule and there was no driving.

We worked from 8.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. after an initial spell for 8.00 a.m. till 7.00 p.m. Lilley had this changed.

We had about 15 deaths at Wampo during that 6 months. They included the following volunteers:-

C.S.M. Crabb	diphtheria and dysentery
Geoffrey Brown	appendicitis
John Welsh	appendicitis
MacLeod	dysentery
Pickard	appendicitis
Banner	dysentery
Laurie Woods	dysentery
Bob Wakeford	beriberi

Our first sick were evacuated by barge on 7/4/43

On 23/12/42 I sent my 2nd PC home. The first had been from River Valley Road in June.

Page 17

On 30/4/43 the railway was through Wampo to Tarso.

13/5/43 I received my first home mail, a letter from mother dated 21/7/42. I was then in North Wampo working on the big bridge. Great excitement when we went back to camp that day. I became quite an accomplished rock climber, we went through (?) rocks down the cliff to the river, a height of 300 feet. I did not suffer from vertigo, to my surprise. It was often a temptation to push the Nips over the edge although no one did. One Nip, to 2 or 3 of our chaps, was killed on this job. Sometimes the heat on the rock face was terrific - we could only work for 4 hours at a stretch. The view from the top was wonderful.

15/5/43 After all-night ration [?] fatigue left Wampo by train for Tarso. Lincoln and Joe Potter were left behind, besides lots of others, about 400, so only about 490 of B and D and F Battalions went up together. We were fairly fit. The train journey was not at all bad - going over the Bridge was

an anxious time. The Koreans in charge were a bad crowd. Incidentally the Koreans and Nips hated each other and we had a mass fight at Wampo on one occasion.

17/5/43 We marched from Tarso to S. Tonchan. Here it was that our troubles really started. The wet weather came and we were quartered 20 to a small tent 14 feet by 8 feet and the mud was ankle deep everywhere. The flies and refuse were terrible and the other POWs who were there before us were a hopeless crowd with no decent organisation. The latrines were open and dysentery was rife. I believe I first got it here.

28/5/43 200 of us were marched 3 km to the Bridge Camp. I split from Tony on this occasion so the Kongsu was broken up.

10/6/43 Cholera broke out and Tamils and POWs were dying every day. We lost 105/110 in June and about 500/600 Tamils. They were all buried in big pits anyhow. I was lucky to escape free but the awful horror of catching it was nerve racking.

June and July '43 were my worst months as a POW. It was these 2 months that caused most of the deaths on the railway. Work was terribly hard, the weather was continuously wet and we never had a dry stitch of clothing. The 200 of us built 10 bridges in one month. Most of them were the usual crazy temporary bridges. We did all the heavy work - the Nips used to knock in the dog spikes. We used to carry colossal weights and we were all very weak.

Cheeba, the Korean in charge, was very bad. He forced the sick to work, stole our rations and generally behaved very badly. I have listed him as a war criminal. I had one go of malaria and was lucky to get 3 days off work. This was due to the efforts of an Indian doctor from a neighbouring F Force camp. For several days this doctor came early in the morning to our camp and inspected the sick. He diagnosed malaria in my case and ordered "bed down no work". Cheeba did his utmost to shake the MO but he insisted in face of threats and got his way. On a

subsequent occasion Cheeba knocked this Indian MO down and kicked him and forced the sick out to work. Cheeba used to parade the sick at the same time as the workers and make them do physical jerks, press ups, running around, etc., until sometimes they collapsed. The idea was to intimidate the men into working. Capt. Rae of the SRA(V), my unit, who was in charge of our camp, was not a very suitable person to handle Cheeba. He is a very melancholy-looking, serious individual and Cheeba used to love to irritate him. The best type we could have would have been a bluff, devil-may-care type like Capt. Watts. On several occasions Rae reported Cheeba's behaviour to the "Tiger", the Nip Sergeant Major at South Tonchan. Cheeba did not like this, naturally. He made Rae and Capt Sanderson stand outside his hut at attention for several hours whilst he blathered at them and struck them. Rae and Sanderson came out of it very well. I was the target for several ill-tempered assaults on the bridge work because I never worked as hard as the Nip engineers would like, and deliberately did the wrong things. They realised this ultimately and one

day I was beaten about with a dog spike, without much damage, however, to my head but it ruined my Thai hat. It was at this camp that we first saw signs of people becoming "Jap happy" - that is currying favour with the Japs with the idea of getting more food and better treatment. Some of them took on the job as servants to do the cooking, washing and other personal services. The Nips usually picked out the Eurasians to do this work. Cheeba was particularly keen on having Eurasians as "Tobans" - i.e. servants. He used to call them Indians.

The Tamils in the neighbouring camp were in a shocking state. They had come up by train, as we did, but in April and May '43 - about 6 months later. They were off the Malay Rubber Estates and many of them were the former coolies of estates managed by the volunteers, so we had the somewhat amusing spectacle of the estate manager and his former coolie working side by side on the railway as Japanese coolies. The Tamils were promised by the Nips high wages, good food and light work. As most of the estates were closed down they volunteered for the work in 1,000s,

many bringing their families. They were paid \$3.00 per day (we got 25 cents). They were provided with better food than us. They had new waterproof Jap tents whereas we had only rotten inside tent linings from British tents, BUT, whereas we got treatment from doctors and a certain amount of medical supplies, the Tamils were treated by the Nips, and not very well. When they got cholera or malaria they just lay down and died making no effort to get well. They did not organise proper latrines or swill pits, consequently their camp was incredibly filthy. We used to clean up our rubbish and bury it sometimes in the pitch dark at night. The Tamils just threw rubbish outside their tents and let the flies breed on it and carry disease everywhere. The Nips got very little work indeed out of the Tamils. One POW did as much work as 10 Tamils. Sometimes we would try to work as slowly and carry as little as the Tamils - it was just impossible. A child of 10 could have done more. I do not know whether it was their normal working capacity or not, anyway the Nips never were able to

make them do any more and just could not handle them. If 100 Tamils went out to work you could be sure that 50 of them would disappear into the jungle and sit down and do no work. Those that stayed on the railway track would stand around and chatter for hours meanwhile their "Kalgannies" (?) used to put on a show for the benefit of the Nips - shouting and bawling at them. The Nips rarely hit them - they preferred to make the POWs do the work and they generally just left the Tamils alone. The Nips throughout showed a hopeless lack of organisation. If they had done things properly from the start the railway would have been finished in the dry season with infinitely fewer deaths.

We had some 100 Chinese (Thai born) with us, doing rock drilling. They were big husky fellows and were left quite alone by the Nips. They did not work hard. They knew how to look after themselves. They did not suffer. I think that most of them were gaol-birds, because when they were washing I saw several with the marks of floggings on their backs. We got very few canteen supplies in this camp, because we were

not on the River, and we had to go to S. Tonchan to collect the eggs, gulah malacca, etc. The eggs went up in price because the Tamils were able to pay high prices, earning as they did \$3.00 a day. Before the war, a Tamil's wage was 60 to 80 cents daily. Before the war, eggs were 2 cents. At Tonchan they were 10-15 cents. The day the steam locomotive came over our bridges we had a Yasumé (holiday) the first for a month. Till then we had been working all the hours of daylight. We now went to Central Tonchan and found things in a very bad way. The huts had collapsed and the hospital was filthy. The camp organisation was disgraceful. The officers were running the canteen for their own profit and the sick were neglected. There were many deaths through dysentery, malnutrition and malaria, although cholera had not touched them. The cookhouses were run as a racket and a lot of food went out the back door to friends of the cook. Here it was we first met U Battalion of the Australians. These men looked after themselves better than the British. They had more money, through the rackets in Singapore and through selling the kit we left in Ban Phong and Kanchanaburi.

The C.O. - Capt. Newton - was a hard case, and he got on well with "the Tiger". He used to get drugs for his men by devious ways and not many of them died. A large number of B, D and F Battalion was evacuated to Tarso from Tonchan and the rest of us went North again to do more "Speedo" work at Kanu. At Tonchan my tent companions had included:-

Bill Goode	MCS
Jim Reay	MCS
Charles Woodcock	(Derricks)
Harold Helps	(Fraser & Neave)
John Hinde	(Patison Simons)
Peter Hickey	(John Littles)
Jock Sangster	(Gordon Highlanders)
Lamb	(rubber planter)
Hermes Gould	(Malaya Mail)
Hamilton,	and others whose names I forget.

My particular friend was Charles Woodcock who was evacuated to Tarso with dysentery.

Up till this time I had remained fairly fit except for the one bout of malaria.

The trip up the river to Kanu was exciting. The river had risen about 30 feet due to the monsoon and was tearing down at about 12 knots. The barge we were being towed in broke adrift in the gorge just north of Tonchan - and we thought we were certain to be wrecked, but the Thai boatman leaped ashore and brought up to the bank with the rope and we then landed the barge up by hand from the shore.

It was about 6 hours up to Kanu River Camp, which we found in the usual frightful mess. There were 300/400 very sick men awaiting evacuation. I met Prof. Silcock who told me that Prof. Oppenheim at the top camp was D.I., and probably dead by then - this distressed me greatly as Oppy and I were great friends. Also met Lt. Johnson (McAlisters) of our unit. He had an enormous beard. He was very cheerful, quite the reverse of Silcock who really seemed hopelessly depressed. We were confronted here with a march up an enormous hill to the top camp - Kanu 2. We had to carry our gear and I carried an additional bucket, which belonged to George Firth. Buckets were worth their weight in gold because containers were very very scarce and to get a drink you had to boil your own water. When we got to Kanu 2 we found they had cholera. We cleared the jungle outside the camp and put up our tents. U Battn arrived a few days later. It was not a good camp. The water was very scarce - no river - and there had to be strict cholera precautions. We had a change of cookhouse staff, which was good. We had about 4 deaths from cholera. Sgt Robertson of the FMSVF was one. Peter Bennett of Guthries died of cholera in the main camp. I did not see him and was unaware of his presence there until long afterwards when I met John Craig at Kinsyo.

Page 27

The work was rock drilling and blasting. Some men were much better at this than the others. The first day each pair had to do a hole of 80 cms. Some of the pairs finished early, so next day the task was 1 metre. Still some of them finished early, and the task was progressively increased to 1 metre 20 cm, 1 metre 50 cm, 1 metre 80 cms, 2 metres, and finally 2 metres 50 cm - which was 3 times greater than the original task. The fault for this lay with those idiots who used to work so hard to get away from the job early, not thinking of their weaker fellows or considering that the Nips were sure to increase the task. It was the same old people who did this foolish thing as had when we were building the earth embankments at Wampo, when the task was increased from 4 cubic metres between 6, to 9 cubic metres between 6. The chief offenders amongst these men were the Gordons, Australians and some of the volunteers, Rochester, Glendinning, Hutchinson, Parkinson and Uncle Bill Rundle. These men suffered in health as a result of their over exertion. I never completed the task until all the others had gone, and did not try - preferring to take things easily. I would rather go back to camp fairly fresh at 8.00 o'clock than completely

Page 28

worn out at 5.00 o'clock. I never did more than 1 metre 80 centimetres anyway. There were ways and means of cheating the Nips. Once I had wonderful luck - I found a hollow rock and after going down about 40 cms the drill went straight in up to about 1 metre. For about 1 week on this job I was beaten every day for not working hard enough but I did not care. The Nips were trying to make an example of me but they never really hurt me. On the last occasion the Nip Sergeant put on his gloves and tried to knock me unconscious with several blows on the point of the jaw but he didn't succeed. He did succeed with Willie Wilson, however, and we had to carry him up the cliff, and the next day he was evacuated to Tonchan. What used to hurt me was the degrading part of this work - being beaten around by an Asiatic - the hurt to one's pride was terrible and we used often to swear revenge on particular Nips. If I ever met that Nip Sergeant again, I'm sure I should recognise him. Sometimes it was difficult to control one's temper. If the Nips saw this they used to delight in irritating the person. Occasionally a prisoner would lay a Nip out - it was not difficult - but it was not worthwhile because sometimes the POW would

be beaten to death, and he would usually be beaten with sticks and his limbs broken. The same Nip sergeant hit one man on the head with a pick handle and he went mad. He used to fight any Nip he saw. He eventually died. On some occasions if a Nip was unpopular with his own men a POW could lay him out and get away with it. This did not happen often. On the whole the Nips treated our Battalion harshly but not brutally. They got all the work out of us that they wanted. Their idea of getting a job done was to put masses of men on it. The tools were shoddy and inadequate. The shovels were made out of petrol tins and bent in no time. The rock drills were often as blunt as hammers. The hammers used to break. The pick axes were made of cast iron and the axes were not forged. It is an amazing thing that the railway ever got through. Sometimes there were so many useless tools that the POWs had to dig with their hands. "Hellfire" Corner, the 100-foot deep cutting at Kanu 2, was done chiefly by Australians, and the Nips certainly drove them. They did a lot of night work. We did no night work. This 100-foot deep cutting was probably the biggest job on the whole railway. Millions of tons of rock had to

be blasted away. Blasting went on night and day every 3 or 4 hours.

When the steam train went through Kanu 2 we went back to Tonchan for a rest of a few days. Then to the Bridge Camp for about a fortnight. Everything was better now. The work was light. We only had to put the ballast on the track - working with Tamils. The camp was cleaner and the food brought up by the railway more adequate. Now came a horrible rumour. The railway was held up in Burma and we were to be marched up to more "Speedo". We went to Tonchan Central where we linked up with Lilley again. For a few days our fate was in the balance, then Lilley's protestations to Hattori had the desired effect and we were told that we had earned our rest and another battalion was to be sent. These unfortunates were the men from Saigon who had come up in April '43. A lot more men were evacuated and we then went to Hintock River Camp. This was an interesting camp. There were 450 of us - the balance of 1,700 at Wampo. The camp was full of sick Saigon men when we arrived. They had come

from Saigon where they had lived very well on stuff stolen from the docks and gone straight into the jungle and the Speedo without acclimatisation. The result was disastrous. They were in a bad way. There were also some sick Dutch. They had no news of the war and we were able to give them this - all about the fall of Italy. F Battalion's secret wireless set was operating spasmodically. It was ballasting and clearing up work with the worst bunch of Nip Engineers I ever came across. The work was not difficult but they had got into the habit of driving the men and could not get out of the habit when the need was not there. I well remember carrying some particularly heavy logs one day. I blacked out after that and also on parade that night. Dr Richardson was not very sympathetic and Rae and Clarke our officers had to tell him off. I had a day's rest, although Richardson was not willing to give it to me. He was scared of the Nips. Many of the Medical Officers were. It was in this camp that we really fed well. The rations consisted chiefly of dried vegetables, "cheesy" fish and rice,

but in the jungle there were 100s of cattle that had strayed from herds being driven over to Burma. We used to rustle these and we used to slaughter 3 bullocks a day between 450 men. We all ate too much meat and some developed bad diarrhoea. I had had a bad attack, probably dysentery 2 or 3 weeks before, but did not suffer at the time. "Snuffy" Craig and Major Brodie both went down here.

On 25/8/43 we went to Kinsyo. We found Kinsyo a ruin. All the camps we arrived in seemed to be ruins. There were cholera stricken Tamils and all the very sick from the battalions that went to Burma in one place. The camp was beautifully situated, but due to the monsoon was ankle deep in mud and we were in tents. Our job was to rebuild the camp and build a railway station. 50 of the volunteers went to a sawmill about 6 / 10 kms north. I got a good job - my first staff job. I had a Rolex Oyster waterproof watch I had bought in Singapore. The Koreans were very keen to buy watches, and mine was in particular demand, but I wanted to keep it

as a reserve - to be sold when I was really destitute, and perhaps in an effort to escape. The Korean in charge of the food store knew I had this watch. So he offered another man, Peacock, in the same circumstances, and myself, jobs in the food store. These jobs were much sought after and I did not refuse, not knowing the Korean's hidden purpose. Once installed in the food store he started pestering me to sell my watch. In the end I sold him the watch for \$70 and a pair of boots. I was without boots and in this mud it was uncomfortable, so I really sold the watch to get the boots. I did not need the money. I already had \$40 from Singapore. The market price for watches was \$150 to the Thais. When I left Thailand, one like mine would be worth \$1,000 at least. In Singapore 3 weeks ago they were \$900, or about £120, second hand. So I lost on this deal financially, but in the food store I ate Nip food and all the fruit, biscuits, eggs, meat, etc, I wanted. It was really good food and I flourished. My weight went back to

13 stone, and I was working hard and keeping fit. Unfortunately, I think I overdid the work. We had to unload barges of peanuts, peas, beans, etc. and we built up stacks 14/15 bags high which meant much straining and heaving. This upset my stomach and I gave way to dysentery. I did not want to go sick and lose my job but on Dec. 2nd I decided I would be foolish not to go to the hospital and so that day found me in hospital with amoebic dysentery. My fellows in the store were:-

George Wiseman (FMSVF)
 "Tich" Burchinall (of Manchester)
 Taffy Coleman (Swansea)
 Wally Vincent (Wolverhampton)

These last 3 were of the Saigon party and told us a great deal about the rackets up there. The stealing of silk, food, ammunition, etc. The arrival of Nip conscripts who thought they were in India. The famous Col. Hugonin's pool of pay, which took the pay and never gave it out. The

occasion on which Hugonin put a man in the Nip guard room and was put in with him the next day by the Nips. The kindness of the French and the Annamites. Quite a different situation

