



**HONG KONG DIARY
AND
MEMORIES OF JAPAN**

Gleanings from the Diary of A Winnipeg Grenadier



H6737 Private Tom Forsyth, ex. P.O.W.

HONG KONG MEMORIES

GLEANINGS FROM THE DIARY OF A WINNIPEG GRENADIER¹

Tom Forsyth

My name is Tom Forsyth. I was born near Pipestone, Manitoba on April 26th, 1910. Lived and worked on a farm till I enlisted with The Winnipeg Grenadiers at Minto Armories on Sept. 30th, 1939. Drilled for weeks in civilian clothes till we were issued with last war uniforms with 1916 stamped inside the tunics. Moved into Fort Osborne barracks just before Xmas. Left Winnipeg on May 21st, 1940. Several days before we were issued with billfolds by the Grenadier Ladies' Auxiliary, I still have mine.

Reached Jamaica May 31st, 1940, where we relieved the King's Shropshire Light Infantry who went further south to Curacao, part of the Dutch West Indies, where they guarded huge oil refineries. Our job was simply garrison combined with guarding a camp which contained (by the time we left) over a thousand Germans and Italians and some notorious local characters including Bustamante who has lately caused such an uproar in the island's labor situation.

We left Jamaica on Sept 13th, 1941, and reached Canada on Sept 21st. Had 14 days furlough and left Winnipeg on the 27th; reached Vancouver on the 27th, left the harbour the same night on the Awatea and sailed on the 28th.

Saturday, November 8th, 1941

Aboard the Awatea, somewhere on the Pacific. Left Vancouver Oct 28th; we now know we are bound for Hong Kong. Our fresh water is rationed. Tonight the usual poker and bingo games going on - very warm. C9 serves as dining room and bedroom - hammocks slung in rows above our tables.

Nov 9th

Lecture by Crawford on the hazards we will encounter in the way of diseases, plagues and germs in general. According to bulletin, tension between U.S. and Japan is at its height.

Nov 10th

Drill in the Bren and lecture on signals. P.T. every day. Some big money has changed hands in crap games. Nazis have been stopped in front of Moscow. We are away off the sea lanes, have not seen a ship for days. Robinson commended for observing a rocket flare from a friendly sub during the night. . . If the army doesn't teach a man anything else, it ought to teach him to appreciate civilian life once more.

Nov 11th

Fatigues . . . Observed two minutes of silence.

¹ Bibliography, see pages 69 and 70.

Nov 12th

Tugby, C.S.M. of H.Q. Coy is very regimental; had C9 turned upside down and all men washing, scrubbing and polishing while in a lather of sweat in the close, moist heat.

Nov 13th

We sighted land early this afternoon, dim and hazy on the horizon, like a heavy cloudbank at first, but gradually growing more distinct. It was the Philippines, on both sides of our ship, could distinguish tremendous breakers crashing white against the foot of the craggy coastline. A lecture on the importance of discretion on our part while in port at Manila. Tonight there is no blackout on the ship. We can see faint lights on the shoreline; one of the crew died early this morning; was buried at sea.

Nov 14th

We are right among the islands, they are something similar to the West Indies in appearance; now there are sampans, a whole fishing fleet of them with their odd, rectangular sails of matting; aeroplanes overhead, and considerable naval traffic, harbor patrol boats. We pulled inside a long rock and concrete sea wall that is built around the outside of Manila harbor. Inside was a large part of the U.S. fleet. Destroyers and battleships, subs and three very fast torpedo boats that shot past in a smother of foam. After taking aboard pilot and customs officers we docked about 9. H.Q. training periods went on as per usual while we lay in harbor, while some speedy U.S. fighter planes played and dived over the ships and the port. We took on oil and water before pulling out. This evening we seem to be sailing straight into the sun. The islands are very mountainous; their peaks are always shrouded in the clouds, a contrast to the open sea where clouds are rare.

Nov 15

We are in the China Sea, veering nor-west, a rolling swell. We have two escorts this morning, one on each side and ahead. We drew our rifles and tin hats today. Last night we saw a great display of searchlights from the islands we were leaving. They were making the V for victory sign in the sky. Tonight we are out of sight of land and the sea is rough and some heavy showers have fallen.

Nov 16 (Sun)

Most of us were up at 4 this morning as there were the usual fatigues. We sighted China's shores as the dawn broke and we passed the island in the mouth of the Pearl River and reached the dock about 7. The harbour was full of small craft. When we came down the gang plank the first sign I noticed was a warning against bathing in the harbor on account of cholera. The dock police were turbaned East Indians. We formed up on a square close by to the music of a pipe band of the Royal Scots who are garrisoned here. We marched through the city of Kowloon to the Hankow barracks about three miles. We saw our first rickshaw pulled by a trotting coolie. Our huts are built of concrete. We have the same style of iron beds we had in Jamaica with 1910 stamped on them. The mattress is in three separate pieces known as biscuits, two blankets and sheets . . . One Canadian Dollar is worth \$3.24 in Hong Kong money at the Naafi (the British Army Canteen) but \$3.60 thru the proper channels.

Nov 17

A great relief to sleep on a bed (even if it has no springs) after weeks on a hammock. I sent a wire home; it cost 2 Chinese dollars. We have the same type of mosquito bars over our beds as we had in Jamaica. This is the cool season. One side of our garrison fronts on the bay and mud flats where we see natives digging for clams or some seafood. There are four main concrete drains crossing our area. Where they begin they are only several inches deep but where they empty into the bay they have gradually deepened till they are 8 feet deep. In the heavy rains that followed we were to see these drains full and overflowing from one end to the other and even a certain individual swimming in one on a wager.

Nov 18th

Tonight, Geekie and I went out on a midnight pass. The streets and sidewalks resound to the clatter of wooden sandals. The main streets of Kowloon are quite wide, no streetcars, a lot of busses, some bicycle and rickshaws. Saw a show at the Alhambra.