Page 35

from that today. The mad Nip Commandant who used to wave his sword around rather wildly. The American airman officer, who used to break camp every night and stay with a French family and listen to the news bulletins. George Wiseman was the son of the Head of Dunlops in Malaya. He works in Bousteads. We did not hit it off too well. He had a short temper and we had several rows with periods of politeness in between. Taffy was a very warm hearted kind chap. Tich was 4'6" and very pugnacious, but a true Mancunian. Wally was a regular soldier of a good type. Immensely strong. I got strong enough in the store to carry a 2-cwt sack of peas 70 yards uphill from the river to the store. But whereas I could do only one trip by myself Vincent could do several. There were also some very strong enormous Dutch in the camp. On the whole, the white Dutch were bigger and fitter than the British. The majority of the Dutch POWs were Eurasians, some so dark that they were indistinguishable from Indonesians. Most spoke English very well. In Java, English is a compulsory language for all but the lowest-grade vernacular schools. I worked for 3 months in the food store at Kinsyo. The camp work was light. They rebuilt the huts, cleaned up the rubbish tips, evacuated the Tamils, herded the cattle, made a library, built a station,

Page 36

made air-raid shelters, and there were regular Yasumé day. Every 10 days. On these days we had football matches, often with the Koreans whom we soundly beat. They were only beginners however. Occasionally the Koreans lost their tempers, but on the whole these football matches were well conducted. On Yasumé evenings we had concerts. The producer was Charles Woodhams, who was a dancing trainer - having trained chorus girls at places like the Folies-Bergère. Naturally we had our own chorus girls - dressed in gowns made from mosquito nets and with wigs made from rope, etc. Some of the settings were very good - made from very unpromising material. The orchestra was largely home-made. Violin, double-bass, guitars, etc, made from teak chests and telephone wire. There was a trumpet in the camp and bagpipes brought up by one of the Gordons, who used to march as a piper in front when we were marching. There was also an accordion which Harris of the 9th Coast carried all the way up from Singapore although he could not play it. Mouth organs were much in evidence. We used to have all the old favourite songs and some new ones composed by our camp musicians. There was also a

Page 37

good deal of dancing. The Thais who occasionally came to the concerts - odd boatmen and kampong dwellers - were completely taken in by the "girls". Our female impersonator "songstress" - Bill James - was not so good. He had a particularly unmusical tenor voice, which jarred the ears in the lower registers! I came across 2 really good female impersonators whose falsetto was convincing - Bdr. Butler at Changi and the Australian Lieutenant Weller (?) at Bangkok. Bill James as "Babeth" had one saving grace - he was so ridiculous that we went into fits of laughter. Bill was from the tin-mines near Ipoh. One of the most popular turns was the "Hawaiian Serenaders" comprising Jimmy Scheerder, Sidney de Cruz and Zuzatti - Malayan Eurasian Volunteers. With their home-made guitars and mellow voices they scored successes with songs such as "Aloha", "Song of the Islands", and "Syncopated Hula". At Wampo on the Japanese Emperor's birthday in

1943 we had a "Co-Prosperity Sphere" concert, by order of the IJA (Imperial Japanese Army). The stage was decorated with the flags of Britain, Japan, China and Thailand. There was a turn by a solitary Chinese - terrible, then the English did some turns - the usual

Page 38

dancing and singing with some jokes and patter. Then the Japs, or rather the Koreans, put on a turn. There was a long, involved piece of buffoonery supposed to take place in a barber's shop, and then a Nip (an Engineer) came out with a mouth organ and played several pieces. He then told the audience, which was POW, of course, that he wanted them to join in the chorus of the next song. This was explained by the interpreter. He then played - "God Save the King"!! Some of us sang, but the majority were too dumbfounded to make any effort. The show was not a success. The Thais put in a rather pathetic effort at the end. We had sports that day and the Koreans took part. A member of the 9th Coast who was "bed-down" sick won the 440 yards! A Korean won the 100 yards and 220 yards and a young Eurasian medical orderly (?Slash Hancock), who was only about 18, won the High Jump, Long Jump and was first home in the 1 mile relay. The swimming was won by another young Eurasian named Neubronner. The Nips and Koreans did not do too well. Most of the POWs refused to take part. We had amongst the

Page 39

Volunteers, Lang, who represented Oxford in the 100 yards and 220 yards about 2 years before the war. He would have knocked spots off the Korean, if he had competed. This Korean was a good chap. We called him "Arthur Askey". Most of the POWs would not take part because the food was not good, and we were not fit enough to waste our energy in sport. The worst Korean was one called "Quara Quenara" pronounced, "Cue-Ana". On one occasion a man was caught by him trying to sell a pair of boots to the Thais. He slapped him up and rubbed chili sauce in his eyes. He did not do these things for nothing, but when he had an excuse he was a beast. As I have mentioned before the Nips and Koreans loathed one other. The Nips regarded the Koreans as an inferior race and the Koreans retaliated when they could. I saw Koreans beat up some inoffensive Nip1-Star privates, who wandered into our camp to buy from the canteen. The Koreans were getting out of hand in the camp. They used to gamble all night and get drunk. Shimosaki who bought my watch told me he lost \$200 one night. He borrowed my pack of cards

Page 40

and because he lost money he tore the cards up, but he did not replace my cards. Hattori had lost all interest and spent his time drinking. He did not ill treat us but he paid very little attention to anything. Then the Tiger arrived on a visit. He decided to smarten up the Koreans. He was to inspect their rifles and give them some practice. They had hardly touched their rifles for months. There were no guards around the camp. They built a guardroom and one day the Koreans brought their rifles to the store to be cleaned. We had 8 of them in all. All but one had the strike shortened so that they were useless. This was probably done in Singapore at the capitulation. There were ants' nests, spiders and all sorts of things in the barrels. We were not supposed to clean these rifles but could hardly refuse. We kept them in the store. Then one night the Tiger had a practice alarm. Quara came rushing up to this store and pleaded with us from outside, Please to let him have his rifle! We slowly woke up and passed it out of the back. They then went charging around in

the dark pretending to be beating off an attack. They were useless soldiers and the Tiger, who was a regular, was disgusted. It would have been the easiest thing in the world for us to have killed all the guards in this camp and get free, but there was nowhere to go, and there were 100s of miles of jungle all around. There were some plans laid in Kanchanaburi to kill the guards and escape. These plans were discovered by the Nips. The stupid officer who put them on paper was severely dealt with. Another stupid officer was L.T. Col. McKellar, who typed out the news we got from F's secret wireless set and left it under his bed, where it was found by the Nips. He never disclosed where it came from, but from that time on the Nips started searching us - till then, August '43, we had only been searched cursorily once or twice in Singapore for stolen property, particularly the glass-cutting tools. They very nearly discovered the wireless set at Kinsyo. We were separated from our kit and they started rummaging. Two officers

walked straight to the hamper the wireless set was in, and walked off with it right under the Nips' noses. At various times I had taken from my kit - 25 yards of telephone wire, 2 pencils, and 1 brass cigarette lighter (broken). I always hid my jack knife and have it today as a souvenir. Sometimes I buried it, sometimes put it inside a hollow bamboo, sometimes in the rice we had as haversack rations. The Nips used to take: -

- Torches
- Tools
- Wire
- Paper and pencils (any writing materials)
- Knives
- Money over \$10
- Uncensored books

and anything that took their fancy, such as my cigarette lighter. At River Valley Road some of the POWs had hand grenades and pistols. Most of these were sold to the Chinese, also one machine gun in parts. At Non Pladuk the Nips found 2 revolvers. The owners claimed they were family heirlooms and got away with it. Just like their own swords.

At Tonchan they found a wireless set, the owner said it was being used for instructional purposes - luckily they did not find the batteries. Again they got away with it. Jerry Hawley of our unit was caught, with 2 others, with a wireless set complete with batteries at Kanchanaburi. They were beaten and questioned, Jerry died of his beating and one of the others went mad.

At Kinsyo our bombers used to go overhead at night on their way to Bangkok, and sometimes on fine moonlight nights we could see them. There were no Nip planes.

2/12/43 I went to hospital with amoebic dysentery. 2 days later Pavillard started me on a course of emetine injections - 7 in all. This saved my life. It was the last course-but-one from a supply

bought by the Thai agent Pong. Pong was a member of the British Secret Service and he used to bring up our canteen supplies. The emetine was supplied, to be paid for after the war. Pong was in close contact with Percy Pearson of the FMS Volunteers, who was in Bangkok with Borneo Coy. before the war. Pearson spoke Thai. We got our

Page 44

batteries, drugs and some news from Pong. Pong also brought up money for some of the volunteers who had connections in Bangkok. Pong was very helpful and took many risks on our behalf. I don't think the Nips ever suspected him. He used to give them treats on his barge.

In hospital with me were Snuffy Craig and Major Brodie with dysentery. We were about the only ones. The others (200 odd) were suffering from malaria, ulcers, scabies and malnutrition, beriberi, etc. Snuffy Craig was the most extraordinary case of dysentery I ever came across. He neglected to go sick until he was very ill, and was at death's door when they started him on emetine. He had 30 injections of emetine, 10 of morphine, about 3 blood transfusions and all sorts of other medicines, which were scarce. He was nearly moribund for about 14 days, but, when he started on the road to health, he made a very quick recovery. If he had been sick at Tarso he would have died without a shadow of a doubt. Major Brodie was almost as bad. It was at Kinsyo Hospital I

Page 45

started recurrent B.T. malaria. Between Dec. '43 and June '44 I had about 20 attacks, one every 10 days or so. At Kinsyo I was very well looked after. I had a tin of milk every day for about 4 days. Liver occasionally, and about 4 eggs daily. I was well on the road to recovery when the order came to evacuate the hospital to Tarso. This was the worst thing that happened to me. I left a hospital where I was one of 2 or 3 dysentery patients, with plenty of attention and good food, and went to a base hospital where everything was bad. There were about 4,000 patients, 2,000 very sick including about 500 serious dysentery cases. I arrived at Tarso on 13/1/44. Prof. Tom Silcock met me and I was put in the worst dysentery ward. Here 10 or 12 were dying daily. I was on a platform on the opposite side of the hut from the dying men. The first night was hideous with the smell, filth and feeble cries of the dying. The orderlies were callous. I spent the night awake and helped attend the dying opposite. The hut was swarming with bed bugs and all those who

Page 46

could walk used to sleep on the ground outside. There was one M.O. for 250/300 men and he used to leave the dying men alone. There were no drugs to speak of, and if a man was seriously ill he would pass them by. I have never had my faith in humanity shaken as at this camp. This M.O. was in the habit of seeing the bad ward every day and the other not so serious ward every other day. The convalescent ward he saw once a week. His round in the morning took about 2 hours and he had the afternoon to himself unless he was seeing the other wards. The chief treatment was by means of diet. The food was graded, so that the most serious cases got the best, and the convalescent what was left. Eggs, purchased by the officers' contributions and a levy on the workers' pay and from canteen profits, were the chief addition to the diet. There were A, B, C, D, E and F diets. A diet was fluid: tea, and 2 pints of beef tea daily. B was fluid, plus 2 eggs and rice. C diet was D diet plus 1 egg. D diet was the normal hospital diet. Breakfast: 1 pint of rice. Dinner: 1 pint of rice and $\frac{1}{4}$ pint of vegetable stew, usually containing soya beans.

Supper: 1 pint of rice and $\frac{1}{4}$ pint of vegetable stew, as at dinner, and a little meat, and also a baked rice cake, usually containing sweet potato or pumpkin. The food was terribly short and the soya beans, although they were nutritious, did not agree with my disordered system, so I had a relapse of dysentery. I lost weight gradually. My motions were of the order of 20 times daily. This was nothing; some patients went 150 times daily. I was moved to the less seriously sick ward and was very glad to be in a cleaner, wholesome atmosphere. I started to read a great deal in between whiles. The Library was the one bright feature of this camp. The weather became dry and hotter by day. I slept outside every night and it was beautiful there under the clear starlit sky. Each morning, as dawn broke, I watched it and thought of the opening lines of Fitzgerald's poem:

Awake! for morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the stone that puts the Stars to flight:
And lo! The Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultan's turret in a Noose of Light.

I used to sleep near the latrine to save my strength. Bertie [Barry] Wright, who died in the Tamajan bombing,

slept alongside me and we used to talk of this and that until 2 or 3 in the morning very often. The Nips very, very rarely came into the hospital area and never bothered us. There were lots of "bludgers", men pretending to be sick so that they should not be made to work or go up to Burma. Some would purposely keep their ulcers open. Quinine was fairly plentiful. Lots of men would pretend fever and then sell quinine to the Thais at \$1.00 a tablet. There were several scandals in which orderlies were involved - selling drugs and stealing rings, watches, cash and other kit from dead or dying men. These criminals were bestial. Some were detected but the majority escaped detection. The men that sold the drugs deserved shooting because it amounted to murder of their comrades, and when the quinine ran out later that year some of them died for lack of the drug they themselves had sold. These men would do almost anything. It was literally human nature at its lowest. I lost 4 stone and it became a struggle to live. Tony Mills

helped me by carrying me some washing water. The climb down to and up from the river was something I did not attempt for 3 months. I used to bathe once a day in about 3 pints of water. Bertie [Barry] Wright went swimming every day and would collect bits of cabbage, onions and other refuse thrown out by the Japanese cookhouse into the river. I would pick some jungle spinach - usually from near the mortuary, and then cook the lot in Gahan's pot. We had an extra pint of vegetable stew this way about 4 or 5 times a week. I firmly believe it was this that kept me alive rather than the cookhouse food. The cookhouse staff would give their friends extra food from our rations, and the amount that came out of the back door about equalled what came out of the front. Anyone who got "lagis" (extra) was very fortunate. Share and share alike became a thing of the past and it was fight or die, and many a man who was too weak to fend for himself, or who had no

friends, died. I have few good things to say about Tarso camp in those days. Tony Mills, Father Bourke, Johnny Johnston all

Page 50

showed themselves to be good men. Padre Thorpe was not bad - a good mixer, rather inclined to be too hearty. The other C. of E. padre was despicable. Capt. Walker the SSVF welfare officer never came near the hospital, except for the funeral of one of his men, but lived like a lord in the officers' quarters. Captain Madge of the FMSVF looked after his men very well and he did me a wonderful kindness. When I was at my lowest he gave me, out of the Volunteer officers' fund, 12 eggs which did a great deal to pull me through. The trouble usually was that their gifts arrived too late. A man had to be practically moribund before he was given the extras to save him. Gunner Smith of the 125 Field Regt., who was a friend of mine and who shared our stews, and eventually died at Nakom Patom, is a case in point. He was critically ill with TB but only when his case was past hope did the MO order him to be put on an extra egg a day - that is C diet. I was put on C diet after a period of about 5 weeks, during which I lost 4 stone. We were weighed each week and if a patient gained

Page 51

weight he was almost certain to be taken off C diet. I never did gain weight until we left for Nakom Patom, which blessed day was April 13th 1944. I must add a few more observations about Tarso. My particular friends were:

Bertie [Barry] Wright (of Anglo Thai Corp.), a volunteer from Penang who told me that John Dickinson had offered him the manager's job in Rangoon before the war. I was very distressed to hear of his death when the POW train at Tamajan was bombed by American Liberators on 8/12/44. Tommy Thompson looked after him and told me that Bertie was splendid. One leg was off and his stomach was torn out but, although he was conscious for about 6 hours, he did not complain but joked about his leg and continually drank water.

John Godber, also a volunteer in the FMS Armoured Cars. A big, athletic fellow with a keen intelligence. He and I spent 6 or 7 months together at Nakom Patom, where I learned to like and admire him. We had some fine discussions. At Nakom Patom we worked for a while together as tin-smiths.

Gahan. I never knew his Christian name and I don't think any one

Page 52

ever learned it. A true Irishman. Born in India about 37 years ago. He was a great wanderer. His father was in the Indian State Railways. He had lived in Calcutta with his parents during the period, I believe, 1924/27. He had been to 16 boarding schools in his time usually running away after a few weeks. He went to Capetown University and had worked in various parts of the world. He had lived in France for some time and spoke an odd collection of languages. He was a rubber planter for about 6/7 years before the war and I can imagine that he and his manager had some rows.

The last 2 and myself were together at Nakom Patom and many an argument we had - it was our most agreeable pastime, any subject would do.

Reg Cully of the AIF, Sydney. A Corporal in the AIF. An athletic, cultured man. Interested in music and literature, and a great talker. He and I were in neighbouring beds in Tarso and he sometimes joined in our discussions.

Jack Cox of the 118 Field Rgt. RA. From Liverpool - worked in the London and Scottish Assurance. A very young chap of 20 or so. Again a great

Page 53

talker. A bit too much of a talker, however, and rather self-opinionated. A small, well-knit man with a great interest in body culture and weight lifting and so forth. He showed his photographs of himself before the war. He must have lost 6 or 7 stone.

There were a lot of others I grew to like in Tarso during those 3 months and I was not too unhappy although the conditions were so terrible. We kept our spirits high in spite of difficulties.

Now to go to Nakom Patom.

13/4/44 We went by train. The journey was good. We travelled behind coaches containing Jap sick. They were in a bad way. They accepted tobacco from our men.

N Paton was reported to be a sick-POW heaven, with huts of wood with concrete floors, water laid on, electric light, no Nip guards but Thai administration, good food, no work, etc, etc. It lay 50 miles west of Bangkok. Work parties had constructed about 15 huts to take 200 patients. Each patient got 1 metre of space, as against the usual 18 inches.