Nov 19th

We heard our copies of H.K. newspapers we had tied up and stamped and addressed will not be sent home today or any day? Why? Must pay 20¢ for boat mail letter home or \$2.50 for airmail. A Chinese shoemaker is taking orders for handmade shoes; he traces the outline of their feet on paper. Chinese women with glossy black hair tightly combed and strained back from their brows and coiled in a snug little knob at the back of their head, secured with a large brass pin, wearing dark drab garments, a sort of smock and trousers that reach between the knee and ankle are squatting at the doors of our huts, sewing patiently away shortening our slacks, shorts etc. Few can understand any English. We have been warned against using fans in our huts for fear of wasting electricity. We hear the Japs are only 23 miles away on the other side of the hills. The byword here and all through our outfit, the stock reply to all hopeful or longing wishes, or ambiguous statements is "That will be the day!" inevitably it is overworked and has grown stale with too frequent usage. Tugby is certainly a regimental C.S.M. and few appreciate him. Today almost all the officers and N.C.O.s went to the island of H.K. to inspect defences. Old Joe Hopper was acting C.S.M. for the day. Jimmy Young orderly officer, and Ballingal appointed himself the adjutant! We took all our beds apart and painted them with coal oil to discourage the bed bugs which never tasted Canadians in this colony before and seem to find them most satisfying. We had a swimming parade to the Y.M.C.A. Back to barracks for supper. Prairie and I clearing up dishes after.

Nov 22nd

We were told, when our Bren gun carriers came in we would be using them to patrol the border of Japanese occupied China. Geekie and I went down town on the bus, crossed on the ferry to the island of H.K. saw some fine modern stores and buildings there and double decker street cars. An Englishman in a car picked us up and drove us up the steep winding road to 15 Peak Mansions. His name is William F. Simmons. He was ordered by the government to send his wife and family to safety. They are now in Victoria. B.C. Wonderful view of the harbor from peak. We had supper at the Y.M.C.A. and took in a show at the Star Theatre. "A Guy, A Girl and A Gob" Very funny. Vic Geekie is one of the finest men I've met in the army, a wonderful sense of humor.

Nov 23rd Sunday

Instead of Church parade we are loading and unloading ammunition and cleaning Bren guns which are packed in grease. This Crown Colony of H.K. is greatly overcrowded owing to the influx of refugees from Canton as a result of the Chino-Japanese war. People sleep on the sidewalks here by the thousands. The surrounding hills are rapidly being denuded of their scrubby forest covering because fuel is so scarce for cooking fires. Talking to an Englishman who had been here for 19 years and appears to be very fond of the place, but he claims everything was better in every way in the good old days. Liquor was cheap and plentiful then, and all the maids were fair! Tonight fifty-six men went to hospital. The meat was bad at supper. I did not partake of the viands, as I had smelled it first.

Nov 24th 1941

Some of our men sent to the island. Weather is quite chilly, showers are cold.

Nov 25th 1941

A number of us were ordered to be ready to move to the island. Wilson got a telegram from Jamaica.

Nov 26th 1941

Fell in, marched to Ferry, sailed across the bay, landed, had a very steep climb up the hills to Wanchai gap where we took up positions on the roads at different points. Night rainy and windy, 2 hrs on and 4 hrs off.

Nov 27th 1941

Everything damp, including ourselves; there is a constant stream of natives toiling up these hills cutting great bundles of ferns or brush and toiling down again with their burdens.

Nov 28th 1941

Struck camp. There is a species of deer in these hills called the barking deer; they are quite small, only weigh about 40 lbs. They are preyed upon by packs of wild dogs that use these hills as a refuge. The leader of these packs is an Alsatian. In the hills on the mainland, wild boars still live. We returned to barracks on the mainland by supertime.

Nov 29th 1941

Vic and I went down town and crossing to the island shopped around in the Emporium, a large modern departmental store. After supper with Leach and Grace we were caught by a blackout and cessation of all traffic. Watched one plane come over practising dropping flares and tear gas bombs. It was payday today, so a wild night. A riot in the Sun Sun, 70 men of H.Q. still absent from quarters at 10 o'clock.

Nov 30th 1941

All men confined to barracks. Carrying ammunition from central store to coy: stores. Ordered to pack kits. Rumors are rife that there has been a clash on the border during night, etc. despatch riders are dashing about, and trucks and field pieces are starting up the mountain roads toward the New Territories. I mailed seven Christmas Cards today. Fatigue parties are loading magazines tonight.

Dec 1st 1941

Monday. The Royal Scots loaned us one old Bren gun universal carrier and we had a lecture on it. Each Coy sending a platoon to man posts on the island.

Dec 2nd 1941

Vic is taking up a course to become a P.T. instructor. We have been allowed to take turns driving the old carrier backwards and forwards with most emphatic cautions to be careful. Our officers are afraid we will break some parts and be charged with them before the carrier got back to the Scots. Our regimental charges are going up by leaps and bounds. Nearly 9 Hong Kong dollars now.

Dec 3rd 1941

Lectures of field signals for use in carriers. We have sections of men parading, pretending they are carriers! Then a lecture on poison gas. Some of our driver mechanics are working on the old carrier hoping it will hold together so we can practise with it.

Dec 4th 1941

Lessons in turning the carrier around without stalling or killing the motor.

Dec 5th 1941

Lecture on new anti-gas equipment of cape and hood and detecting assembly of tippet and white and yellow paper slips.

Dec 6th 1941

We had a grueling session of squad drill under the lashing tongue of a lieutenant, the same squad drill we performed at Minto Armouries in 1939. Went out in the evening with Vic and saw a show called, "The Long Voyage Home". Crossed to the island and went up to the Peak on the cable car, 1205 feet above sea level in 8 minutes, at an angle of 45 degrees. It must have cost a million to put up the barracks on the Peak, they are huge, massively constructed buildings. After descending we went to the Queens Theatre to see, "My Life with Caroline" starring Ronald Colman. Very entertaining.

Dec 7th 1941

Confined to barracks, all ranks, moving stores, loading amm'n. Fell in after dinner, marched to ferry, landed, climbed the steep road to Wanchai gap. Erected tents, then the brigadier ordered that the big marquees we had worked so hard to put up must come down. We could sleep in pup tents but there were not enough, so most of us slept under the stars. We heard distant rumbles of artillery during the night.

Dec 8th 1941

Monday. We are at war with Japan. Just after breakfast the siren started to wail a warning, then we heard planes but could not see them, then great water spouts four in a row in the harbour close to a big freighter, our ack ack opened up. On a wiring party last night and all day today.

Dec 9th 1941

Worked all night moving stores from mainland across by ferry and up into hills, then no place to put them out of the rain. Great quantities thrown on the ground, this continued throughout the day. Our old parade square bombed and the Jubilee building was hit. Some Chinese killed and several Rifles wounded. We are on road positions. Raining, wet and cold.

Dec 10th 1941

We hear artillery fire from the mainland where the Royal Scots and Middlesex are holding up the Jap advance. Imperials have fallen back to their second line of defence. Our meals are very scanty.

Dec 11th 1941

While on night shift we heard a whistle and scream as the first heavy artillery shell from the mainland reached our island. Counted 8 separate ones. An attempted invasion this afternoon by a fleet of junks from an island to our south was foiled by some of our gunboats who sank seven of them and drove the rest away. An artillery duel going on now. Six Jap bombers flew over at 3.35 and dropped bombs. Kowloon has been bombed, some parts are burning. The echoes of the report of our big guns rock and roll around these peaks like thunder. The air raid siren has been sounding almost constantly these days. Some of the boys have been raiding our stores piled in the open and we tasted our Xmas puddings a little earlier than usual. The quartermaster will be getting gray hairs thinking of the bales and boxes of clothes and shoes lying out in the rain.

Dec 12th 1941

On a wiring party all day. We heard that the U.S. has declared war on Germany, Italy and Japan.

Dec 13th 1941

Heard that when the fleet of junks was invading they got so close the Starret boys of A Coy sunk several with Vickers fire. A number of fifth columnists have been caught quite close around here and taken blindfolded to H.Q. Some disguised as Coolies, some as A.R.P. Wardens. A launch came across from Kowloon supposedly bearing Jap delegation.

Dec 14th 1941

Quiet night. Heavy artillery this forenoon. A hit made on gasoline dump at crossroads. It did not take fire but is running away rapidly. Some of the boys have young beards. Heavy shelling this afternoon. Shrapnel dropping around us. The fragments are quite hot, ugly jagged pieces of metal. Quite a number of planes going over dropping bombs and propaganda leaflets at the same time. The literature is directed towards the Indian troops, a picture of John Bull on a suffering elephant. The cable has been sabotaged so we are cut off except by radio. Parts of Kowloon burning. Very cold here during night. Must be the altitude and the damp.

Dec 15th 1941

Our water supply very inadequate. We are lucky when we get two meals a day. A lot of Jap planes over. Relieved of our post, moved into 555. A lovely house, the owner is gone, but his coat of arms is emblazoned over the mantelpiece, a shield with two dolphins in one upper corner, a diagonal bar with three fleurs-de-lis on it and two linked rings below. But we had no chance to sleep, we worked all night filling sand bags and carrying them to build a barricade around the officers' orderly room.

Dec 16th 1941

Food seems harder to get all the time. We have drawn our emergency iron rations, but were ordered not to touch them till we had been without food for two days. There is a small radio in this house, we heard some Christmas carols. Went out this evening, filled sand bags till 1 o'clock.

Dec 17th 1941

Heard from an American station we were besieged on this island but could hold out indefinitely. Rumours running around these hills that the Japs are proposing terms again today. Heard tonight of a proposed raid on Lamma Island.

Dec 18th 1941

Project awaiting confirmation by the Brig: A huge fire down on the edge of Victoria City. An oil dump has been hit by Jap bombs. A vast cloud of black smoke covering most of the sky and bellowing ever upward.

I cannot bring myself to write what happened between the 18th and the 25th. All I can say is I saw too many brave men die, some were my best friends and died beside me.

When we were ordered to lay down our arms on Xmas day I was filled with a huge disgust with everything. I gave my diary to Colonel Sutcliffe to keep for me.

It's hard to put into words our feelings when we heard the Governor of the Colony had surrendered to the enemy. I saw some men breakdown and cry like children, "What, surrender now?" they sobbed, "after all the good men we've lost?" (We had 137 men killed). Others cursed and raved as though delirious. Others like myself were stunned, dazed, apathetic. I had never dreamed it could happen, up to the last moment until Lieut. Corrigan (The Fighting Irishman) ordered us to lay down our arms. I had hoped, prayed and, yes, believed, a miracle would happen. Surely there must be aid for us not so far away, what about all the rumours of Chiang-Ka-Chek leading a Chinese army down thru the new territories? What about . . .? Ah, well, here's one Lee Enfield that no Jap will ever use against us. I released the bolt, slipped it out and flung it into a deep rocky ravine 200 feet below.

Prisoners of War at Mount Austin Barracks on Dec 25th 1941; moved to Peak mansions 9.30 P.M. Dec 26th moved to H.K. University Dec 27th moved to Victoria Barracks Dec 28th.

Dec 30th 1941

Had an early breakfast of ½ cup of tea and a large spoonful of beans, left Victoria Barracks about 7, moved by slow stages down to the ferry where we saw a large number of bodies floating in the water, ferried across and had a long roundabout march to Shamshuipo barracks where we found everything in a state of ruin and desolation. After we left, the Chinese had systematically looted and destroyed . . . the biscuits we slept on had been torn to pieces and the coir stuffing scattered everywhere. Not a window remained in a hut or a door, even the brass faucets were gone, while the pipes had been torn out of the washrooms, and every scrap of wood that could be torn away from anything was gone, even the seats of the toilets. A scene of utter chaos such as I never

thought to see. Very short of rations. Tonight each man got 3 hard tack crackers and 1/3 of a tin of bully. Some of the boys are sick.

Dec 31st 1941

Spent a restless night though bone tired. An Imperial staff sergt lay outside dying of an internal hemorrhage and calling for help. Some of his friends knelt beside him; they said he could not be moved. They carried him away in the morning, when he was dead. Inside our hut big Tiny kept us all awake with a terrific cough. Each man got 3 hard tack crackers for breakfast, the same for dinner. We are cleaning up the huts, and the grounds, sweeping up the broken glass and the shattered mortar and dirt and refuse of every description, the same as we did at Murray barracks and the University and Victoria barracks. Tonight we had our first taste of rice. There is a great pillar of smoke and a glare in the sky, must be from the oil fire that has been burning for the past week.