Page 54

The walls and floor were of wood. The roofs of attap. Water came from boxes and was for a time very short. Washing was impossible until the Monsoon came. Food was definitely good with fresh vegetables, pork and coconut oil. In a short time most of the sick were on the way to recovery. Other sick arrived from Burma and other parts of Thailand. The Burma sick were in about the same condition as ourselves - the other Thai sick were not so bad. The camp was administered by Lt. Col. Sainter(?) ("Joo-Itchi"), he was a Hebrew and not at all popular, particularly amongst the Aussies. The Aussies used to play pranks on him. He maintained a corps of MPs who were loathed. The medical staff was headed by Lt-Col Coates of the AIF, previously senior surgeon in Melbourne Hospital. He was an exceptionally fine surgeon, although his manner was very abrupt and he had a short way with fools. Another Aussie, Lt.-Col. Dunlop, was a surgeon there. He was a more painstaking type than Coates and the two did not "hit it off". Dunlop

Page 55

disliked Coates personally but admired his skills. Lt.-Col. MacFarlane, RAMC, a regular Army British doctor was i/c of the dysentery section. He was hopeless, as nearly all the regular army men were. Capt. Street of the Beds and Herts was i/c of our dysentery ward. With much less work than at Tarso we improved. Roy Moulton of the FMSVF and Gunner Smith died shortly after our arrival. I rapidly improved, although the dysentery continued. I sold my cigarette case for \$18 and

changed the last \$40 Japanese money into ticals. I did this through the Japanese, and got 1 tical for each dollar, although the true value of a Japanese Straits dollar was only about 10 setangs(?) or 1/10 tical. I shared this money with Joe Potter and we had a couple of good months' food, because the canteen was excellent. There were fried eggs, sambals, fritters, fried fish, bananas, peanuts, peanut toffee, kachang ijau (a type of pea), soya beans etc. We spent about 30 cents a day each and as the ordinary ration was quite good we both improved. Joe's trouble was that he ate unsuitable

Page 56

food. We avoided peanuts, peas, beans for a while to give our intestines a chance to heal. But later on we used to buy ½ pint of cooked peas a day for 10 cents, which was very cheap. Some Red Cross blankets arrived but, although I was using sacks, I did not get one. Many blankets were being sold to the Thais by people breaking out at night. The whole thing was organized to the last detail. They used to buy the clothes and blankets in camp (often they were stolen from other POWs) and sell at enormous profits outside. I made an exchange of a shirt. I gave my volunteer shirt, which was in good condition, for a Jap shirt and \$5.00. The money helped a bit. I heard that blankets were fetching \$100.00 and shirts about \$40.00. I had my boots stolen (the ones I got for my watch in Sept. '43). I reported it to the camp police, who of course said they could do nothing, and anyway they had probably been sold outside by then. Then I searched every hut in camp, and by that time there were some 40, each with about 200 POWs. Eventually I found my

Page 57

boots in the camp police hut. I had always suspected Winchester of the Gordons of being the thief. When I noticed that the boots were under the bed of another Gordon I felt surer. Winchester was arrested and put on charge. I was, of course, a witness. He had sold the boots for \$3.00 to this other man. The punishment was 10 days' work without pay. As at that time we got 20 cents a day he made \$1.00 on the deal! - for, of course, he had already spent the \$3.00 on tobacco. This was not exactly a deterrent sentence.

When all the dysentery patients were grouped together I moved in with Joe Potter, John Godber and Gahan. Joe and I used to play bridge every other evening with Johnny Gregg and Stanley Craig. We fixed up an oil lamp with coconut oil from the canteen at 60 cents a ¼ pint and wick made from bandage, and I made a reflector using tin foil from a tea chest. The light was one of the best in the hut. There were, I suppose, about 4 of these oil lamps in a hut of 200 - this was the brightest illumination we

Page 58

had had in all the time in Thailand. The electric light fittings were in this camp, but not the electricity. We understood that the cost of the camp, \$1,000,000, had been borne by the Red Cross. Some of the Japs must have made a good thing out of it. I received 5 injections of emetine when the American Red Cross drugs arrived in August '44. I was not exactly on my last legs, but had started to go down the hill again due to a relapse brought on by working in a drain being dug across the camp. Work started later on a huge dyke and ditch which went all around the camp - I worked for 3 or 4 days and then had a relapse of malaria. One day on this job we had a big daylight air raid on the railway bridge. There were 30 Liberators and it was the biggest raid we saw at N.P. They

dropped six salvoes and did a good job, as we saw when later we moved from Tamuan to Bangkok. The Nips were terrified but we stood there and laughed at them, which did not appeal to them.

Page 59

An order was issued that POWs were not to laugh at the Nips when they ran to the air raid trenches. We had no slit trenches for ourselves till then but after the raid we dug trenches around each hut. At the full moon we had night raids and the planes would get their bearings from the pagoda or Wat in the town. This Wat was 400 feet high and an outstanding landmark in that flat paddy-growing plain. The outline of this Wat, which was tiled in golden tiles, was very striking, particularly with the sun setting behind it. This shape was something like this:-

(Sketch) all this part covered in golden-coloured tiles.

The planes at night bombed the railway at the port of Pak Nam - usually about 12 or 15 miles away. There were no raids whilst I was there on the aerodrome 1 mile outside the camp. On this

Page 60

'drome there were several old Thai biplanes which took off in the daylight air raids. They never attempted an attack however - they were more sensible. On one occasion 2 Nip Zero fighters used the drome. The most 'planes we saw was 54 coming back from a raid on Bangkok 50 miles away to the East.

The Nips allowed us concerts after we had been in NP about 2 months. Before that we were not allowed any lectures, to whistle or sing. Of course, we had them and we also had plenty of quizzes, in which I often took part. Hugh Llewellyn of the APC was our word master for a while. There was a great change for the better in him. Before the war he was one of S'pore's most unpopular young men, putting on airs and making himself objectionable. He had lost all of this and behaved splendidly - working most disinterestedly for camp welfare. He used to run the quizzes. Before the war he had adopted a pseudo-intellectual pose - he had dropped this, and he had worked hard - physically - in the improvement of the camp.

Page 61

N.P. was a very clean camp. We had several plagues of flies and every man made a fly whisk and killed at least 20 a day. There were prizes of extra "douters", rice cakes about the size of a currant bun, for those catching most. Some turned in 700 or so flies daily. They would sit all day long on the cook house killing flies. The bed bug position was kept in control. At first the wooden plank floors harboured millions of them and sleep at night was impossible. But we took all the nails out (which we used for repairing our wooden slippers - trompers), and then took up the planks, killed the bugs by squeezing them, and then put the planks in the sun and that killed the small ones. Then we ran the planks through fires to kill the eggs. After doing this every few days for a month or so, we got the bugs under control and could sleep at night. I made myself a wooden bed and used a tarpaulin I had had from Singapore days as the part to lie on and it was as

comfortable as a camp bed. I had good nights and that helped my strength back. Altogether Nakom Patom was the most comfortable POW camp I was in. The majority of the sick patients recovered fairly quickly, and it was largely due to the good, clean water we got from the bores, and the fresh and more abundant food and then, of course, like a miracle, the arrival of the American Red Cross drugs. In this shipment there were large supplies of sulphonamide, which was involved in the treatment of tropical ulcers, pneumonia, pleurisy, etc. I had bought 5 tablets in 1942 in Singapore and they had controlled my ulcers, in that I was never in danger of an amputation.¹ I gave Harold Helps one tablet; I dressed his bad ulcers and that saved his leg. When the American supplies arrived they were able to treat Coleman (Anglo-Thai) for pleurisy and he had over 200 tablets, which pulled him through. Someone stole 2,000 tablets from the store and, as they were worth about \$2.00 each, there was a big case about it. The thief was not discovered.

I worked with Godber and Gahan as a tin-smith working for the cookhouses and the canteen and camp welfare. My job was making mugs out of milk tins. I used to make the handles and rivet them on with aluminium rivets. After a few days doing this I got quite expert and made about 30 mugs a day. These were bought by the camp welfare out of canteen profits and given to those without mugs. We were paid 4 cents per mug so we made about \$1.00 a day. This order did not last long because there were not many tins. We spent more time repairing broken kerosene tins for the cookhouses. We also got cook's rations on this job - that is double rations so we were never hungry. It was a good job. I did this for about a month and then I took Joe Potter's job in the office of Col. Coates. Joe went into the avitaminosis ward for treatment of oedema and for one month I worked as a clerk at

hospital records, statistics, etc. It was very interesting. I had all the post-mortem reports, classification of diseases, food and diet control sheets, etc., etc. A lot of these reports were not intended to be seen by the Japs - particularly the hospital diary and when the Kempeis - (Jap Gestapo) came to search the camp - we buried all the vital records in an air proof tin, in the grave of a deceased patient. I have no doubt that these records have been recovered since and, if I know anything about Coates, they will form the basis of a comprehensive report.

During several of the searches I was worried about my knife - but it was never discovered. There was no wireless set at Nakom Patom; we used to rely on the contacts made outside by the racketeers. There was an Eurasian Penang Volunteer who looked Chinese, who used to go out at night disguised as a Chinese and meet a Chinese with a car in the village. He then listened to news from Delhi and passed it on to a few of the POWs inside. By this means we heard of the fall of Saipan

¹ Small amounts of the tablets were scraped into the ulcers

and the likely end of the war with Japan. We also heard about the invasion of Normandy and the success of our forces at Caen. There were, of course, conflicting rumours ardently opined by pessimists like Stonehewer (nicknamed Steinhower). Old Stoney used to join John Godber, Gahan and me in our evening discussions, and we never ceased to find amusement in pulling his leg. He was an incorrigible pessimist - saying that the war would last until we had built up the Chinese, who would do all the fighting using British and US armaments. He thought the end of 1946 the earliest possible date for victory. Stoney was a tall skinny man with a very hooked nose, short wiry hair and outstanding ears. He was terribly ugly but extremely likeable because he was so amiable. His chief retort to our leg pulling was, "You'll see!". He thought the Nips were determined to exterminate all the POWs

Page 66

and did not give us one chance in 100 of coming through. All this in a very serious, slightly malicious, manner. I once wrote a letter to myself purporting to come from up-country on the railway in which I mentioned that everyone was dead or dying of malaria, dysentery etc. I showed this to Stoney - he was completely taken in. He professed to believe all the bad news or rumours and he would find dozens of arguments to counter any good news or rumours. The only time he was really obliged to give credence to good news was over the Saipan show. My own attitude was to believe hopefully at any time that the war could be over in 6 months. I started this method of bolstering my spirits in January '44. It was 18 months before the war did end so I had to revise my theory twice.

Page 67

Our talks in the evenings were not devoted to news all of the time. When "Stoney" was with us, we used to hear a lot of theories to explain the news and the possible trend of events, but we usually left the subject after ½ an hour or so and developed the conversation along any suitable lines. As we had had about 3 years of practice in talking for 3 hours each night we were quite expert in developing conversation along original lines. One finds after a few weeks of being penned up without distractions such as wireless, cinema, music and books, that one's mind turns for its occupation upon itself. Philosophy was one of our great subjects. Religion was another. With Joe Potter, who was Rugged mad, we discussed sport; with

Page 68

John Godber we discussed agriculture, rowing, Australians, religion; with Gahan we arrived at an argument about anything. It was difficult to argue with Gahan because he would never concede a point or admit that he was beaten.

Some of the highlights of my nine months at Nakon Phatom

Christmas Day 1944.

Breakfast. Sweet coffee (no milk), one fried egg, rice bread.

Dinner. Battered steaks, Christmas pudding (made from tapioca flour, bananas and ginger), sweet potatoes fried, fried pumpkin, pork pie and onions. Sweet coffee.

Supper. Christmas cake, margarine, banana fritters, sweet coffee.

Altogether the food this day was very good, but too much for most of us. I could not eat all that was provided.

The Japs gave us some Thai

Page 69

whisky which we had in our coffee. There was about a tablespoonful each. During the afternoon there were "races". The big men chose the little men as jockeys. There were about 8 races with different handicaps. There were bookies and sweepstakes. The best backed horses were Lt./Col. Dunlop AAMC and Major ???, the Irish International Rugby forward. Dunlop won, although he split his toe in the water jump.

In the evening there was a big concert "Alfs Ring" ["Alp Ring?"]. The comedians Fizzer Pearson and Griffiths Jones were very good. And so ended Christmas Day, which had been in a way quite enjoyable. Naturally people's thoughts turned homewards and we all hoped to be home by

Page 70

the following Christmas. Joe Potter and I went to the concert together and we found ourselves next to some Dutch. They turned out to be Dutch civilians who had been conscripted during the war. One was a professor of Oriental languages and we enjoyed his conversation whilst waiting for the show to begin. I made several good friends amongst the Dutch, but, as a group, the Dutch were cordially disliked by all the other POWs. They used to ingratiate themselves with the Nips and do menial work for them, and try to obtain advantages in excess of those given to the British, American or Australian POWs. So far as the present trouble in Java is concerned all the POWs are on the side of the Indonesians. We can appreciate that the Dutch colonial policy would be very oppressive and with the object of

Page 71

making the maximum amount of money with the minimum of trouble. "The trouble with the Dutch is that they give too little and take too much." This is a very old maxim and is borne out even in present day experience. The policy of self-abasement to obtain commercial and political advantage has a continuous development, right through the days from when they were the only Europeans permitted to trade in Japan and Siam in the 16th and 17th centuries. In those centuries the Dutch used to crawl on their hands and knees before the Emperor of Japan and the King of Siam to petition for trading rights. Other races such as the British refuse to do such humiliating things merely to obtain commerce. By and large none of us had any respect for the Dutch and there was constant friction. We used to admire

Page 72

them for their command of English and their ability to look after themselves but, man to man, we had no liking or respect for them.

The Dutch were a mixture of wholly European Dutch and Eurasians. The Eurasians predominated, there were about 70% of them to 30% wholly European Dutch. The Eurasians varied from beige in

colour to ebony and in fact I doubt if some of them had any white blood at all. The colour of their skins did not make a great deal of difference to their status as Dutch. Under Dutch law any person with any European Dutch blood became a Dutch subject with all attendant advantages. There was the usual sense of inferiority amongst the Eurasians but I was surprised to find that, on the whole, they were better educated and more cultured than their fellow white Dutch. I think this was due to the high standard of advanced education in Java. Nearly all of their schools taught English as a compulsory subject whereas in Holland

Page 73

English was a language taught after German and French, which were the two compulsory languages.

Other high lights of Nakon Phatom

The Canteen This was the best I came across as a POW. The management of it was largely Volunteer and many of my friends had jobs there. Needless to say they were good jobs and much sought after. The canteen staff used to get all the best food and they were paid in addition. Although things became more difficult to get at the end of 1944, due to the shortage of transport on account of Allied bombing, we were usually able to buy:-

Eggs (fried or boiled)	at 12 ½ cts to 15 cts.
Bananas	at 1 ct each
Peanuts	at 10 cts a ¼ pint
Peanut toffee	at 15 cts a piece 3" x 2 ½"
Fried Fresh Fish	at 15 cts each, the size of herrings.

Page 74

Tapioca flour bread	at 10 cts a piece 1 ½" x 3" x ½"
Chili sambal	at 5 cts a tablespoonful.

These prices were not too high considering what they had to pay in Malaya at the same period - \$10.00 for one egg, and so on. We were paid 25 cts a day by the Japanese so one could buy one egg and one piece of bread each day, that is if one was earning money by working. I did not work much at Nakon Phatom but, by selling my cigarette case for \$18.00, changing \$40 Japanese Malayan currency into \$80.00 Siamese, I usually had enough money to buy 2 eggs a day. One could safely say that everyone in the camp averaged 1 to 2 eggs each day, which made all the difference to their health.

The water Up the river when working on the railway we used to drink river water, which during the rainy season was thick with mud and sand.

Page 75

I am sure the bad water contributed largely to the intestinal complaints of the POWs. At Nakon Phatom all the water came from deep bores - about 250 deep. We put these bores down soon after we arrived and the quality of the water was excellent. The food was consequently much better cooked and the tea quite palatable. About Nov. 1944 we even had bath water from these bores.

Each day every man in camp got 3 gallons of washing water. The result of this was that skin diseases got better. There had been a lot of ringworm, scabies, impetigo, etc., and, with the cleaner water these were brought under control. I had my own bucket, which I bought in July 1943 in Tonchan and had carried about ever since. With this I was able to get two

Page 76

baths a day. I shared with Joe Potter and we could wash such clothes as we had fairly frequently that is about every third day.

The beds. When we first arrived we all slept on the wooden floor. This was far better than sleeping on the ground, or on the bamboo slats as we did up-country, but we went better than this. It was not very long before most of us had scrounged wood and made camp-style beds. I made a most comfortable one out of tarpaulin I had brought up from Singapore. I used to pull it down every day and de-bug it so that my nights were quite comfortable. Later on we lost our beds in a manner which made John Godber and me very annoyed. Capt. Bennett of our hut announced that the Japs had ordered all beds to be handed in for firewood. We decided to evade this order and we hid our beds. Bennett discovered

Page 77

them and forced us to hand them in. It was the next day that I discovered that Bennett and most of the other officers had retained their beds. It was this sort of thing that sickened us. The officers were always claiming special advantages. They were still being paid their usual money, less deductions for accommodation, and they usually ended up with \$50.00 per month each, that is against \$7.50 the working men got. Consequently, they were able to eat much better than the men and, of course, they did no work. They grabbed all the best books from the library, to which everyone contributed, and they spent the whole day reading, playing chess and cards. With very few exceptions the officers were very selfish. Major Henley of the SRA(V) was unselfish and gave all the SRA(V) men in

Page 78

camp - there were 10 of us - \$4.00 each from his own pocket. Sometimes an officer who was outstandingly selfish and useless would get his deserts - as in the case of Capt. Walker of the FMSVF (Bousteads), who was the messing officer. He was discharged from the job, which placed him in charge of the cookhouses. Lt./Col. Sainter IASC the Camp Commandant was a bad case. This man, who had all the food and clothing he could require helped himself over-generously to the American Red Cross supplies that arrived in June 1944. It was said that he was smoking Chesterfield cigarettes for months after. We got a ration of about 25 cigarettes each from the Red Cross shipment. It is certain that he took a whole tin of cocoa for himself. All this harping on unequal distribution of food may seem strange today, but at the time it must be remembered that food was the most important thing in our lives, and if there was inequality in distribution it caused the most outspoken comments.

Page 79

About the end of Dec. '44 the Nips decided that, as there were many fit men in camp, these would be sent away to working camps. Every man in camp was paraded before the Nip doctor (who was actually a dental student with 6 months medical training) and he picked out those he thought fit to go away. I was at this time working in the office of Col. Coates and made up the lists of men to go. I was not anxious to go but, when I was put on the list, I had a struggle with my conscience and kept my name on the list. I left N.P. on Jan.13 '45 for Tamuan. We had a good trip by lorry and barge. I arrived to find the food reasonable and met many old friends whom I had not seen for a couple of years. There were Tony Mills, Tom Evans, Maurice Gulliford,

Page 80

Charlie Woodcock, Donald Napier, Lincoln Page, Tony Lock and many others. In some ways I was glad to be at Tamuan to see so many old friends. I did 2 or 3 days' work, and then the officers were all moved out of the camp to go to a special officers' camp. John Craig, Charles Thornton, Tiger Colthart [Coltart], George Keyser, Harry Toms, Johnny Johnston were amongst them, and we all had a party the night before, with sweet coffee and cake provided by the canteen. After this I got a job in the hospital office with Maurice, taking the place of Arthur Saringeon[??], who was an officer. Unfortunately I went off my food and it turned out to be yellow jaundice. I had this for 3 months from Jan. 30th till about April 28th and I was in hospital the whole time. Pavillard gave me 1 pint of sugar and I was on a special fat free diet, and did not

Page 81

do too badly in the grub stakes. I used to peel vegetables in the morning and get extra douvers. Then the jaundice diet included 2 eggs a day and also extra vegetables. Pavillard made rather a pet of me and kept me in for a longer time than most. At the end I was doing the water fatigue - that is drawing the water from the wells for bathing the other patients. We sometimes got a little extra food for doing this. Porky Gardiner, David Morrison, Charles Woodcock, Pat Kennedy and I were all in the same ward. Every evening I used to go over to talk with Tony Mills, Maurice Gulliford and Charlie Woodcock. Lincoln had a job in the hospital office taking blood specimens for malaria diagnosis but he kept out of our discussions for some reason. We called

Page 82

ourselves the "Thinkers". Every evening I would say to Charles, "Coming to Thinkers this evening?" We usually did. Jerry O'Hare used to join us often. Here, our discussions were on a more exalted level than those at N.P. with John Godber and Gahan and Stoney. We had little talks about Art and Literature from Professor Hough, and about Architecture from Lincoln. I never gave any talks because, frankly, the intellectual level of these chaps was a lot higher than mine. Tony was a Double First at Cambridge, Hough and David Rintoul from Kings, the same. Maurice and I, as earnest seekers after knowledge, were on about the same level. Jerry O'Hare was a good deal behind in these discussions - his favourite subject was commerce, which was a subject not popular amongst the rest.

Page 83

Sometimes Jerry, Maurice and I would join forces to pull the legs of the Government wallas - that is Tony Mills, Tony Lock and Hough.

My best friends here would be Tony Mills, Maurice Gulliford and Charles Woodcock. Lincoln and I had drifted apart somehow. I did see him in the afternoons sometimes when he would give me some of the points in the Theory of Music. We both joined the choir and I sang second tenor. I read a great deal at Tamuan - notably "Othello", "Hamlet", Ends and Means, Eyeless in Gaza, Work Wealth and Happiness of Mankind, The Expanding Universe, The History of Science - Its Relation with Religion and Philosophy. I found myself amongst the fans of Aldous Huxley and we all decided that we preferred his philosophy

Page 84

to that of Shaw and Wells. Hough gave us two or three notable lectures - The Interpretation of Dreams, W.B. Yeats and his Poetry, and Modern English Poets. (This reminds me that I must get hold of the recently published book Poets of our Time 1900 - 1942 published in the Everyman series). Hough was a great talker and experienced in the subject but withal he was an intellectual snob. I think he and I clashed more than any of the others. If there is one thing I dislike it is snobbery of any kind. David Rintoul made great efforts to be pleasing but I cannot forgive him for his actions of selfishness in the past - particularly over the Library at Wampo.

George Brice was one of my friends outside the Volunteer circle. He was at Heidelberg University during the Nazi time and gave me an insight into the mentality

Page 85

of the Germans. He spoke with a German accent but he was not of a Teutonic point of view. He was a schoolmaster from Worcestershire. I will look him up one day. George and I were in hospital together for a long period and we used to play bridge together. I learned contract bridge when I was in Kinsyo Hospital and at intervals I have kept it up ever since. Piquet is another game I learned but there are very few people who care to play it. I am not fond of solo or cribbage. My chief love in cards is bridge (contract) and I follow Culbertson in this with Blackwoods 4 and 5 Club convention for slam bidding. Ken Warden, the Malayan Bridge Champion, gave me some lessons at Kinsyo. He was very patient and careful but it will take me a long time to get up to his standard. He was playing the game when

Page 86

he was 14 years old together with Cartwright of the Chartered Bank. He beat the Austrian champions in 1940.

It was on New Year's Eve 1945 that the Nips shot a POW (of the Northumberland Fusiliers). I came to Tamuan a few days afterwards and heard the whole story. Apparently he was out of bounds, but he was definitely not attempting to escape. The Nip officer responsible has been charged as a war criminal. I expect Lilley and some of our other officers will have to stay behind in Malaya to get these war criminals charged. I hope I shall not have to do anything to charge Cheeba - it might interfere with my plans somewhat.

This takes my journal up to April 28th 1945. We used to hear news from outside occasionally, and I heard the night before we left all about the break up in Germany.

Our news sources were from outside the camp now as the wireless set was out of action. "Well-dressed" Thais were our principal source. Of course there were many rumours and false news. For instance, the fake news that S'pore had been taken in 48 hours on Feb. 25th 1945. But we sometimes got the genuine stuff.

There were searches made of the huts every week or so. We nearly always had warning because the Nips used to write their orders for the day on a board in their guardroom and one of the chaps who could read Japanese would tell us what was going on. The Nips never suspected that we could read their language. I used to hide my knife in the bank of earth beside the hut or in the hollow bamboo. Once I was very nearly caught but

the only loss I suffered at this point was a broken cigarette lighter.

The canteen at Tamuan was poor and the prices very high. Eggs became 20/25 cents each and bananas 2 cts each. We stole quite a lot of the mangoes, which grew in the camp.

On many occasions there were daylight air raids by four-engined planes on the big Tamakan Steel Railway Bridge. It was finally completely smashed. One morning at dawn, about 12 four-engined planes flew around our camp very low, machine gunning all around the camp, but not one bullet fell in our camp. They must have known POWs were there. It was a thrilling experience. We were all outside cheering except those that had actually been bombed by our 'planes, as at Tamajan on Dec. 8 '44 when Bertie [Barry] Wright was killed.

Part 3:

This part of diary relates to events 28 April 1945 to first news of Japanese surrender down the well at Takuri - morning of 16 Aug. 1945. Then to evacuation to Bangkok/Singapore.

Rec. 29/1/46

Page 1

Continuation of Journal.

We now go on from April 28th 1945

When Dr Pavillard selected us from those in his ward that were not so ill, he told us that this was the best party ever to have left Tamuan. As things turned out he was not far wrong.

I, Charles Woodcock, Tony Mills, Jimmy Brown, Porky Gardiner, the Mitchell Bros., the Miller Bros., John Hinde, Griffiths, Thackeray, Ronny Todd, Capt. Young RAMC, were amongst those who finally ended up in Takuri.

150 British left Tamuan on the 28th April and we had a very exhausting trip by rail to Bangkok, crossing on the way a river in the pitch dark. The bridge across this river had been bombed whilst I was at Nakom Patom and we saw how effectively the job had been done.

We had had nothing to eat for some time and at this river the Nips decided that we should be given something to eat. There was the usual shortage of containers and I was lucky in that I still had my old rubber-tapper's bucket.

Whilst it was raining a fatigue party was sent across the river to get the food. In charge of my party we had Sgt. Gladman of the Beds and Herts; he was extremely nervous of the Nips and, as a result, was left behind in the rush. Poor Gladman rejoiced in the nickname of 'The Elephant Man'. The reason for this was because he used to be a keeper at Whipsnade Zoo.

There was quite a lot of bashing up on this trip. The Koreans were in charge and were taking themselves very seriously. The 'Rocking Horse', one of the Korean sergeants, was in charge of the party. He was quite popular with us because he

Page 2

knocked Yuki on the head with a changkol handle and Yuki eventually died. It was Yuki that, on one occasion, said that he hoped all the prisoners would die, and if he could do anything to hasten them on their way, he would do so. I never saw such malignant hatred concentrated in any face until I met Yuki. He had some justification for hatred because, when Malaya was attacked, Yuki was unfortunate to be caught. He was a civilian, and was kept with some others in a railway goods wagon for three days without food or water. He was not likely to forget this in a hurry.

Well, the 'Rocking Horse', who, incidentally was promoted to sergeant major after the Yuki episode, was taking no chances with us on the way to Bangkok. He kept us confined to the carriages, or rather wagons, most of the time. The guard in our wagon was not too pleasant and gave poor old

Gladman a bad time. There were fewer than the usual number in the wagons, I think it was 25, but the two guards insisted on taking up most of the room. After we crossed the river we had to push the train which we found on the further side up a long slope to the station. Here they attached several coaches full of Thai and Nip passengers and at daybreak we left on the last stage of our trip to Bangkok.

At Bangkok we found that the station had been severely bombed and there were large craters all over the place. We were a poor-looking bunch compared with the well-dressed Thais. They did not seem to bear us any animosity. Here the guards passed over to some Nip guards, who looked a superior type to the Koreans, and we all were congratulating ourselves on saying goodbye to our dear friends, the Koreans. The Koreans were all lined up and there was a formal handing over, during which we were counted about ten times. As we went away we wished the Koreans a fervent farewell. We were then whisked away on to a ferry and soon found ourselves at the godowns where we

Page 3

were to stay for a week. The Nip guards were not so good as we had at first hoped. During the air raids of the preceding month, the water supply of Bangkok had been knocked out, and, as a result, the supply for the godowns had to be carried from ponds about ¼-mile away. The Nips had to provide the escort to and from the ponds and they were unwilling to do any more than the minimum number of trips. As a consequence we were without water on the day we arrived at the godowns for about ten hours, and it was a scorching hot day. The Dutch ran this camp and they seemed to think it was a good place. The reason for this would not be far to seek. The godowns were bombed about a fortnight before we arrived and there were big holes in the roof. It rained several times whilst we were there and, as a result, we were several times soaked with rain. When this happened, the guards were delighted. There was an awful lot of saluting to be done in this camp. They confined us within the godowns all the time we were not working except for a period of half an hour after roll call in the evening.

Every time one passed the guard on the way to get food or to get water one had to salute or, if without a hat, bow. During my stay in this camp we worked on two occasions at night in the godowns. This was a wonderful opportunity to do a bit of stealing. I got away with several blocks of writing paper, some biscuits, and sugar. The sugar was very pleasant to eat after so long without and the biscuits helped to fill up the empty spaces. The paper was, however, the best haul because at that time there was a great shortage of paper for rolling cigarettes and I sold three sheets for ten cents, making about fifteen ticals for my three blocks.

Page 4

There were the usual searches made after the work was over for the night but I was able to keep the paper under cover. Some Dutch were discovered and kept at attention for several hours.

The goods we were moving consisted of shoes, shirts, shorts, biscuits, paper, soap (of which I got two tablets), sugar, peas, beans, dried fish and a few other odds and ends. All this stuff was intended, I believe, for the armies then on retreat from Burma. Whilst we were in this camp we were fed well on meat and plenty of vegetables, but there was always a shortage of water. The latrine had been hit by one of the bombs and there were a lot of flies about which made an outbreak

of dysentery likely. I was glad on the whole to move from the camp. The chief reason was that there was so little liberty.

150 of us went on to Takuri. We went by truck to Lopburi, where there was an aerodrome and for two days we worked on repairing the runway. We were quartered in an old hut that had been machine-gunned and we were badly over-crowded. Then we went by train to Takuri. The long wait of seven hours in the open train without water was rather distressing.

When we arrived at Takuri we were quite overcome by the heat and lack of water. During the wait at Lopburi station the Thais kept throwing us bundles of cigarettes and a little fruit. They certainly showed where their sympathies lay. The Nips tried to stop the Thais from throwing these things to us, but without success. One Thai girl had two eggs which she wanted to give us but the Nip sergeant saw her and grabbed the eggs and threw them on the ground. The girl then picked up a stone and we thought that there was about to be a riot. To our disappointment the Thai girl thought the better of it and dropped the stone. The Nips were under instructions not to let us have contact with the Thais but, at the same time, they were not to get involved in incidents which would give the

Page 5

Thais an opportunity to have a go at them. It was at this station that one of the POWs was given a message by a Thai to the effect that, when the time came, we were to run away from the Nips and join up with the Thai army. At this time we paid no attention to such seemingly irresponsible messages. We were to learn later that there was a good deal more going on than we thought. It was about this time that the first parachutists were dropped into Thailand. We had no idea of this at all but it is more than likely that the Thais at Lopburi knew all about them. Lopburi was the HQs of the Thai army and we were to learn later that, in preparation for the invasion of Thailand, our Secret Service had made contact with the Thai army and they were to come in on our side. Without an indication of this, how were we to know that the message from the Thai was genuine?

We arrived in Takuri in a storm of rain and there was a rice-carrying fatigue for a start. We were most of us glad of the rain because we could quench our thirst. Tony Mills, Charles Woodcock and I moved in together. Our neighbours were Jock Isdale and Andy ?. These two were a couple of dour Scotsmen, and Jock was really rather a bore, who could talk of little except his pub in St. Andrews, where the golf-fiends come from. They were much better neighbours than the roughs out of the 9th Coast Regt. we had as neighbours at Wampo.

The huts that we found at Takuri had been put up by Thais and were very poorly constructed, but we had to put up with them for a while. We cleared a large extent of jungle ready for about six large huts, this under the direction of Tamuan Charlie,

Page 6

the only Nip we had brought from Tamuan. Tamuan Charlie was the works sergeant at Tamuan, and not at all popular amongst the POWs. We felt that, if we could only get rid of him, we should be able to train the other ones to the way we wished. There was one other Nip officer there, a great oaf of a man, who obviously was homesick for his farm in Nippon. Farmer Giles always treated us pretty well and very rarely did anything but stand and watch us work. The work was not hard and

for the first three weeks we fed from the Nip cookhouse. We did not get as good food as the Nips but there was always enough rice. There was an outbreak of a peculiar complaint we called 'Broken Bottles'. We believed it to be due to the shortage of water when we first arrived; certainly it was very painful and I had rather a bad attack. For several days I was passing blood. My own theory was that this complaint was due to the unusually large quantities of fat that we were getting in the Nip pork stew. When we went on to our own rations, then the quantity, and also the quality, fell off. Quinine was very short when we came up because we had been told, in the usual way, that we should get supplies at the other end. We ran out in a week or so and it was lucky for us that there was a decent Nip doctor who gave us a supply out of his own stocks. As it was, quite a lot of chaps developed Blackwater fever and we had five deaths in four months. Capt. Young of the Malay Regt. was the leading light in this camp at the beginning. The Dragon, that is Sgt. Major Osbourne, was completely hopeless. As a regular soldier we never expected very much from him in the way of brains, but he was equally bad at keeping discipline. Although Osbourne was nominally in charge of the camp, it was Young that got things done. As an MO, Young was not supposed to have anything to do with the routine work of the camp.

Tony Mills was early on picked out by Young to look after the Canteen, and, in addition, Tony did the library on his own initiative. Charles and I did

Page 7

the normal work like the others. We learned to do the Tonga Trot whilst carrying stretchers loaded with soil or rocks. (The Tonga Trot is a very slow walk.) I should add that a tonga is a sort of stretcher made out of two bamboos and a sack. The Nips on the aerodrome used to try and make us work hard, but with very little success in our case. Our reply to cries of 'Speedo' would be that he died in 1943. The food became very poor. Each meal consisted of rice, kangkong and a very little pork. It became very monotonous and most of us developed Pellagra.

I had pellagra for three months until the war ended. It got so bad that I could not eat my food until it was cold and I was unable to smoke. Also I got pellagra rash on my legs. The doctors were 'tida apa' about things like this and, in point of fact, they were, on the whole, a lazy lot. They, and the Eurasian medical orderlies, were generally disliked throughout the camp. I will make an exception in the case of Young. Most of these MOs and orderlies had been looking after the poor Tamils in the coolie hospitals around Kanchanaburi. From all accounts they did not do much beyond look after themselves. I heard an authenticated account of how they would inject the Tamils with distilled water and then sell the proper drug that should have been used. These doctors, I dare say, were so used to dealing with coolies that they could not get out of the habit when they came to us. Their manners when the workers came to have their sores dressed after a day on the 'drome were disgraceful. Most of the men developed sweat sores and these became septic. The treatment for sweat sores was very primitive, being merely a dab of pot. permang. and not even a dressing. I was unfortunate enough to get a good crop of sores.