Jan 1st 1942

Quite cold in our windowless, doorless hut, very windy. Dust and ashes are swirling around from the remains of the rubbish fires which are burning all day yesterday around our huts. Men are grouped around little cooking fires trying to boil water to make tea. A chill cheerlessness pervades the camp. Some Chink peddlers trying to sell some native food thru the wire, the sentry chased them away. The sun is shining but it has no warmth. Cpl Fox has dysentery. Roll call at 9.30. Breakfast a cup of half cooked rice without any salt. No dinner. My worldly goods are indeed few. I have the clothes I stand up in, one change of cotton underwear, 1 haversack and water bottle and my steel helmet. My packsack and all my personal belongings plus my two kit bags, one of which contained \$25.00 in Canadian money, are all over on the island up among the peaks. Some at house No 555, some at 529. Our rice tonight was only half cooked and yet it was burnt! Strange, today every man was asked his age and previous occupation. Chilly this evening.

Jan 2nd 1942

A very cold, miserable night. Wrapped up in one blanket and oilskin gas cape, but shivered all night. Everyone trying to find something to cover our windows.

Jan 3rd 1942

Another shivery night. Major Baird gave us a pep talk telling us not to get. Downhearted this morning. A Middlesex team beat the Royal Signals 4-0 at football. They must be eating better than we are.

Jan 4th 1942 Sunday

Roll call at 8.30 and Church Parade at 12. A number of Indians are moving out of camp. We are going to get some of the coir they left behind and pick it over for our beds. The main topic of conversation is food, and once Jenkins struck. An attitude and declaimed:

You may live without books
What is knowledge but grieving?
You may live without hope
What is hope but deceiving?
You may live without love —

What is passion but pining?
But where is the man who can live without dining?

At the Church parade the Royal Scots padre took the service. His text was, "Ye are they who came out of great tribulation."

In HONG KONG the day never passed without the camp staff or the guards inflicting sheer wanton cruelty on helpless innocent Chinese civilians. The guards loved to practise Ju-Jitsu on ten year old boys; to make old women kneel for hours in the middle of the road at Shamshuipo, while at North Point camp whenever any Chinese women attempted to gather firewood on the high hills above the camp the guards used them for target practise, taking turns firing, laughing and joking. The camp was on the very edge of the water; there was always a lot of small craft in the bay. A small rowboat with two women in it came just within rifle range; an officer was making his rounds, he seized a rifle from a guard and fired, one of the women dropped her oar and sank forward in the boat, the other rowed frantically to get out of range. Cold, calculated butchery, that's all it was. A Chinese girl about 18 was tied to a tree for two days for gathering firewood close to camp.

Close to Bowen Road hospital two Chinese were wired to trees, soaked in waste oil and set on fire. Their screams were terrible to hear.

Now we are prisoners of War back on the mainland in Shamshuipo barracks.

Jan 5th 1942

I got my diary back from the Colonel this morning. Lack of personal kit is proving a great handicap and inconvenience. Few men have any soap or razors. The problem of feeding 5000 men, Grenadiers, Royal Rifles, Royal Scots, Middlesex, Hong Kong Volunteers, Hong Kong Singapore Royal Artillery (the latter were Hindus) all big men with turbans and bushy black beards, was a difficult one. Old gas drums had their heads knocked in (or out) they were propped up on stones, a fire lit underneath and rice boiled that way, a cupful morning and night, no salt, a most insipid mess. The fortunate few who have money can buy over the fence from the Chinese a few things like buns and canned goods that really help. I'll never forgive myself for leaving \$25.00 in my kit bag up among the hills on the island. We had a lecture from Baird, he advised us to make wooden clogs or sandals to save our shoes. The Imperial have all had a pay of \$10.00 since they came in this camp, but we haven't been paid a cent.

Jan 6th 1942

The Japs put on a band concert. We were invited to attend - or else. Not to be outdone, what was left of our band, along with the remainder of the Royal Scots band got together and played a few selections. This afternoon the Japs found a house nearby that contained a lot of furniture looted out of these barracks by the lower element among the Chinese, and ordered them to bring it back and throw it over the fence. Tables, chairs and fire pails, trunks &c. A number of our men are going sick with dysentery. It is raining this evening, a mournful drizzle.

Jan 7th 1942

Indians digging a grave for one of their fellows who died during the night. There is a tremendous

lot of traffic on the road that runs across the face of the hills behind our camp and up into the New Territories. Traffic seems to run equally both ways but the general belief is the Japs are taking everything of value out of this Colony and forcing the Chinese to leave, too. There were thousands of refugees here before hostilities began. They are worse off than we are now. Their plight is pitiful. All on foot, women and little children and babes in arms, climbing the steep rocky road over the mountains, their worldly goods in a bundle on their backs, retracing the same road down which they had fled not so long before, hoping for safety and protection from a brutal conqueror. What possible hope would they ever have of reaching Chinese occupied territory? Asked the Imperials who knew this country what lay on the other side of that bare and rugged mountain range? Miles and miles of impassable swamp. Men make wars; women and little children pay for them in untold suffering.

Jan 8th 1942

A cold night. McBride has four pieces of shrapnel in his head but must wait for an X-Ray before operation. Some of the Chinese troops escaped so now the Japs are forcing them to build for themselves a strong wire bull pen, when finished they will be herded into it.

Jan 9th 1941

The camp is full of rumours. It's amazing the way men will repeat rumours that they know in their hearts are too good to be true. There is no place on earth so full of wishful thinking as a P.O.W. camp. It's like drowning men grasping at straws, or like men repeating things as if the mere repetition they could make them come true; make facts out of fancies. The Japs are doing everything to discourage peddlers who sell around the fence. I saw a sentry administer a brutal beating to a 10 year old kid, could hardly crawl away afterward.

Jan 10th 1942

A fine rain falling. Leach lent me a book to read, "Of Human Bondage", the front torn off, it starts at page 158, the end at least was happy. A gramophone is playing 'Rose of Tralee' and Helbren is producing something from his accordion in the next hut. The two main topics of conversation in this hut, and indeed in the whole camp, are food and how soon we may be free. What our first big meal will be like when we get out, and what we will do to the fifth columnists in civilian dress, with armbands, outside the fence who beat up the peddlers. It is tantalizing to hear men talk of their favourite dishes while we dine on rice without salt, but it is exquisite agony to think of our people at home who have no way of knowing what happened to us; we hear our casualty list never went home, nor the letter each man wrote after capitulation.