Page 8

It was about three months before my sores cleared up. The marks of them are there today. When we finished work on the 'drome we stopped on the way back to have a bathe. This was the best moment of the day. The water was not exactly clean as it was shared with water-buffaloes, but it was a good deal better than having to wash out of a mess-tin containing perhaps two pints. On

several occasions men were attacked by large leeches; I was on two occasions so attacked. These leeches were very large - about four inches long and, when empty, as thick as a pencil, but, after having had a feed they became distended to ½ inch diameter. They were difficult to disengage and it was only after having had the hint from a Dutchman that I found the best way was to use tobacco. After soaking the tobacco for a few seconds, and then squeezing the juice on the end of the leech, it would reluctantly loosen its grip. The puncture made by the leeches lasted for a long time, the blood oozing from the wound for about three hours. These were buffalo-leeches so no wonder they had a good time with us. Our work on the aerodrome was to get together supplies of stone and laterite to re-surface the landing strips. There were about 30 Nip fighters using this strip, none of them looked much good - they were probably out-of-date Zeros.

A month or so after we arrived all the Nip planes went away. On fine days we sometimes had visits from the RAF. We were quite pleased at this, because we thought that they would see from their reconnaissance photographs that we were POWs in the camp. How mistaken we were we did not know until after the show was over. The strength of the camp was built up to 1,500 men over a period of three months, and the Nips ordered the construction of a dyke all around the camp, as was their usual practice. We finished 200 metres of this before the big push to get the 'drome completed. I never worked on the dyke because I was helping to dig the wells and, as a matter of fact, did the divining for three of them. The first well

Page 9

was not a success and I put my name forward as a water-diviner, knowing that the divining-rod would react in my hands. The Nip officer showed some interest but when he found he could not do the same thing he became rather sceptical. However it was decided to give me a trial and the first well was dug, with myself as one of the nine diggers, in the spot I indicated. We struck a spring at 7 metres. This was better than the result in the first well. We made the wells 11 metres deep. At about 9 metres the sub-soil gave way to rock in isolated pieces and without the proper tools it was impossible to dig much further. We used to break many of the tools. The same old shovels made from kerosene tins and cast-iron picks were provided. It was hard work battering away with the picks into the conglomerate. We worked in shifts - each of six hours. On each shift there were nine men. Three men would be down the well at the same time, two men worked at pulling the dirt up by rope over our home-made pulley, one man worked at swinging the basket of dirt off the pulley on to the side, and the others carried the dirt away in baskets to the heaps around the clear sides of the well. We all worked in our 'fandouchis', Japanese for loincloth. This was a sensible dress for the climate, although I suppose it would shock some. The wells were three metres in diameter at the top. The sides sloped inwards very slightly - that was where the skill came in. We did not use any revetting so there was some danger of a collapse - we never had any trouble, however.

When we got into the water region we had to do constant baling which slowed down the work to half the speed. This job was very popular because it meant that the men engaged on it were free for the

Page 10

morning, or the afternoon, as the case may be. We worked it so that we had the morning off one day, and the afternoon on the next day. The ordinary workers were rather jealous of us. As we worked through till 2 o'clock one day that meant that we ate our dinner from the cookhouse and

consequently got double rations. The next day we would get double rations for supper. All this was a very useful addition to our food. The well party was well known in the camp for feeding well. We dug three wells in all. The third was not completed when the war ended. On the morning of August 16th, our shift was down the well at nine o'clock, and Charles and I were down the well when the others came rushing along to tell us that the war was over. Charles, in his cautious way, said that he would believe that story when the relieving troops arrived. I was prepared to believe it or not - I kept an open mind. We went on with the work for about two hours, but the story became so strong that, in the end, we came out of the well to see if we could learn the truth. I found that the Nips had announced that there would be no work, that there were discussions going on between the commanders of the two armies, we were to remain calm, not be afraid of bombing, the sentries were not going to harm us, we were to carry on with normal camp work, in two or three days they might be able to tell us some news which would be something we had been waiting for. This did not say in so many words that the war was over, and the men began pestering the officers for more definite news. The officers replied that they knew no more than had been announced by the Nips. I, personally, did not believe this. I thought that the officers knew more definitely, and particularly as they went around shaking hands with each other. For three more days there was nothing more, and the men began to lose hope, thinking it was no more than Peace-Feelers, as had been put out before. The work on the well went on, with some men working hard and others not, on the assumption that the well would never be used by us.

Page 11

It must have been the 19th or 20th that we really became assured that we were free. An officer of the parachutists arrived by a 'plane flown by the Thai airforce, and we all clustered around to hear the news. He seemed a bit shy to be surrounded by a mob of naked and ragged POWs and told us nothing; but we heard of the result of his conversation with Young, Barnett and the other officers. We were told of the use of the atomic bomb and the entry of Russia into the war against Japan. This parachutist was the first free man on the Allied side that we saw. He was dressed in Pacific Green uniform and to our eyes looked a god, no doubt that was why he felt so shy. The night before we had had a concert and, right in the middle of it, Lt. Col. Lilley of the Sherwood Foresters, who was our popular commander from Wampo days, Maj. Barnett, Lucas, and several others, arrived from Pratchai. He was given a terrific welcome and the concert was forgotten. He made a little speech and promised us more news as it became available. Actually, I suppose this was the time when I was really convinced about the war being over. The atmosphere became intensely exciting after this, and we kept our little coconut oil lamps burning practically all night whilst we huddled around on the bamboo slats talking of the great news. What impressed me more than anything was the news of the atomic bomb. It seemed to make the possibility of another war quite unthinkable. After coming out, it is very disheartening to hear people talking of the next war. We were very impressed by the stories told by Percy Pearson, the man who worked for Borneo Co. before the war, who had acted as the Thai interpreter and kept us supplied with news during all these years. Percy had come up with Lilley from Pratchai.

Page 12

Lilley and his party went away the next day and things began to happen rapidly from then.

Firstly there was a good deal of money brought in by the paratroopers to be spent on extra food, and it was poured out like water. We started by buying a herd of cattle. The herd that we had from the

Nips had been 'lost' by the cowmen the day after the war ended. It was generally believed that the cow-men made a good thing of their last excursion outside the camp. We found that the new cows were decidedly superior to the ones that the Nips had provided for us. Sometimes the bullocks arrived just in time to die on our hands. We now entered upon an orgy of meat eating, which was not too good for some of the chaps. I found that I could not eat half of the meat that the cookhouse now provided. Now that the war was over, and the necessity for scrounging extra food had gone, there was not much anxiety to work in the cookhouse and there was a strike. The Australians filled the gap. The food as cooked by the Aussies was much better than that cooked by the English.

I was offered a job in the canteen, my first staff job(!), and took it because Charles at the same time took over the job of accountant from Ginger Pass (a rogue if ever there was one). We worked hard on distributing the supplies of eggs and bananas that were bought with canteen funds, that is the money brought by the paratroops. There were about $\frac{3}{4}$ -million ticals in all - equal to, before the war, £68,750 - equivalent then to £12,500. This was for the purchase of food for 1,500 men! As eggs were then 20 cents each they could buy over 30 eggs per man. Needless to say that this money was never spent. The Thais came with gifts of food and tobacco, which even further added to the glut of food. A large party of men who had been on one of these death marches came in. There were about 1,500 of them, including my friends Jack Cox (Liverpool) and Roy Fay. This party had marched about 450 miles when the end came. They had not suffered many deaths but the casualties

Page 13

would have been high if the end had not come when it did. They lost 28 men in four or five weeks. Some men escaped and later turned up fit and well, having spent the time with the Thais. Amongst these was Bill Whiteside, who was with me at Nakom Patom. These men brought with them a case of smallpox, and it was due to this that we were penned up at Takuri for three weeks. The day for evacuation by air to Rangoon was the 16th Sept. It was very shortly after this date the first Dakotas came and soon they were taking away 60 or 90 men daily. A party of sick men went down to Pratchai and were evacuated the same day. Amongst them was Tony Mills, who had been very ill with dysentery. At one time I had begun to despair of Tony coming through. For the intervening three weeks the Dakotas were working on evacuation of men from Saigon, Bangkok, and other bigger centres. They used to come to visit us and drop supplies of clothing, tinned food, books, magazines, drugs, games, and sports equipment. When these supplies came, I had the job of sorting them for distribution to the different battalions. I cannot say that it was a very enjoyable task, but I did at least have the satisfaction of knowing the distribution was done fairly. My turn for evacuation was with the AIF to Bangkok after all the British had gone to Rangoon. We had two false alarms but, on the day that there were 25 Dakotas, we were finally off to Bangkok. We left in a welter of farewells. Everyone was saying goodbye to everyone else. Most of the POWs had by this time got hold of decent kits and they looked fairly respectable. There had been the usual 'flogging' of kit by the usual men, but as there was better food most men were content to keep what they were given. We were supposed to stay inside the camp except for a short period

Page 14

after evening roll call, but this rule was universally ignored. For myself I was unable to spare the time to go out very much, but those that did had a good time with the Thais, by all accounts. The train the Aussies and the Malayans went down to Bangkok on was very slow, but, as we were in 2nd class coaches, we were fairly comfortable. At Pratchai some of the Aussies missed the train. On

the way down we raffled off some of the Nip swords. There were about 120 for distribution amongst 1,500 men, but I was unlucky. Thackeray and McCubbin were the lucky volunteers. When we arrived in Bangkok the city was in darkness owing to the civil war in progress between the Thais and the Chinese. There were Ghurkhas on patrol, and we were told that some POWs had been involved in the trouble. We drove through the darkened city to the racecourse. This was full of Dutch. We volunteers were made to feel here that we were no-one's baby. Father Bourke, who was our senior member, became rather difficult to find and we were altogether rather lost. I kept chasing Fr. Bourke for information, and he did get me Mother's cable through the Red Cross. I felt very miserable at the possibility of waiting in Bangkok for weeks and weeks whilst they fixed up ships.

We moved from the racecourse to the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, where we found lots of other forgotten men like ourselves. Roden, Boyer and Fleming were amongst them. The C. of C. was all right, so far as sleeping accommodation was concerned, but the food was terrible. It was better, of course, than Nip rations but the trouble was that there was a big racket in selling the rations. Whilst I was there, there was a theft of ten cases of milk, which did not leave much for us. The temptation to steal was very obvious because there were very few restrictions on movements, and the prices outside were so high. I believe they got about 10 ticals for each tin of milk. Some men went into bigger rackets than this; they armed themselves and went with the Thai police to Nip civilians' houses and robbed

Page 15

them of their jewellery and money. This type of activity was condoned by the authorities. I think that we are going to have a great deal of trouble with some of the POWs and other troops when they are demobilised. The trouble with military training is that it encourages the use of force as a legitimate method of achieving an object, and the principles to determine what is permissible and what is not, are not learned at the same time. I was told that looting was an offence punishable by death, but never heard of any case in which a severe penalty was inflicted. The Nips have much severer penalties for thieving and looting than we have, and it is unheard of for a Nip to be found stealing from his comrades. This is one thing I liked about them. Their discipline was much better than that in either the British Army or the AIF. On one occasion two Argylls were caught stealing from their comrades and the Nips wanted to shoot them, but our people would not permit it. I honestly think that this was a mistake. If these men had been shot for the offence, there is no doubt that there would have been much less trouble afterwards from thieves. Generally, thieves were punished by having their pay stopped for a few days - this was hardly the sort of punishment that would deter a determined thief. The Nip practice is to cut off the hands of a thief - this is barbaric but effective. On one occasion, two Gordons were caught in possession of the entire kit of Gerry Moxon (SSVF) - to preserve the good name of the regiment the whole thing was hushed up! The thieves lost the privilege of buying from the canteen for two weeks. As they had plenty of money through selling their spoils, and they were able to buy from the Thais, I think this punishment worried them very little.

Page 16

One of the most obvious results of the confinement on many of the men was that they lost their sense of right and wrong. I'm not sure that some of them ever had much idea. Sometimes, I would be the confidante to whom a life's history would be related. This was the usual practice of the men I

found myself next to in hospital and, as I was in hospital for 14 months without a break, I heard many life histories in that time. It was interesting, and disturbing, to note that, in the life of practically all the men I slept next to, crime of one sort or another was just the accepted thing. There was the butcher who spent enjoyable and profitable weekends in the country, coming home on Sunday with a couple of sheep in the back of the car. Then there was the lorry driver who made himself a cemented backyard with material that he should have delivered to the site of an underground munitions works. Lorry-drivers and builders' labourers seem to be a particularly bad crowd for getting 'perks' (perquisites). Amongst the regular soldiers, the quartermasters were quite proud of their ability for making a bit 'on the side'. The racket here was to sell the rations to the civilians. During the war at home this seems to have been quite the understood thing. I found a little amusement in drawing out these chaps to tell all about themselves. A cigarette was usually enough to get a start made with the story. I also got some amusement in noting how that, once a man was dead, he became a sort of hero although whilst he was alive he might have been the biggest rogue in camp. People would go about saying nice things about 'Tom' although whilst he was alive no-one had a good word to say for him. They were soon forgotten though. People had too great an interest in staying alive themselves to pay too much attention to the dead. We became very callous.

To return to life in Bangkok after the peace.

Owing to the shortage of occupation troops we had to do guard duty. I was on guard twice during the week

Page 17

we were in Bangkok. Our main job was to see that men came back in an orderly fashion by 11 o'clock. Of course, they very rarely came back by even one or two in the morning, and certainly not in an orderly manner. As this was an Aussie outfit nothing was done about the drunks except to put them in the guardroom until they recovered. Some of them were very, very drunk indeed. After being without strong drink for three and a half years, the men became drunk on two or three bottles of beer. I kept off the liquor, as I knew that it was particularly bad for a man recovering from dysentery. We were allowed to draw money up to 300 ticals but, as I saw nothing I wanted to buy, I took only 180. It transpired later that this money was a gift from the RAPWI organisation. I missed 120 ticals through not taking the money in Bangkok. I thought I should be able to draw the balance in Singapore. This was not so. Many men drew their 300 ticals several times over, just going to a different pay office each time. I always thought that the money was to be deducted from accrued pay; actually it was a free gift.

The long-hoped-for day that we should move by 'plane to Singapore at last arrived. We went the previous night to the aerodrome and spent a comfortable night on real beds, the first we had had for many, many months. The 'planes were drawn up on the 'drome ready for an early start. There must have been about 40 of them. Six o'clock found us out of bed and at first light, that is at 8 o'clock, we were away. This was my second trip by 'plane - the first was as Norman Berg's first passenger when he had learnt to fly. Poor old Norman joined the RAF and within six months he was a 'gonner'. The trip to Singapore was very smooth until we were an hour out of our

Page 18

destination and then the 'plane hit bad weather and we were thrown about quite a lot. No-one was sick, though; we had been warned to eat very little for breakfast before we started. The 'plane was a Dakota - the general transport 'plane of the RAF. On arrival at Singapore we were met by Red Cross girls, who gave us cigarettes and chewing gum, and then we were whisked off to the camp at Half Moon Street without any delay. Here we found 600 other POWs who had come from different places. Some were from Sumatra, others from Indo-China and Borneo. We were impressed with the arrangements made for our reception. There were new tents, beds, mosquito nets and clothes. We got everything necessary to make us respectable. The next day there was a medical inspection and I reported that I had still a little trouble with the dysentery. I was put straight into hospital. In hospital the first person I saw was Aub Watson, whom I had last seen at Nakom Patom in January. He put me wise to all the wrinkles. The food was not so good as at the reception camp, as there were too many rackets being worked. The beds were proper hospital beds and I felt rather diffident about accepting all this comfort when I was, after all, not very sick. When I looked around, however, I saw that there were very few really sick men in the hospital. Most of them would stay in bed in the morning, and put their clothes on in the afternoon and go out into the city. The majority were just having a jolly good rest. I was troubled with stomach pains and, after being tested for amoebic dysentery with six negatives, I was treated with sulphaguanidine, with very good results. I have had no trouble since this course of 300 grains. The staff was not drawn from ex-POWs. They were all from Australia and had been especially sent over for this job. Some of the MOs were pretty hopeless but we all thought the QA sisters first rate. As the first women we had met for 3 ½

Page 19

years, they were something of a novelty. We got on splendidly with them and I think they must have been told not to be strict with us because I never heard a murmur even when chaps came in long after lights out. I made friends with the MO of our ward, and was given permission to go to Singapore whenever I wished. I went down almost every day. I met Mr. Horne who had come over with the Aust. Red Cross. He seemed to be quite out of touch with Guthries. I had a feeling that they do not want him any more. He looked much fitter than I had known him, and there is little doubt that the four years in Australia had improved his health. Mr Horne was of the impression that Guthries might not wish to open up on their import business again in Malaya. I suggested that, in that case, there was an opportunity to start a new firm to develop their old agencies. He agreed, and we discussed ways and means of starting a new firm. I have very little regard for Mr. Horne's business capacity, but I think that, if we went in together, we would do all right. He has the name and would probably be able to get overdrafts, and I should supply the main motive power behind the business. In any case, he would wish to retire in about 8 or 9 years, and then the full control would fall to me. I should have to buy him out but with good trading during the next few years the money should be easy to save. This is all rather past history for, as I write, Guthries have decided to come back in full strength. I am in a quandary whether to go back to them or not. I saw many of the Chinese merchants whilst I was in Singapore. They have come through this thing better than I thought they would. Most of them have retained their property and many have turned the years of Japanese occupation to good account. They made high

Page 20

profits in Jap dollars and bought jewellery with the proceeds. They told me grim tales of the torture by the Kempeitai and I can believe these tales. I feel that the Chinese that have suffered most have been the politically-conscious ones, and not the merchant class. The communists, of course,

suffered more than any. The credit of the Chinese merchants is almost as good as it ever was. The town has not suffered much material damage. The chief trouble is the scarcity of consumption goods. This has led to the development of a big black market. For miles through the streets there are little stalls selling looted and black market goods. I saw my golf clubs for sale in one little stall. I was able to get into the old mess, and found that the Nips had divided the rooms in two and that there was a certain amount of furniture still there. The radio and all the small stuff had gone and there was a refrigerator there in place of the one we used to have. I stored away some furniture, but the Chinese who had rented the house, claimed the refrigerator was his property. I know he was lying because in the presence of Ong Boon Seng he told me that he had bought it the week before, but to substantiate his claim he produced a bill dated July 1943. I could not claim the fridge as my property but I felt that I had a better claim to it than he had. I saw the police about it and they promised to investigate. All my photos had gone and I was unable to trace Wong the head boy, whom I had telephoned on Feb. 12th 1942 to hide away all our papers until after the war. If he ever came back I should most certainly give him a good present, because Wong was a very good servant. I am rather afraid he became one of the victims of the Nip purge. I left a note for Wong in the Hailam Kongsu. If he is still alive, he will come to me when I go back. Getting about was difficult. The best way for men in uniform was by thumbing jeeps. The drivers of these jeeps were seldom anything but road hogs.