Jan 11th 1942

A service was held by the two Imperial Padres. The padre of the Royal Scots urged us to "Put on the full armour of God and gather our hardihood around us and to count our blessings." I had a long talk with Dusty Dame; sitting on the smooth cement of the tennis court in the sun, with my pencil I sketched the old farm, quarter-by-quarter, field-by-field.

A Japanese hospital ship is in the harbour with 9000 wounded Japs from the Philippines. One report claims the Japs had 10,000 casualties in taking of Hong Kong, 2000 dead, 8000 wounded. A big mule train went away and up over the mountain trail at noon today. Rumor says the Japs are taking all metal from here, are not fortifying the place. We have no midday meal, not even

tea and we are forbidden to drink the water here without boiling it first. Private camp fires have been forbidden to conserve fuel for the kitchen. All lights must be out at 9 o'clock. There are not many to extinguish, only two or three candles in each hut.

Jan 12th 1942

Saw Jap sentry rope and tie a Chinese boy to lamppost. Then completely stripped two Chinese women in order to publicly humiliate them.

Jan 13th 1942

We had a few native beans in our rice today, but only half cooked. I think I miss bread and butter more than anything.

Jan 14th 1942

The inveterate smokers are having a hard time to get tobacco. Are picking up butts and stubs and snipes.

Jan 15th 1942

Officers betting on probable date of our release. A few beans in the rice tonight; pale yellow and rather hard. We hear freighters in the harbor can only get up the Pearl River as far as Canton.

Jan 16th 1942

We had ten minutes of squad drill on the square, so we will not forget our basic training I suppose. The Jap guards stared.

Jan 17th 1942

For several days the Japs have been loading sacks of salt out of a big storehouse (just outside our garrison) onto their trucks and down to a ship. Big 60 cats with cabs are coming in a steady stream down the mountain road dragging big guns and heavy loads. I was on guard at the orderly room during the night, yet there was nothing there but a few makeshift tables and brooms. Quite cold. Milt Dann hammered out a large piece of corrugated roofing and made a door for one end of the hut, riveted the hinges on.

Jan 18th 1942

Cecil Fines birthday. Went to Church service. Am beginning to detest this monotonous diet. But must eat to live. There are two bodies floating past the wharf at the corner of our compound, they are floating face down. Their hands are tied behind their backs.

Jan 19th 1942

A few minutes of squad drill this morning. More prisoners came in who had been in hospitals. Firewood is very scarce; rafters are being torn out of huts. No axes in camp, using picks and iron fence posts to split wood, saw one of the Rifles eating his rice out of a large ornamental hubcap off an automobile.

Jan 20th 1942

We did Coy drill for 15 minutes this morning. Herb Millar came into camp from hospital, wounds in his back still open. Japs clearing all our wounded out of hospitals. 39 Jap ships in

harbour. Several truckloads of army stuff came in camp. The Indians nearly mobbed it. Had to be driven off, a near riot between whites and Indians. Pickets out all night patrolling between the lines.

Jan 21st 1942

A new staff in the kitchen. A certain staff sgt let out of the kitchen as he was found feasting during the night on hard tack and butter!

Jan 22nd 1942

Some Indians moving out today. Imperials playing cricket on parade ground, guards are maintained on the kitchen all night

Jan 23rd 1942

Canadians moving out of this camp. The Imperials swarming into our huts as we vacate them and dragging off our few iron beds. After counting and recounting by the Japs we start at 10, march in fours thru Kowloon, cross to Island on the ferry, see many sunken boats on the way over with part of their funnels or smoke stacks showing. Reach North Point camp; wait while some Imperials and Chinese Volunteers march out to make room for us. What is left of Royal Rifles are here. We see some of our men we had given up for lost. Many of these huts damaged by shellfire. Flies are bad; dysentery prevalent. We are right on the shoreline here. Food better here, a little bully beef and some hardtack.

Jan 24th 1942, Sat

A severe lecture, warned to have our beards off in 24 hours though few men have razors and are not anxious to lend. We were told any breach of discipline would be severely dealt with by loss of pay, detention or field punishment. The beds are old, wooden double deckers, not enough to around, shove two together and cram three men on top and three in bottom. Some Dutchmen came into camp tonight captured off a sub on the 19th December. Took all this time, to get here in a tramp hugging the coast.

Jan 25th 1942

A parade to find out how many native born Canadians we had, now the rumours are flying that there may be an exchange of prisoners. The navy played the army at football; the Rifles played the Grenadiers at softball. Roll call and P.T. at 10.30. Another roll call at 10.30 and another period of P.T. These will be compulsory every day from now on.

Jan 27th 1942

During the night there were several bursts of machinegun fire evidently designed to drive away marauding Chinese from the partly submerged wrecks that litter the harbour. The flies are fierce in the camp. We are forbidden to eat in our huts as it may draw the flies in more. The guards here change every hour. Cooks are trying to bake bread in kitchen but lack proper ovens.

Jan 28th 1942

An officer in camp has made a bet we will be home for Easter. Quite a commotion in camp tonight. Five navy men have escaped and it is believed they actually left sometime last night, supposedly in a whaler propelled by sails. All ordered into huts and a thorough check of all camp

personnel made.

Jan 29th 1942

A muster at Reveille and another roll call at 10.30. A few men who try to light little fires for themselves are strictly discouraged. A rumour we may be exchanged for Japs on West Coast or for their fishing fleet.

Jan 30th 1942

The navy men in here seem to have lots of money, the sentries sell them cigarettes and chocolate bars.

Jan 31st 1942

Kit inspection, a hollow mockery. Some men were searched for officers clothes and equipment. A great many bets are on as to when we will be free; a pool has been formed, guesses range from May 1st to 1945. Reading "Down the Garden Path" by Beverley Nichols, one of the best I've read for some time. The guard was changed today. An open air concert tonight, our band playing. The crew of the Dutch sub sang their National Anthem, and a sub song and a song of the sea.

Feb 1st 1942

A rumour Chinese guerrillas are active on mainland. Small meals today, a lot of hungry men.

Feb 2nd 1942

I dreamed I was home last night, kissing Isobel². I wish now I had kissed her oftener when I had the chance.

Feb 3rd 1942

Wild rumors about exchange of prisoners. Some fellows for a hobby are whittling or carving, some are collecting badges and fixing them on their belts. Moved all beds outside. Scrubbed both beds and huts. Half of each double rafter is being removed from each hut. This camp was originally built to house Chinese refugees. A queer mist drifting on the harbor tonight. Sentries firing on peddlers around the fence. A short lecture from Lieut. Commander Gaspar on his experiences with Chinese Maritime customs in checking smuggling off the coast.

A Canadian caught by a sentry buying thru fence, had face slapped, goods confiscated, taken before camp commandant. A rumour some whole meat came into camp. C Company has started a small newspaper several sheets of typewritten matter which is tacked on the wall of hut 20. We did not get any meat but a little gravy and, as Jenkins said "Where's there's gravy there's always meat" so someone got it.

Feb 4th 1942

We have a half hour of P.T. every forenoon. Two Chinese have been shot and one bayoneted by the Japs for selling stuff thru the fence. A little whale soap tonight. Drizzling rain.

Feb 5th 1942

Overcast, cold, showery. Reading, "Salute to Adventurers" by Buchan, very good. For supper a

² Isobel, my youngest sister

sauce made from sweet potatoes.

Feb 6th 1942

Someone outside has loosed an occasional shot at our guards during the night. There is a blackout on the mainland and island. Cars have blue cloth over headlights.

Feb 7th 1942

Another incident of sentries being fired on at a corner where they stood under a light. A lot of men have taken to chewing the pitch or tar used for roofing and men are warned at every parade to spit it out before they come on parade.

Feb 8th 1942

Dark lowering clouds, drizzling drearily. On kitchen fatigue with old Bill Harkness . . . outdoor kitchen . . . smoky open fires . . . soot. Puddles and pools everywhere. Chilly . . . clothes wet.

Feb 9th 1942

Trying to get some dental work done. No luck.

Feb 10th 1942

Another grey day. The Japs are chanting to their sun god and doing P.T. Really work at it. 24 Grenadiers came into camp today from Queen Mary's and St. Teresa's hospitals. Alex Skibinski says a lot of our dead are still lying unburied around Wanchai Gap. Heard Eric Anderson's leg was saved after all. A miracle.

Feb 11th 1942

Rained heavily during the night. Bleak and cheerless today. Some bricks, barrels and stovepipes came in today to aid in building kitchen. A hospital ship with a Red Cross on it arrived today, probably loaded with wounded from Singapore.

Feb 12th 1942

Cloudy, cold, raining. One of the boys is reading Revelations and striving to prove that Hitler will only endure 40 and 4 months from the outbreak of his dominance which should mean his fall this summer. A lot of the men are getting lousy, no soap, no hot water, most of the men have no great coats and walk about with blankets around their shoulders.

Feb (Friday) 13th 1942

Cloudy and cold. A hot argument between Sgt Payne, Sgt Watson on Capitalism versus labor. Ravenously hungry.

Feb 14th 1942

Raining again. Hospital here is cram full, thirty odd patients. Latest figures on our casualties are 137 dead or missing. There are 719 Grenadiers in this camp now, probably the same number of Rifles. Quite a number of the Royal Navy and the crew of the Dutch sub. The grounds here are less than a quarter the size of Shamshuipo. Today we were warned to turn in all cameras. I haven't seen a single one in camp.

Feb 15th 1942

Sick as a dog .. couldn't touch food all day.

Feb 16th 1942

Went into hospital with dysentery. So called hospital was an old warehouse, no windows in east or south, dank concrete walls and floor, roof supported by six huge stone columns. It reminds me of Byron's description of the prison of Chillon. There is a makeshift stove here but it will not draw, gives more smoke than heat.

Feb 17th 1942

Rumour is rife that Singapore has fallen. They drench us with Epsom Salts five times a day as if we were horses.

Feb 18th 1942

Rained heavily during the night, the rats scurried around our pallets in the darkness.

Feb 19th 1942

Temple came in today. When they open the door to get rid of the smoke from the stove they chill the whole room.

Feb 20th 1942

Rainy night, grey cold day. Was given a bit of hardtack, good.

Feb 21st 1942

Fines visiting me, he has been very kind, both in Shamshuipo and here.

Feb 22nd 1942

A grey cold day. More hardtack. Some of the boys taking bath in a basin tonight.

Feb 23rd 1942

Milder. Still overcast. This afternoon nine of us including old Alf Johnson and myself were loaded in the back of a truck and taken to Bowen Road military hospital. It was shelled during the war and damaged badly in parts, the connecting covered bridge between the two main buildings being gutted by fire. Only the ceiling looks bad in our ward, much of the plaster is off. It leaks when it rains. I had a hot bath in a real bathtub and got into a bed with sheets! Wonderful. A Rifle in the next cot to me is very ill with dysentery. His name is Lowe, from Bury, Quebec.

Feb 24th 1942

Actually had two slices of bread for breakfast and some tea. Couldn't eat any dinner. We are quite high up in the hills here. A number of Grenadiers who are convalescing from wounds dropped in to say hello to me. They tell me Corporal Green died this evening.

Feb 25th 1942.

Weather has turned very cool and raw. Green was buried at S this afternoon.

Feb 26th 1942

Cold and very foggy. We hear occasional rifle shots, the sentries shooting pigeons. A naval officer says the Japs have a division of troops, 12,000 men guarding this colony. About 4,000 British civilians have been interned on Stanley Island across from Repulse Bay.

We had cuttle fish for dinner, I could not stomach it, the suction discs on the tentacles gave me the creeps.

Feb 27th 1942

Very raw and cold. Some pretty nurses here. I was given a thick crust of bread for breakfast, very grateful for it. I am reading "The Good Companions" by Priestly. Very good.

Feb 28th 1941

Still cold. This place has as many wild rumours circulating through it as camp. Latest is that Britain has granted independence to India.

March First, 42

Still raw and cold. There are 11 patients in this ward.

March 2nd 42

Some Indian ghee on our bread. Very good. Similar to dripping.

March 3rd 42

A big helping of rice for dinner as a mistake was made and we drew rations for ward 6 who have more patients than ours. Quite a number of patients who were discharged from hospital and waiting in the barrack block went down today back to North Point or Shamshuipo.