To be continued.

This part of diary relates to stay in Singapore during Sept./Oct. 1945

Rec 20/2/46

Page 1

Continuation of Journal

During my stay in Singapore I visited many of our old Chinese dealers and had Chinese dinner several times with them. The Chinese food was the best that I had during my three weeks in Singapore. We went to a Teochew place in Havelock Road three times and had all the usual dishes. There was shark's fin soup, bird's nest soup, prawns, lobster, and other seafood. The cost of these dishes was very high compared with pre-war prices. One dinner cost as much as \$30 or, say, £2/10/-, per person. When we had beer with the meal that cost \$3.00 a small bottle. One evening I had dinner with Goetzee and Vincent of Fraser & Neave who were running the brewery. On this occasion, we had simply everything that we were accustomed to before the war. There was a turkey, which had been in cold storage for four years (and it was delicious), asparagus, stuffing, new potatoes, apple pie and all sorts of pre-war drinks. These included 25-year old brandy, hijau (crème de menthe), good sherry and, of course, whiskey and beer. I heard that this was the first opportunity that these chaps had attempted to do any entertaining since they were free, and they certainly made a good job of it. There were three of the sisters from the hospital there and two Australians who worked in the Red Cross. One of the men was Stan Simmonds from Gilbey's, Sydney. It was Stan that provided the gin and whiskey.

I was pleased to notice that the brandy and crème de menthe were Guthrie brands. This was the first occasion that I had anything strong to drink but, with the sisters' approval, I had some beer and a liqueur brandy afterwards, and thoroughly enjoyed both. We all went back to the hospital together and although it was long after lights-out I was covered because I was with the

Page 2

sisters. On the other occasions that I was out after lights-out I had some difficulty in getting transport back to the hospital, which was 7 miles out of town. After the dinner with LPK at the Great World, we set off back in the car that he had bought that afternoon, but after a couple of miles it broke down and we had to push it back to his house. We were lucky to be able to get a taxi and we went out together and he footed the bill, which was terrific. The normal charge for a taxi to town from the hospital was \$6.00 (say 14 shillings), but on this occasion, as it was after midnight, the bill was double. LPK was doing very good business by buying Japanese stores from the Govt. and re-selling at the controlled price. He told me that the Govt. officers in charge of price fixing were making their fortunes on the side, and I can well believe him. He did not say that he was making a fortune himself - it was not necessary to make that point. LPK showed me his store, and it was full of Japanese sugar brought over from Java before things got difficult. He also had large stocks of tapioca, peas and beans. LPK showed no inclination to do any business with me, and I was rather curious to know why he had gone to the trouble and expense of entertaining me. I suppose he was building up good will for the future. The brothers and the old man were all very well, and they did not seem to have suffered much beyond the loss of their three cars. Ong Boon Seng was another Chinese that entertained me very well. We were hoping to do business in Australian products. I gave Teng Kee and Joo Kee a certificate that we had taken over the contents

of their food store for the military on Feb.15th 1942. This was the business known as Bun Bee that I had prevented from being looted on the afternoon of the day that Singapore fell. They were grateful and put the matter in the hands of Kenneth Seth of the battery, who is a lawyer, and had been one of the men to help with the transfer of the stocks. Ken Seth, who is Armenian, was staying

Page 3

on in Singapore and not going to leave like most of the POWs. Very few of the POWs are staying on in Singapore, and those that did were not receiving any assistance from the Government, whose policy was to get all the POWs and civilian internees out as soon as possible. Anyone that stayed behind had to look after himself, and there was considerable pressure brought to bear on them to try to make them go on leave immediately. They were not provided with any accommodation or food, and getting clothes, food, and somewhere to live were very difficult problems. I had the idea at one time that I could do a good job of work in helping to get things going in Singapore before I went on leave. This was quite contrary to the declared policy of the Military Administration. I cannot help but feel that the men who got out when the war started, and have now come back as Brigadiers and Colonels, were anxious to keep a clear field for themselves. Several of my contemporaries are now Colonels, and I think they want to stay Colonels as long as possible. My own view is that the sooner we have the Military Administration out the better. They look like hanging on until about April next. I went to see some of these fellows and it was amusing to notice that the first thing they did was to look at one's shoulders. On the quiet, all these ex-Malayans were more interested in re-starting their own businesses than they were in getting down to their job of distributing food and clothing to the distressed natives. I did not like the tone of things one little bit. I am sure that when the time comes to hand over to Civil Govt. there will be very little to show for the 6 months of military administration. Many of the Chinese

Page 4

staff of Guthrie were 'working' at the British Military Administration office. I went to see them and found that all but one of them had come through. It was rather amusing to see the rows and rows of Chinese clerks and salesmen sitting at their desks doing absolutely nothing. They had every other afternoon off and did nothing all day but sit at their desks and wait for instructions that never came. Mr Horne was frequently in town, and I used to meet him at the GH café. He had sent a cable to Guthries for instructions and we were daily waiting for the reply. Even after a fortnight there was no reply, and this made it very difficult for us to proceed with our other plans. All the other firms had been getting to work on their plans, and it gave our Chinese staff a bad impression for Guthries to be so dilatory. Old Song Kheng, the cashier, took me to dinner twice, and I went to his home, too. He kept pressing gifts on me which I could not refuse. I hope that the firm is going to stand by the Asiatic staff, who on the whole are a very loyal body. Hun Swee appeared to be the exception. Song Kheng told me that he had been 'liquidated' by the guerrillas as a collaborator. Mr Horne was working on the storing of the cargo of the 'mercy ship' the 'Admiral Chase'. This ship was full of goods donated by the Australian Red Cross, to the value of £750,000. The goods were actually intended for the relief of POWs and internees but, as most of these had already been evacuated, the goods were to be distributed to the Asiatic population. Some of the things included in the shipment were not very suitable, as they included such articles as silk stockings and toothpaste, but I know that the generosity of the Australian people was very much appreciated. Mr Horne told me that he had a great deal of trouble with coolies stealing from the cases as they were unloading, and even

from the paratroops who were supposed to be guarding the goods. They were stealing the toothpaste and selling it for as much as \$8.00 a tube (19 shillings).

Page 5

Any coolie wearing boots would be a suspect. They found one with eight tubes of toothpaste inside each boot. The coolies were paid only \$1.20 a day, which was not enough for them to live on, so there was some excuse for them to steal, but none for the paratroops. All around the hospital there were houses in which there were stored Japanese supplies. Paratroops were put to guard these stores but, instead of guarding them, they sold the stores to the Chinese round about. The practice was to let the Chinese into the store and charge them according to the length of time they stayed inside. Once the Chinese had gone, the paratroops would loose off a volley of shots, and when the officer came to investigate they would say that there had just been looters at work. They sold the entire contents of one store in this manner. I should add here that the paratroops in question were Australian and had never seen active service. They lived just down the road from the hospital and were a constant source of trouble.

It will be obvious from the foregoing that a great deal of the commercial activity of Singapore was connected with the black market. During the Japanese occupation, I understood from our Chinese clerks, the main means of making a living was from black market operation. Nearly all of our clerks had earned their living in this manner. One, however, Quay Tau, had turned his attention to fishing. He found this to be less strain on the nerves than black marketeering, also he was able to provide food for his family. I like Quay Tau very much, and think this action of his shows both sense and honesty. A few, but very few, of the Chinese of this type were in the underground movement against the Nips. Most of the guerrilla work was done by the Chinese Communists. It is rather odd to remember that the Malayan Communist Party was banned until the day that the war broke out against Japan. Then they raised a force of Chinese Communists to fight the Nips, which they called Dalforce after the leader Daley. This unit fought very bravely and was, we heard, killed almost to a man. There were about 1,000 of them. The Chinese I talked to had varying estimates of the number of Chinese killed by the Nips when they rounded up the civil population immediately after the fall of Singapore. Some said 100,000 others 150,000. Personally I find it very difficult to believe that more than, say, 20,000 would have been liquidated. This is a very difficult matter to verify but

Page 6

Ong Boon, whose judgement I respect, said that he thought possibly one-tenth of the Chinese had been put to death. This would give a total of 50,000. Judging from the family losses of those I spoke to, nothing like a tenth of the population had been put to death. Perhaps the chief losses had occurred amongst a different class of Chinese society. Singapore looked very over-crowded whilst I was there. Probably because it was there that the first free food issues would be made. The most distressed natives that I saw were the poor Javanese coolies that the Nips had brought over to work when there was a shortage of labour, due to the large numbers sent up to work on the railway with us. They were all suffering from starvation and were covered with sores like we were up in the jungle. The other Asiatics obviously did nothing to help them and, as they were in a strange country, it was natural that they should become distressed. I was glad to see that the British Military Administration collected these wrecks, and gave them hospital treatment and food. These are the same Indonesians that such a lot is heard of today.

Knowing of the political trouble in Java, I attempted to assess the feeling in Singapore as regards the same matter. From talks I had with some quite prominent Chinese and Indians, I came to the conclusion that there was very little wish to leave British protection. The more honest of those I spoke to, said that they wished for Britain's return because it meant that they could trade in safety.

The Malayan Union was generally welcomed, although some wondered why the Settlements were not included in it. I was of the opinion that the reason was that Britain wished to retain actual sovereignty over the S.S. for purposes of defence. I am glad that the power of the Malay sultans will be limited in the future. They did not show much loyalty to us during the campaign against the Nips. This is the big chance for the Chinese to obtain fuller control in the rule of the country. In the past they have been penalised in favour of the Malays. The Malays have always proved to be a worthless lot, and if they do not pull themselves together, they will be crowded right out by the more energetic Chinese. There was previously a pro-Malay policy adopted by the Malayan Govt., which was not popular amongst the commercial people and it looks now as if this policy is to be dropped. The commercial people can now say, 'We told you so'.

Page 7

Many were the arguments that I had with Tony Mills, and others of the Malay Civil Service, on the point whether we were controlling Malaya for the benefit of the Malays or for our own benefit. My argument ran that, as the development of the country by construction of railways, roads and the opening up of jungle areas for rubber and other products brought greater comfort and material benefit to the Malays, we were quite justified in retaining political control of the country. If the development of the country were left in the hands of the Malays, there would have been none of the things I have mentioned. The argument of the MCS wallahs was that the original treaties with the Sultans had merely been for the protection of the country by Britain, in return for which we got certain trading preference. They argued that, once the Malays were in a position to do all the offices of Govt. themselves, we were morally bound to clear out. They denied the motive of self-interest altogether. I said that this was hypocritical, as it was perfectly obvious that Britain would never saddle herself with the responsibility of protecting a country which meant nothing to her. As a dig in the ribs I used to remind the MCS boys that their salaries were paid by the proceeds from the 'exploitation' of Malaya. This did not go down too well as a rule but it is perfectly true, I think. I rather envy the MCS people their disregard for the necessity for making a profit out of trading in the country (exploiting it). It is rather a comfortable thought to feel that one is working in a country solely for the benefit of other people and that, after a career devoted to the limiting of the depredations of Big Business, one can retire to Budleigh Salterton on a pension which is underwritten by those same Big Business interests. This is the whole crux of the matter to my way of thinking. The ordinary commercial man has to make money whilst the going is good and hope to save enough for his retirement, whilst the civil servant is not bothered with the problem of making money at all. He knows that when he is 55 years old, that the Govt. will pension him handsomely. There are a certain number of careerists amongst the MCS who trim their sails to whatever wind of Govt policy is blowing at the moment, but the majority are content to go along in a quiet and unobtrusive manner. I like Tony Mills very much, but I do think that he will have to weigh the merits of the case for the inhabitants of Malaya against

those of the developers (exploiters) of Malaya. At the present time the scales are weighted heavily in favour of the natives of the country. Of the MCS men I met I found that Bill Goode was the one with the keenest appreciation of the full matter. I think that I gave Tony a clearer insight into the case for commercial interests but I could not tell Bill Goode anything about this point of view. He had spent one of his leaves going around the offices of the big Malayan merchant houses and he was able to appreciate their point of view. He had a very clear brain and was able to expound subjects such as the Exchange Control system in a way that was admirable. I would give him a very good chance of ending as a Governor of a Colony ... perhaps Malaya. Bill's one failing is that he has an uncertain temper. Tony has a most equable temperament but not a great deal of ambition ... definitely not a careerist. He has, however, one of the best brains that I have ever come across. He took a First in Classics at Cambridge and has consequently an academic brain, but I think his experience as a POW has made him a very much more practical man. I think he was probably the best scrounger in our kongsi! His chief failing has been that he lacks the 'common touch'. Again, his experience as a POW will have helped him. He was the most highly principled man I met as a POW. This was quite compatible with his reputation as a scrounger as he never would scrounge anything to which there was a good title held by someone else. Tony showed up particularly well in the Tamajan bombing, when he, with Llewellyn and Hugh Shelton-Palmer, organised the rescue work after the Dutch doctor and Bouncer Robertson, the officer, had run away. We Volunteers were very proud that the rescue work on this occasion was done by the initiative of three Volunteers. There were a number of 9th Coast men on the train at this time and the relations with them changed somewhat after that. You could tell that they had a good deal of respect for the Volunteers for the way in which they had behaved. There was still the same slanging off of each other but in a more friendly spirit. They still referred to the Volunteers as Vultures but it was almost a mark of affection.

There is little more to add to this record, but I will conclude with a few comments on Singapore as it appeared to me after the surrender.

When we flew over the island on our way down from Bangkok, we saw at once that much of the rubber had been cut down and vegetable gardening started. To me, this is a good thing. Too much of the food consumed in Singapore had to be brought in before the war. Tapioca was the principle article of diet of the Singapore people during the Japanese occupation.

There were few cars on the roads, and those that there were seemed to be on their last legs. There was a new means of conveyance, termed a tri-shaw, that was made by attaching a side-car to a bicycle. These were pedalled about for hire by the Chinese, usually boys of 15 to 20. They are safer and quicker than rickshaws and I hope they will ultimately replace rickshaws. They are not so hard to operate as the rickshaws. These tri-shaws were introduced by the enterprising Chinese, and represent, I think, one of the good results of the Japanese occupation.

Raffles, Sea View, Adelphi, Oranje and Goodwood Park Hotels were occupied by British Military Administrative staff. There was very little social life and one never saw 'boys' running around with drinks and a carefree crowd drinking and dancing. There were a few entertainments for the troops put on by the ENSA people. I saw one of these at Raffles, and it was terribly amateurish. Exactly

the same show was put on at the hospital for the POW patients. The best turn was a card manipulator.

The cinemas were open and, if one could put up with the heat as there were no fans or air-conditioning, one could see a good show. I saw 'In Which We Serve' at the Cathay.

The cabarets did a tremendous business and in the amusement parks there were many stalls selling black market goods. There was very little beer for sale in the cabarets and no spirits. Tiger Beer was being sold at \$3 a small bottle - say 7 shillings. There were many patrons in the cabarets from the paratroops units - who brought their own whiskey and other drinks.

Page 10

The most serious material damage had been done in the docks by Allied bombing on Nov. 5th 1944. About a quarter of the godowns had been flattened.

The Nips had used Raffles Hotel as an officers club and made alterations that I think were an improvement.

The main streets were quite clean but the back streets were very dirty. Nips were put to work to clean up the mess. About 700 Nips daily were working in the city. This out of 65,000, which seemed not enough to me.

The majority of the Nips were living in Johore but there were small camps of them in rubber estates on the island. I saw a party of these when I went out to see Ong Boon Seng's estate one Sunday. These Nips were very respectful to me, but it was rather a nuisance having to return their salute every minute or so. They were not guarded and appeared to be having an easy time. I saw some having a bath using soap and could not help thinking that they were much better off than they had any right to expect. They were well dressed and appeared well fed. Ong Boon Seng told me that they had big stocks of cloth, which they bartered with the people round about for cigarettes and extra food. In Bun Bee's shop I met an officer of the RASC who told me what the Nips were getting as rations. They were getting tinned milk, which seemed absurd when it was impossible for the civilians in Singapore to get it. I saw other Nips carrying away the cases full of Japanese Military currency to be destroyed. They looked very dejected and were bare-footed. They did not salute me but I took no notice. I hope they will give the Nips plenty of work to do - it is what they understand. They understand harsh discipline and being compelled to do unpleasant tasks. I have a feeling that we shall treat them too kindly. The maximum amount of work, the minimum amount of food, good medical treatment, plenty of restrictions to liberty and bags of propaganda would be my programme for them. If they do not get enough to do they become uppish. They are probably the world's best subjects for propaganda.

Page 11

The Chinese in Singapore were anxious that the collaborators should be arrested quickly and complained that many very prominent collaborators were still permitted to remain free. There were plenty of people willing to act as informers but the authorities were very dilatory in taking action on the information received. I believed that the authorities were wise in not being too precipitate in making arrests. It was not possible for the culprits to get away and evidence against them would

accumulate until the case for making an arrest would be watertight. Whilst I was in Singapore they were concentrating on rounding up the Japanese war criminals. These were put into Changi Jail, which had been used so recently as a prison camp for British civilians. Most of the head Nips were put into Changi jail. The Koreans were in a separate camp and were, I believe, treated better than the Japanese. I could not see the reason for this. In Bangkok, on the other hand, the Koreans were the first to be rounded up.