March 4th 42

We each had a boiled egg for breakfast. Some couldn't eat theirs. Mine was stale and musty but I choked it down. Heard there is a lot of Beri Beri in North Point.

March 5th 42

My morning egg was rotten. The first warm sunny day for some time. I sat out on the balcony for an hour this afternoon. A very skimpy supper, two wafer thin slices of bread and a half-ounce of cheese.

March 6th 42

Walked down three flights and had a much needed haircut. Sat in the sun after dinner. Tonight I was weighed, 136¼ lbs. Left Canada weighing 168.

March 7th 42

Cold and dismal again, no sun. A few beans this morning, an egg tonight. Read one of Hocking's books.

March 8th 42

A roll call at 9 every morning now by order of the Japs. This forenoon some Jap officers brought

in a Chinaman who accused a Sgt Major who is a patient here of burying arms and ammunition on the hospital grounds. The Sgt Major indignantly denied the charge. This seems to be a popular method among the Chinese to curry favor with the Japs. Our eggs were rank tonight; the moment we broke the shell we knew they were rotten.

March 9th 42

A few beans for breakfast. Finished reading "Sons of the Others" by Phillip Gibbs. Very good. An egg tonight. Very strong, but forced it down.

March 10th 42

Raining and cold. Went to dentist, Captain Fraser. Very decent fellow. Still has strong Scotch accent. Octopus for dinner. It was horrible. Truck came up from North Point with more patients. Duck egg for supper.

March 11th 42

Soap is terribly scarce and very hard to get. Makes bathing and laundry difficult indeed. Salt is hard to get, we miss it greatly.

March 12th 42

Talking to Eric Anderson who got a bad dose of shrapnel in both legs and one arm. He is remarkably cheerful, though both legs are in a cast from toes to knee. He has the highest praise for the two Canadian nurses who work here. (Came over with us on the Awatea). Miss Christie and Miss . . ? Waters?. Short concert in one ward.

March 13th (Friday)

Weighed again. 134½ lbs. Very dense fog during night, even harbour lights obscured. Read "The Good Earth" by Pearl S. Buck. A sordid, tragic story. The Ides of March. Misty but clearing up. Two discharged from our No 7 ward. I talked to Bonny Neufelt for a while. He lived near Morden once. Twelve in his family, father came from Nebraska. They used to kill four pigs and an ox every fall to see them thru the winter. His mother had a famous recipe for baked bean. It makes us all the hungrier to talk about those things but we can't help it.

March 15th 42

A practise fire drill. A wild rumour that 4,000 Canadians landed in Australia to protect it against threatened invasion.

March 16th 42

Kit inspection by the Japs. They seized all flashlights and all medical or technical books. Lowe, one of the Rifles from Bury, Que up for a few hours today. We are getting 8 ounces of bread per day. Reading "The New Road" by Neil Munro. Very good, historical novel. The Japs have had two Chinks tied to posts by their guardroom down on the road below this hospital for a day and a night. We are only allowed hot water for washing two days a week now.

March 17th 42

Today was Eric Anderson's birthday. I had quite a visit with him down in his ward on ground floor. He was drawing plans for a house and ham he would like to build after the war. Cuttle fish

for dinner, horrible.

March 18th 42

Working all forenoon, sweeping, washing and polishing, in preparation for inspection by the new Japanese Governor of the Colony. He never even walked thru our ward. Japanese are afraid of dysentery. Talking to Ganton, his arm in a cast, he is planning a co-operative farm on a large scale in B.C. after the war.

March 19th 42

Three cases from North Point went into ward 6 today. Two with malaria and Roger Leitch with Beri Beri. He is all puffy from rice diet.

March 20th 42

Am hungry all the time, day and night. I help carry rations regularly from the kitchen now. I read "The Glen O' Weeping" by Marjorie Bowen, a tragic story about the massacre of Glencoe.

March 21st 42

Wash up dishes after every meal now. Drop in for a few minutes chat with Leitch in ward 6 and Anderson in 9. For the first time rice was cooked dry and increased from 3 to 5 oz.

March 22nd 42

Fine weather for once.

March 23rd 42

A little Indian ghee on our bread this morning. It's a sort of dripping, it seems more filling than butter. An Indian artilleryman died of his wounds today after lingering for months. He was buried in the steep hillside. Kellaway of the Rifle who died here was just 19 the day before he died. Sgt. Pellor just came in with tonsillitis.

March 24th 42

Reading Hood's poems today. Heard a large convoy had reached Australia from U.S. (True or false?)

March 24th 42

The Japs are tearing down the statues in Monument square of Victoria and Edward and melting them for their bronze.

March 25th 42

A spoonful of Soy sauce, dark brown, sour and salty, on our rice at noon. Any flavor is better than none. Four more patients in from N. Point. One was Major Crawford. Read "Wild Animals I Have Known" by E. T. Seton. I have not read it since I was going to school at Paramount.

March 27th 42

Gained a pound last week.

March 28th 42

Eric had another operation on his leg and had a piece of infected bone taken out.

March 29th 42

Reading one of Churchill's novels, "A Modern Chronicle", published in 1910. Cloudy, raining tonight.

March 30th 42

Raining, roof leaking. Hen's eggs today, far more rotten than the ducks'.

March 31st 42

Cold and rainy. A rehearsal for a concert tonight. Some patients going on stretchers. Dark in our ward, one bulb when there should be at least three. Roof leaking and place has a cheerless air. Hungry, restless and my feet are cold.

April First

A good concert tonight, but all too short.

April 2nd 42

Told today to move to barrack block as consider cured. 15 men left it today for Shamshupo. I was put on a working party this afternoon, given a shovel and told to fill up a huge bomb crater. Two slices of dry bread for supper. The barrack block is a large, dirty untidy building, 13 of us in it.

April 3rd 42

General clean up.

April 4th 42

We had two small thin slices of bread dipped in peanut oil and fried, for breakfast, very good. On working party today, pick and shovel filling in craters and shell holes, hard work, I do not feel up to it yet. Headache and backache, general weakness.

April 5th 42

Bad attack of diarrhoea, or is it a relapse of dysentery? Up 9 times during the night. This morning went to Easter service.

April 6th 42

Lull, rainy. Warned to be ready to leave for North Point. As soon as we had packed we were told the move was cancelled. I started to read "Oliver Wistwell" by Kenneth Roberts, a splendid historical novel. There are 836 pages, wonder if I will have time to finish it? Afraid not.