Lee Choon Seng, proprietor of the Thye Hong Biscuit Co., Thye Hin & Co, Thye Ann Investment Co., was named to me as a collaborator. If this is so, and he is charged, then one of our biggest business connections will be severed. I expect that Chua Poh Chuah would take over the business. I saw Poh Chua several times and he was as friendly as ever. We had tiffin together and he wanted me to do things for him in Australia. At the time of writing there are extensive strikes in Australia and quite impossible to do any export business. I see no possibility of doing any business down here for a long time. The home demand is not satisfied and most firms will not look at export business. This is the greatest chance that Australia has ever had of capturing export markets and I think they will let the opportunity slip. My impressions of Australians are that they do not make the best of their opportunity to progress. They are not exactly lazy - they just do enough to ensure a comfortable living, and they do not care for the rest. With another ten million population, Australia would become one of the big nations of the world - as it is, it is a very small nation with big ideas of its importance. They all say that they want more people, and yet they refuse to admit that, with a great increase in immigration, there would have to be a temporary setback in the general standard of living. I think that one possible solution to their problem would be to use the Nip

Page 12

prisoners to do irrigation work in the Northern Territory. There would be no need to give them a great measure of freedom and when the work was finished after ten or fifteen years they could be sent back to Japan. After the irrigation work the country could take in many more settlers than it can at present. The Nips would rather stay in Australia than go back to Japan because in Japan they are looked down upon for having lost the war. The Nip prisoners in Singapore were not at all keen to go back to Japan.

This will end my journal until I come home when I shall probably rewrite the whole of it.

"B" Battalion.....	20, 23
"B" Company.....	1
"Bludgers".....	33
"D" Battalion.....	20, 25
"F" Battalion.....	20, 23, 26, 30
"Hellfire" Corner.....	25
"Speedo".....	23, 25, 26, 53
"Thinkers", The.....	45
"U" Battalion (Australians).....	22, 24
"Vultures" (Volunteers).....	67
122 Field Regt. RA.....	7
18th Division (British).....	6
2/20 Battn. Australian Imperial Force.....	6
9th Coast Regiment.....	2, 15, 17, 28, 29, 52, 67
Argyll Regiment.....	6, 15, 58
Atomic bomb.....	55
Australia.....	1, 5, 14, 15, 60, 69
Avitaminosis ward (Nakom Patom).....	39
Baker, Samuel Cecil ("Sam") SRA(V) (Gunner).....	2
Ban Phong.....	15, 16, 23
Bangkok.....	28, 31, 35, 37, 38, 49, 50, 57, 59, 67, 68
Banner, [?Leonard Alexander SRA(V) "D" Bn.].....	19
Barnett, Maj.	55
Batu Pahat.....	4, 6
Beach Road, Singapore.....	7
Beatings.....	10, 12, 21, 25, 29, 31
Bed bugs.....	32, 38
Bennett, Capt.....	44
Bennett, Lieutenant Peter [?Paul] Johnson, 1 st Bn, SSVF (Guthries & Co.).....	1, 2, 24
Bennett, Major (RAMC).....	1
Beohm, Bdr Arthur [?Sgt Alan G. 1 st Bn. SSVF].....	2
Berg, Norman.....	59
Black market (see also Rackets).....	9, 61, 64, 67
Blenheim bombers.....	1
Bofor guns.....	4, 7
Bourke, Father [Capt. G.M. 4 th Bn, SSVF].....	17, 34, 57
Boyer.....	57
Boyes, Dick [Boys, R.C, 1 st Bn., SSVF "S" Support Company].....	11, 13, 14, 15, 16
Brewster Buffaloes.....	4, 5
Brice, George.....	47
British Military Administration, Singapore.....	63, 65
Brodie, Major [?W.H. 3 rd Bn, SSVF Medical Detachment].....	26, 31, 32
Brown, Geoffrey (Volunteer).....	19
Brown, Jimmy [?James, FMSVF, 1 st Bn. Perak/2 M.I.B. Sthn Area. "D" Bn.].....	49
Bukit Timah.....	7
Bukom.....	8
Bun Bee (Singapore).....	63, 68
Burchinall, "Tich".....	27
Butler, Bdr.....	28
Butterfield, L/Bdr Charles [?2/Lieutenant Charles Harris, SSVF att. 16 Defence Regt. RA].....	2, 8
Camps	
Bangkok, Thailand.....	50
Bridge Camp, Thailand.....	20, 25
Changi, Singapore.....	5, 9, 28, 68
Chungkai, Thailand.....	2, 16, 18
Farrer Park, Singapore.....	9
Havelock Road, Singapore.....	14
Hintock River, Thailand.....	9, 26
Kanu 2, Thailand.....	24, 25
Kanu/Kanyu River, Thailand.....	2, 23, 24
Kinsyo [Kinsayok], Thailand.....	24, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 47
Kranji Singapore.....	10
Lopburi, Thailand.....	51
Nakom Patom/Nakon Phatom, Thailand.....	18, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 49, 56, 60

Non Pladuk, Thailand	30
River Valley Road, Singapore	10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 19, 30
Takuri, Thailand	49, 51, 52, 56
Tamuan, Thailand	1, 18, 37, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52
Tarso Base Hospital, Thailand	23, 32, 34, 35, 36
Tengah, Singapore	10
Tonchan Central, Thailand	22, 23, 25, 43
Tonchan South, Thailand	20, 22
Tonchan, Thailand	25, 31
Wampo North, Thailand	19
Wampo, Thailand	15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 26, 28, 47, 52, 55
Carr, Capt. Ernest, RA	7
Cattle	26, 56
Chinese (POW)	22
Chinese civilian deaths (Singapore)	65
Churchill, Winston	4
Civil war - Thais and Chinese	57
Clarke,	26
Coates, Lt. Col (AIF) surgeon	36, 39, 44
Colchester, L/Bdr "Tiffy" [2/Lieutenant Cecil Francis, 2 nd Bn., SSVF att. 16 Defence Regt. RA]	2
Coleman, (Anglo-Thai)	39
Coleman, Taffy	27
Coltart, Lt. Gilbert McCallum 'Tiger'. SRA(V)	2, 3, 8, 45
Communists	60, 64
Cooper, (Guthrie & Co.) [?Lieut.Commander Leonard Lawton, RNVR (Singapore)]	6
Cooper, The Rt Hon. Alfred Duff Cooper, DSO, MP. Resident Minister of State, Singapore	4
Cox, Jack (118 Field Rgt. RA) (London & Scottish Assurance)	35, 56
Crabb, C.S.M. Charles Henry, 1 st Bn., SSVF. "D" Bn. (Fraser & Neave)	19
Craig, Lt. John Harcourt, MRNVR (Singapore) (Guthries & Co.)	2, 17, 24, 45
Craig, Pte William John ("Snuffy") (from Glasgow). Gordon Highlanders. 2876114	26, 31
Craig, Sergeant Stanley Edwards , 1 st Bn., SSVF (Fraser & Neave)	37
Cully, Corp. Reg (AIF, Sydney)	35
Cumming, Scott [Lt. Alistair Reginald Scott, FMSVF (Hadden & Co.)]	5
Dakota aircraft	56, 57, 59
Daley	64
Dalforce	64
Davey, 9 th Coast Regiment	17
Davy, "The Welshman" (Gunner) [?William Henry, SRA(V) (Colonial Education Service)]	2
de Cruz, Sidney Joseph P., SASC (V). "D" Bn. ("Hawaiian Serenaders")	13, 28
De Vries	1
Death marches	56
Dickinson, John	34
Diseases	39
Appendicitis	19
Beriberi	19, 31
Blackwater fever	52
'Broken Bottles'	52
Cholera	2, 20, 22, 24, 26
Dysentery	16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 40, 51, 57, 59, 60
Impetigo	43
Jaundice	45
Malaria	15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 31, 32, 37, 40, 45
Malnutrition	22, 31
Oedema	39
Pellagra	53
Pleurisy	39
Pneumonia	39
Ringworm	43
Scabies	31, 43
Smallpox	56
Sweat sores	53
TB	34
Ulcers	31, 33, 39
Drugs	16, 18, 23, 31, 32, 33, 37, 39, 57
Emetine	31, 37
Morphine	31

Potassium permanganate.....	16, 53
Quinine.....	15, 16, 33, 52
Sulphaguanidine.....	60
Sulphonamide.....	39
Duff-Cooper.....	<i>See</i> Cooper, The Rt Hon. Alfred Duff
Dunlop, Lt. Col. Ernest Edward. (Surgeon) (Australian Army Medical Corps., OC).....	36, 41
Dutch.....	1, 26, 28, 41, 42, 50, 51, 57, 67
End of the war.....	55
Entertainments	
Books.....	46
Bridge.....	37, 47
Cards.....	11
Choir.....	46
Concerts.....	28, 38, 41, 55
Co-Prosperity Sphere concert.....	28
Discussions.....	11, 34, 40, 41, 45
Lectures.....	38, 46
Library.....	28, 33, 53
Quizzes.....	38
Sports.....	12, 28, 41
Esson, (Guthrie & Co.) [?Maj. H.W. 3 rd Bn. SSVF].....	6
Evacuation	
Takuri camp to Bangkok (with the AIF).....	57
Takuri camp to Rangoon (British).....	56
Transfer from Bangkok to Singapore.....	59
Evans, Thomas Heath (Tom), SRA(V) (Gunner). "Y" Bn. (Anglo Thai Corp.).....	2, 8, 44
Fay, Roy.....	56
Fifth Column.....	4, 7
Fleming,.....	57
Gahan, Bryan Herbert, FSMVF, 4 th Pahang Bn. "D" Bn.	33, 35, 37, 39, 40, 41, 46
Gardiner, Porky.....	45, 49
Gemas.....	6
Ghurkhas.....	57
Gladman, Sgt. (Beds. & Herts).....	49, 50
Glendinning, [?Corp. A.L.L., SSVF. "D" Bn.].....	24
Godber, John (Rowland John) (FMSVF Armoured Car Regt. "D" Bn.).....	34, 37, 39, 40, 41, 43, 46
Goetzee, (Fraser & Neave).....	62
Goode, Corporal Bill, SSVF, B Coy. (MCS) (Sir William A.C. GCMG).....	23, 66
Gordon Highlanders.....	10, 17, 24, 28, 37, 58
Gould [Goult], Cyril Hermes Weston (Hermes), SRA(V) (Gunner). "D" Bn. (Malaya Mail).....	23
Graham, D.....	16
Gregg, Johnny [? Pilot Officer John Francis Fitzgerald, MVAF].....	37
Griffiths,.....	49
Guards	
"Arthur Askey" (Korean).....	29
Cheeba [?Chuba] (Korean).....	20, 21, 47
Gumboil (Japanese).....	11
Hoja (Japanese).....	11
Japanese.....	20, 29, 50
Korean.....	12, 20, 28, 29, 50
Moriama (Japanese).....	11
Okajacki (Japanese).....	11
Quara Quenara (Korean).....	29, 30
'Rocking Horse', The (Korean).....	49, 50
Shimozaki.....	29
Sikh.....	12, 14
Yuki (Korean).....	50
Gulliford, Maurice William, SRA(V) (Gunner). "D" Bn. (Guthries & Co.).....	11, 15, 45, 46
Gurkhas.....	9
Guthrie & Company.....	1, 5, 6, 7, 24, 60, 62, 63, 64
Hamilton,.....	23
Hancock, ?Slash.....	29
Hardman, (Guthrie & Co.).....	6
Harris, (9th Coast Regiment).....	28
Hawley, Jerry. [Died of beatings, Kanchanaburi].....	31
Helps, Harold Arthur Stafford, SRA(V) (Gunner). "D" Bn. (Fraser & Neave).....	2, 23, 39

Henley, Maj. [Robert Bryan Henly] SRA(V)	44
Hickey, Peter [?L/Corporal James Joseph, 1 st Bn., SSVF. "D" Bn.] (John Littles)	23
Hinde, John (Harold John), 1 st Bn., SSVF, "D" Bn. (Patison Simons [?McAlisters]).....	23, 49
HMAS Canberra	1
HMS Prince of Wales.....	3, 4
HMS Repulse	3, 4
Hoops, L/Bombadier Richard Mostyn (Dick). 3 rd Bn. SSVF/SRA(V). "B" Force. "D" Bn.....	2, 5, 8
Horne, Johnny (Guthrie & Co.)	5, 60, 63, 64
Hospital	
Diets (Tarso).....	32
Kinsyo, Thailand	31
Nakom Patom, Thailand	35
Tamuan, Thailand.....	45
Tarso Base Hospital, Thailand	32
Hospital records	39
Hough, Graham Goulder, SRA(V). Prof. (Gunner). (Lecturer, English; Raffles College).....	2, 3, 8, 9, 46
Hugonner, Col.	27
Hun Swee.....	64
Hutchinson, (Volunteer).....	24
Indian 7th Division	6
Ipoh	4, 28
Isdale, Jock.....	52
James, Bill.....	28
Japanese Officers	
"Farmer Giles"	52
"Tamuan Charlie" (Works sergeant)	52
"Tiger", The (Japanese Sgt Maj, S. Tonchan)	21, 23, 29, 30
Hattori (Wampo).....	18, 26, 29
Japanese prisoners.....	68
Japanese war criminals	68
Jennings, Bdr Charles	2
Johnston, Lt. Douglas Alexander, ("Johnny") SRA(V). (McAlisters).....	24, 34, 45
Johore.....	6, 68
Jones, Griffiths	41
Joo Kee (Singapore).....	63
Kallang Aerodrome	5, 7
Kanchanaburi, Thailand	15, 16, 23, 30, 31, 53
Kanu	23
Kempeis	39
Kempeitai.....	60
Kennedy, L/Bombadier [Leslie Howard, SRA(V)]	2, 3
Kennedy, Pat	45
Keyser [Keyzar], Lt. George Shrimpton, SRA(V). "D" Bn.....	45
Kota Bahru	4
Kuala Lumpur	1, 4
Lamb, [?James Henry, 1 st Bn. SSVF. "D" Bn. (Rubber planter)]	23
Lang, (Volunteer).....	29
Lee Choon Seng	68
Leeches	53, 54
Lewis gun.....	2
Liberator aircraft (American).....	34, 37
Lilley, Lt/Col. Harold [Lilly], 1 st /5 th Territorial Bn. Sherwood Foresters. "D" Bn.....	19, 25, 26, 47, 55, 56
Lister engine.....	3
Llewellyn, Hugh Gwilym Carysfoot, 1 st Bn., SSVF. "D" Bn. (Asiatic Phone Company)	38, 66
Lock, Tony	45, 46
Lopburi.....	52
Lopburi station	51
Loyal Regiment.....	6, 14
LPK (Chinese businessman, Singapore).....	62
Lucas,	55
MacFarlane, Lt. Col., RAMC	36
MacLeod, [?Aden McLeod, 1 st Bn. SSVF].....	19
MacNeill, [?Neil Francis Loudon McNeill, 1 st Bn., SSVF].....	16
Macomski, 9 th Coast Regiment.....	17
Madge, Capt. (FMSVF) [?P.J., FMSVF, Pay & Records. (Neill & Bell)].....	34
Malay Civil Service	65

Malaya.....	1, 3, 4, 10, 13, 14, 17, 23, 27, 43, 47, 50, 60, 65, 66
Malayan Union.....	65
Manchesters	10
McCubbin, [?D.M.R., SRA(V)].....	57
Mersing	6
Miller Brothers	
James Percival and Spencer Sydney: 1 st Bn. SSVF. "D" Bn.	49
Mills, Sgt A.E. (Tony), 4 th Bn., SSVF. "D" Bn.	16, 18, 20, 33, 34, 44, 45, 46, 49, 52, 53, 57, 65, 66
Minam (?Menam) Kah Wei river.....	15
Mitchell Brothers	
Ian Harold, and Ronald Austin: 1 st Bn., SSVF Intelligence. "D" Bn.	49
Morrison, David. SRA(V) (Gunner). "D" Bn. (Ritchie & Bisset).....	45
Moulton, Corp. Roy Alexander, MM, FMSVF, Armd. Car Regt. (Tronoh Tin Dredging).....	36
Moxon, Gerard Joseph "Gerry", 1 st Bn., SSVF. "D" Bn.	58
Muar	2, 4
Napier, Donald John, 1 st Bn. SSVF. "D" Bn. (Fraser & Neave).....	45
Nassim, Arnold E., SRA(V) (Gunner).....	2, 10
Neubronner,.....	29
News, The	4, 7, 10, 17, 26, 27, 30, 31, 40, 47, 55, 56
Newton, Capt. (C.O. Central Tonchan).....	23
Non Pladuck.....	5
Northumberland Fusiliers	47
O'Connor, 9 th Coast Regiment	17
Officers, Behaviour of	9, 22, 26, 30, 32, 34, 44, 55
O'Hare, Gerald (Jerry), FMSVF, Signal Bn. "D" Bn. (Planters Stores, KL).....	46
Omar.....	11
Ong Boon Seng (Singapore).....	61, 63, 65, 68
Oppenheim, L/Bombadier Alexander, SRA(V). (Prof. Maths, Raffles College)	24
Osbourne, Sgt. Maj. ("The Dragon").....	52
Padang Besar.....	13
Paeloe Bukom.....	7
Page, Lincoln (Gunner). SRA(V). "D" Bn.....	2, 11, 16, 17, 18, 20, 45, 46
Pak Nam.....	38
Parkinson, [?Cyril Arthur, 1 st Bn. SSVF "B" Company. "D" Bn.]	24
Pasir Panjang.....	10
Pass, Ginger	56
Pavillard, Capt Stanley S., MO 1 st Bn SSVF. "D" Bn	18, 31, 45, 49
Pearl Harbour.....	4
Pearson, Fizzer.....	41
Pearson, Percy [John Peter] (FMSVF, Armd. Car Regt. "D" Bn.) (Borneo Co.)	31, 56
Penang.....	4, 6, 34, 40
Pickard, Robert Henry 1/SSVF Bren Carrier Platoon. "D" Bn. (Wakefields).....	19
Pinkey (The Grove, Singapore).....	7
Poelau [Paeloe] Samboe	7
Pong [Boon Pong Sirivejjabhandu] (Thai agent, British Secret Service/Free Siamese Army).....	31
Potter, Joseph Bateman ("Joe"), SRA(V) (Gunner) (Guthrie & Co.).....	11, 13, 16, 18, 20, 36, 37, 39, 41, 43
Pratchai	55, 57
Quay Tau.....	64
Rackets (see also Black Market).....	12, 22, 57, 58
Rae, Capt. Herbert John, SRA(V). "D" Bn. (McAlister & Co.).....	21, 26
RAF.....	54, 59
Reay [Rea], James Taylor ("Jim"), 1 st Bn, SSVF. "D" Bn. (Malayan Civil Service; Police Magistrate)	23
Red Cross.....	12, 15, 36, 37, 39, 44, 57, 59, 60, 62, 64
Richardson, Dr.....	26
Rintoul, Bombadier David Edward, SRA(V). "D" Bn. (Chemist, ICI).....	46, 47
Ritchie, Sgt Geoffrey Oscar, CQMS, SRA(V). (Nat. Cash Register Co. & Brinkman & Co.).....	2
Robertson, "Bouncer"	67
Robertson, Sgt George Campbell, FMSVF, 1 st Bn. Perak 2MIB Sthrn Area. "D" Bn.....	24
Robinson, [?K., SSVF SRA(V) (Gunner) (Singapore Harbour Board) (escaped S'pore)]	9
Rochester, [?Arthur Clement, 3 rd Bn. SSVF. "D" Bn.].....	24
Roden,.....	57
Rumours.....	40, 47
Rundle, "Uncle Bill" [?William Elford, 1 st Bn. SSVF "B" Company].....	24
Ryecroft, L/Bombadier A.J., SSVF SRA(V). (Asiatic Petroleum) (escaped S'Pore)	8, 9
Sabine, N.W., SSVF SRA(V) (Gunner) (Audit Office) (escaped S'pore)	9
Saigon	10, 26, 27, 57

Sainter, Lt. Col. IASC	36, 44
Saipan, Fall of	40
Sanderson, Capt.	21
Sangster, Jock (Gordon Highlanders)	23
Saringeon[?], Arthur	45
Scheerder, L/Corp James A. "Jimmy" 1st Bn, SSVF "D" Co. "D" Bn (S'pore Cold Storage) ("Hawaiian Serenaders")	
28	
Secret Service	31, 52
Selfridge, Gordon (Loyal Regt)	14
Seremban	13
Seth, Kenneth Alfred, SRA(V) (Gunner) (Barrister)	63
Shelton-Palmer, L/Corp. Hugh Valentine, FMSVF, Armd Car Regt. "D" Bn. (Planter)	66
Shenton Thomas	4
Sherwood Foresters	19, 55
Silcock, L/Corp.(Prof.) Thomas H., SFS(V)	24, 32
Simmonds, Stan (Red Cross, Singapore) (Gilbey's, Sydney)	62
Singapore	1, 4, 5, 6, 10, 15, 17, 22, 26, 27, 28, 30, 38, 39, 43, 47, 49, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69
Alhambra Cinema	7
Beach Road	7
Capitulation	7
Causeway	6
Cease Fire	7
Drill Hall	1
Geylang Road	1
Half Moon Street	59
Holland Village	6
Hotels: Raffles, Sea View, Adelphi, Oranje and Goodwood Park	67
Kranji	6, 7
Middle Road	7
Singapore Harbour Board	6, 7
Tengah Aerodrome	6
The Grove	2, 3, 7
Slim River	4
Sly, 2/Lieut. Lawrence Pontifex ("Larry"), FMSVF Armd Car Rgt. (Guthrie & Co.)	1
Smith, Gunner (125 Field Regt) (died Nakom Patom)	34, 36
Song Kheng	11, 64
SS Empress of Asia	6
Stealing	10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 26, 27, 33, 37, 51, 57, 58, 64
Stogden, John William SRA(V) (Gunner). "D" Bn.	2, 3
Stonehewer, L/Sgt Richard Dalzell, FMSVF, 2 nd Bn. Selangor. "D" Bn. (Tanjong Malim Rubber)	40, 46
Street, Capt. (Beds. & Herts)	36
Takuri	51
Tamajan	33, 34, 48, 66
Tamakan Railway Bridge	48
Tamils	13, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 53
Tarso	15, 19, 20
Teng Kee (Singapore)	63
Thackeray, [?Edward Llewellyn, FMSVF, Light Battery. "D" Bn. (Inspector of Machinery)]	49, 57
Thai army	51
Thompson, Lt. Kenneth Vincent ("Tommy", "Scruffy") 1 st Bn., SSVF; Pay Section (Derrick & Co.)	34
Thornton, 2/Lieutenant Charles, FMSVF. (Guthrie & Co.)	45
Thorpe, Padre (Australian Forces)	34
Todd, Ronny [?Ronald Bertram Rous, FMSVF, 2 nd Bn. Selangor, 2 M.I.B. "D" Bn. (HB & Co.)]	49
Toms, Harry [Lt. Henry J.C.K., SRA(V) (Mansfields)]	45
Tonchan	23, 25
Tonga Trot	53
Trading, River Valley Road	11, 14
Trincomalie	10
Vincent, [Herbert Laughland, SSVF Singapore Searchlight Bty. "D" Bn. (Fraser & Neave)]	62
Vincent, Wally	27
Volunteer Armoured Car Company	1
Wakeford, Robert ("Bob"), SRA(V) (Gunner). "D" Bn. (Wakeford & Lowndes)	19
Walker, Bill [?SSRA(V)] (escaped S'pore)	9
Walker, Capt (SSVF)	34, 44
Warden, Ken	47
Water	10, 13, 24, 33, 35, 39, 43, 50, 53

Water-divining	54
Watson, Aub	59
Watts, Capt.	21
Webb, [?Charles George SRA(V) (Gunner). (Lecturer, Physics; Raffles College)].....	3, 7, 8, 9
Well digging.....	54, 55
Weller, Lt. (Australian)	28
Welsh, John , SRA(V) (Gunner). "D" Bn.	2, 19
Whitehead, [Peter M. (Gunner) SRA(V). (Derrick & Co.)]	2, 8
Whiteside, Bill	56
Wilde [Wild], Maj. Cyril.....	14
Wilson, William	25
Winchester, (Gordon Highlanders)	37
Wireless.....	4, 10, 17, 26, 30, 31, 40, 41, 47
Wiseman, George Graham Eugene, FMSVF, 45 Res. M.T. Coy. "D" Bn. (Bousteads)	27
Wong	61
Woodcock, L/Bombadier Charles, SRA(V), "D" Bn. (Derricks)	23, 45, 46, 49, 52, 53, 55, 56
Woodhams, Charles	28
Woods, Sgt Lawrence R. 'Laurie' SRA(V). "D" Bn.....	19
Wright, Bertie [Barry James] 3 rd Bn, SSVF (Anglo Thai Corp.).....	33, 34, 48
Yasumé.....	12, 18, 22, 28
Young, Capt. W.B., FMSVF att Malay Regt, RAMC.....	49, 52, 53, 55
Zero fighter aircraft (Japanese).....	38, 54
Zuzatti [Zuzarte], Gonsalo, 1 st Bn. SSVF "D" Co. "D" Bn. ("Hawaiian Serenaders").....	28

Extract of letter:

Written on board HM Hospital Ship "Karoa" between Singapore and Sunda Straits

Thursday, November 2nd 1945

Dear Mother,

This will not be a long letter, but accompanying it will be part of a journal I am writing of the events of the past 4 years. A fortnight is to elapse before I reach Sydney and disembark, and I shall write for 2 hours daily and cover as much narrative of events and impressions as I can. I shall post the first part of this when we reach Fremantle and subsequent parts at Melbourne and Sydney. As I would like these kept as a record and reminder to me of these past few years, will you please not destroy the journal, but keep it for me against the time I get home.

We left Singapore at 3.00 p.m. on Monday and have almost reached the Sunda Straits between Java and Sumatra. We travelled very slowly, at about 4 knots, yesterday so that we shall be able to pass through the Straits in daylight. Four ships have already been lost since the end of the war in the straits due to mines and great care is being taken that we do not encounter a similar fate. The hospital ship is the "Karoa", ex-B.I.S.N. Co. mail ship on the run Calcutta to Singapore. She is a coal-burner and 32 years old and was converted into a hospital ship in India. We are carrying 421 patients. The holds have been decked in and the majority of the berths are in the tween-deck space. The more serious cases are in the old saloon on the promenade deck. The nursing staff is composed of English sisters and Indian orderlies with English and Indian doctors. On previous trips this ship has carried sick and wounded Jap. POWs to India. The sisters went on strike, but were ordered by the colonel RAMC that, as Red Cross personnel, they were compelled to give the enemy sick and wounded treatment, so they carried on. We are comfortably berthed with sheets and pillows on the palliases and the food is good, cooked in, however, rather an uninteresting way. We are getting quantities of potatoes which we have not had for so long and also chilled mutton and cabbage. I have made friends with 3 or 4 of the Australians – we are of course predominantly Australian – and divide my time between reading, playing contract and, from now on, in writing too. The majority of the patients, who by the way are really practically fit, spend most of their time lying on their beds dozing. I have tried this, but it does not suit me. The sea air is relaxing but I prefer to do my sleeping at nights.

I have had 2 tests made for amoebic dysentery, and I think it most probable that I shall be graded as fit for immediate discharge when we get to Sydney. I was troubled for some months by stomach pains but, since the course of sulphaguinidine, I have been feeling fit.

I am most anxious to get down to work again, but things really are in an appalling muddle in Singapore and the British Military Government does not seem very keen to get out and make way for the civilians. It will probably be about April before the Civil Government is back again in full force in Singapore, and until then no private trading is permitted. There is, therefore, little point in my being in Singapore whilst the British Military Administration is in charge. I had thought of offering my services to the Government, but it was obvious when I got to Singapore that they just did not want any of the ex POWs and civilian internees to have a hand in running things.

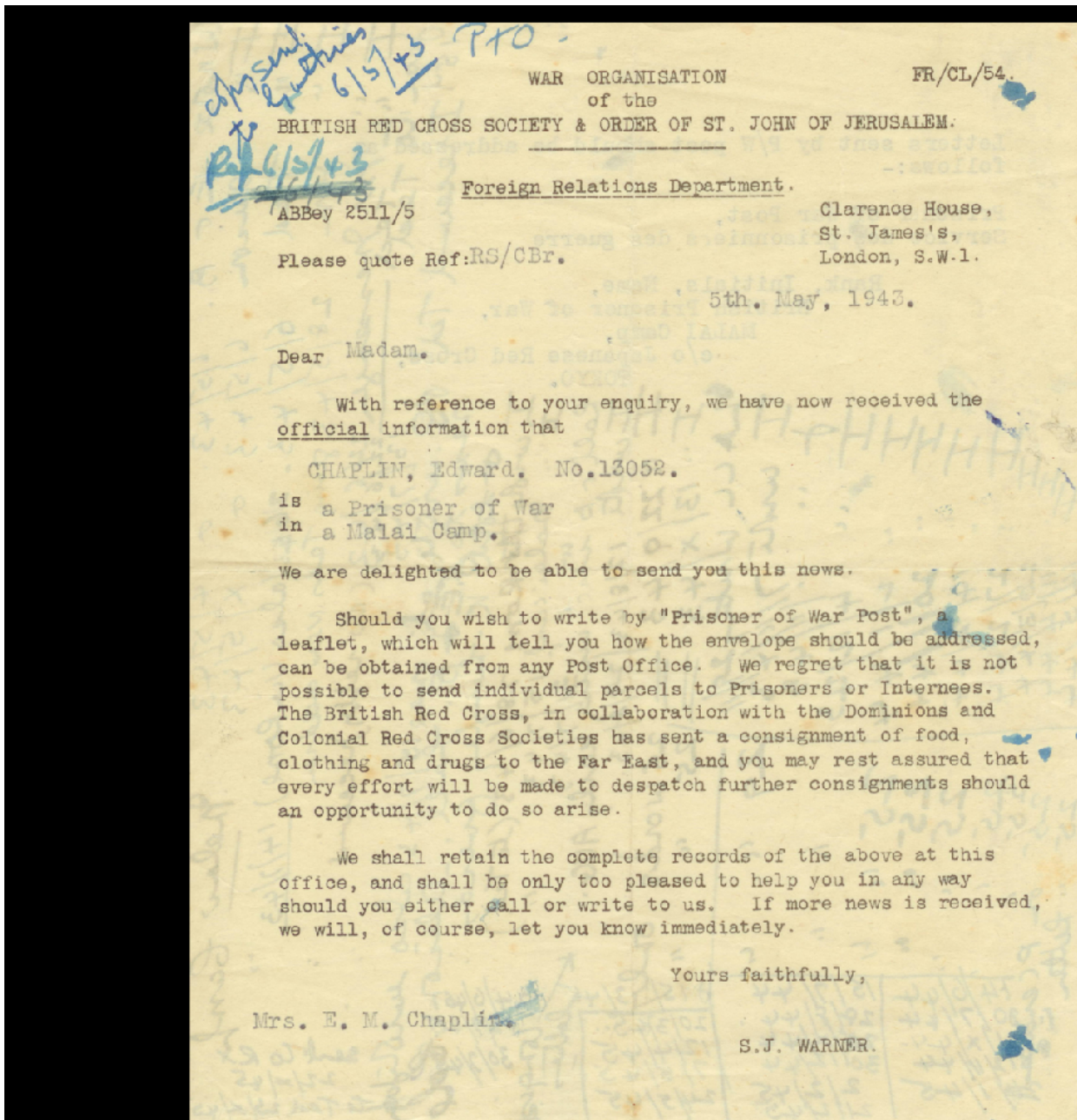
All my love,

Ted

Timeline of Camps and Travel

15.2.42	Capitulation of Singapore at 8.00 p.m.	
18.2.42	Arrived Changi Camp, Singapore	
14.5.42	Marched River Valley Road Camp, Singapore	building godowns; docks
12.10.42	Left Singapore by train	
16.10.42	Arrived Ban Phong, Thailand [Ban Pong]	
18.10.42	Marched from Ban Phong	
19.10.42	March to Kanchanaburi	
20.10.42	Rested	
21.10.42	Marched	
22.10.42	Rested Raja	
23.10.42	Marched to Tandong	
24.10.42	Marched to Tarso	
27.10.42	??? to Wampo Camp	railway track and bridges
15.5.43	Train to Tarso	
17.5.43	Marched to S. Tonchan Camp	
23.5.43	Marched to Bridge Camp	
???	To Tonchan Central Camp	
27.6.43	Barge to Kanu River Camp	
28.6.43	Arrived Kanu River Camp	
28.6.43	March to Kanu 2 (top camp)	"Speedo". Rock drilling & blasting
error?	[Hintock River Camp ??]	
???	Tonchan Central Camp (rest for a few days)	
???	Bridges Camp (~2 wks)	Bridges
???	Tonchan Central Camp (a few days)	
???	Hintock River Camp	Ballasting & clearing up
25.8.43	??? to Kinsyo Camp [Kinsayok]	rebuild camp; build railway station
13.1.44	??? to Tarso Base Hospital [Tarsao/Tarsoa]	
13.4.44	left Tarso	
14.4.44	Train to Nakom Patom Camp [Nakhon Pathom]	
13.1.45	Lorry & barge to Tamuan Camp [Tamuang]	
28.4.45	Train to Bangkok camp (godowns)(1 wk)	
~5.5.45	Truck to Lokburi (?Lopburi) Camp	repair runway
~6.5.45	Train to Takuri Camp [Takli/Takali/?Sraburi]	aerodrome; (well-digging)
16.8.45	Heard about the end of the War	
23.9.45	Train to Bangkok	
1.10.45	Air to Singapore	
Oct/Nov	HMHS 'Karoa' to Australia	

Red Cross Letter Advising of POW Status



copy sent to ... 6/5/43 PTO
R/C/S/43

WAR ORGANISATION
of the

FR/CL/54.

BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY & ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM:

Foreign Relations Department.

ABbey 2511/5

Clarence House,
St. James's,
London, S.W.1.

Please quote Ref:RS/CBr.

5th. May, 1943.

Dear Madam.

With reference to your enquiry, we have now received the official information that

CHAPLIN, Edward. No.13052.

is a Prisoner of War
in a Malai Camp.

We are delighted to be able to send you this news.

Should you wish to write by "Prisoner of War Post", a leaflet, which will tell you how the envelope should be addressed, can be obtained from any Post Office. We regret that it is not possible to send individual parcels to Prisoners or Internees. The British Red Cross, in collaboration with the Dominions and Colonial Red Cross Societies has sent a consignment of food, clothing and drugs to the Far East, and you may rest assured that every effort will be made to despatch further consignments should an opportunity to do so arise.

We shall retain the complete records of the above at this office, and shall be only too pleased to help you in any way should you either call or write to us. If more news is received, we will, of course, let you know immediately.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. E. M. Chaplin.

S.J. WARNER.