April 7th 42 Tuesday

Heard this morning that Colonel Sutcliffe dies last night at 7 o'clock of Malaria, dysentery and anaemia. I think myself he died of a broken heart. The funeral was at 4 in the afternoon. Two truckloads of officers and a few C.S.Ms came up from North Point to pay their last respects.

April 8th 42

We were all searched for fear we might have some hospital equipment, towels or dishes, as many coveted the big white bowls in use here, who had to eat out of tin cans at the camp down below. After supper we left here for North Point camp.

April 9th 42

Back at North Point camp. We had a sort of sauce made out of Chinese dates on our rice. I went on sick parade and got excused duty for a week.

April 10th 42

Very hot down here compared to the temperature up in the hills at Bowen Road. We had a stew made out of wild Chinese lettuce, quite flat and tasteless. Mosquitoes are very bad round here at night. Very hard to sleep. Buns are sourdough, very sour, flat and heavy, no yeast, hard as rock on the outside, souggy inside.

April 11th 42

Footwear a serious problem. Some men wearing wooden sandals but majority handicapped by lack of tools.

April 13th 42

Finally finished a pair. Very uncomfortable to wear.

April 14th 42

The Japs are salvaging all the sunken ships in the harbor, raising them, pumping them out, and stripping them. The double decker tramcars are running past the camp again.

April 15th 42

The fence around our enclosure is being made higher, more barbed wire strung around us. Big Jap inspection of huts and grounds.

April 16th 42

Clear and hot. Japs putting porcelain insulators on fence posts and stringing four heavy smooth wires inside the barbed wire.

April 17th 42

Raining this afternoon. We hear the navy men, 600 of them, are moving out of here tomorrow and that 75 Canadians from Shamshuipo are coming to take their places. Some of our men are selling kit bags to the sailors. For a long time there has been dealing going on. Our men are selling buns to the navy for three cigarettes apiece. Tonight, now that darkness has fallen, our men are shamelessly pillaging around the navy huts, picking up and carrying off everything removable in the way of stools, chairs, tables, loose lumber etc. It is very sad. Before it got dark they were buying them!

April 18th 42

A heavy sky, a drizzle with a gusty windy drive behind it. Miserable day for the navy to move out. They are bustling about. Some staggering under huge packs, guards posted on vacated huts to prevent looting. The navy spent an hour on the parade square in the rain while their packs

were being searched. The first casualty on the charged wire occurred this morning. It was the Jap orderly sgt's own pet dog. We had thought of testing the current with Halbert's pet monkey. This afternoon 80 Canadians came in from Argyle and Shamshuipo, 20 of them Grenadiers. Dick Wilson, Alex Colvin, McCauley and Sgt. Marsh among the bunch.

April 19th 42

A grey rainy day. Special muster parade.

April 20th 42

All the sgt's moving into one hut. There ought to be some good fights in there. A dozen Canadians came into camp from Bowen Road.

April 21st 42

Grey and cloudy, picked up enough scraps of wire around the fence to join together and make a clothesline. Opened up a rice sack and made a sort of a hammock bed to replace the hard boards.

April 22nd 42

Some landscape gardening going on in camp. R.Q.M.S. Beare presiding over rations and rice has been cut. We only get $\frac{3}{4}$ of what we did. Fish sauce tonight so vile I couldn't eat it.

April 23rd 42

A great day, our first issue of soap. One small bar of Lifebuoy divided between 12 men.

April 24th 42

I am reading "Cheating Death" by John Young. I only hope I can manage it. A mess of boiled lettuce for dinner.

April 25th 42

Cloudy with showers. Every night the rats run through the huts. Jenkins says they are waiting till we get a little weaker before attacking us.

April 26th 42

My birthday dinner. One sourdough bun and a cup of bitter tea. My birthday supper, a half portion of rice with a little whale gravy and a small patty made out of whale meat and burnt rice, but mostly burnt rice.

April 27th 42

Raining steadily. Reading the "House of the Four Winds" by Buchan. Some boiled egg plant sauce tonight. We were issued a spoonful of salt.

April 29th 42

An issue of laundry soap, about 1" by 2" per man. The Japs are supervising the laying of some new foundations in camp. There is some argument among our men as to whether it is a new pillbox or a latrine. The Japs beat the Chinese coolies something cruel as they work.

May First

Lost 2 pounds last week. The afternoon roll call has been changed 7.30 in the evening owing to some men collapsing in the heat.

May 2nd 42

A Jap prince touring the colony, ordered to stay in our huts while he passed the camp. Japs have built a high lookout post on top of one of our huts. There is always a sentry up there with a pair of field glasses. Warned by Japs to expect air raids. We had a practise trial blackout tonight.

May 7th 42

A movement is underway here to have ten men from this camp each speak for one minute over the radio to Canada. I may be one of the ten. Our script is to be censored first by our officers then by the Japanese, so we will not likely recognize it when they are finished.

May 9th 1942

I was put on a gardening project with a number of others. The Jap sentries must be short of reliefs, they are practically asleep on their feet, eyes closed, heads nodding. Japs went past in trucks with green foliage camouflage on their helmets.

May 11th 42

Out on a working party, 25 of our outfit and 25 rifles, working on an acre and a half plot preparing it for a garden. It is gravel and clay, very stony. We are spading it, picking stones, carrying down good earth from the hillsides and putting it in long narrow trenches in which we will grow our seeds.

May 13th 42

We had a small portion of beef stew for supper; it comes so seldom it is a great shock to us.

May 14th 42

Raining heavily. Japs held some artillery practice, and experimented with smoke screens. We got very wet working in the garden. The Jap sentries were holding target practise by firing on Chinese gathering wood on the hillside. They used all their ju-jitsu holds on a Chinaman on the road, just outside our camp until he was senseless, then they bayoneted him. When we carried our garden tools up the hill to store them away at the Jap H.Q. for the night we saw a young Chinese girl about 18 tied to a tree in the middle of the yard.

May 16th 42

Great scarcity of firewood for our kitchens. Reading "In Chancery" by Galeworthy. A battalion of Japs are engaged in practising landing manoeuvres with large motorized barges. Troops swimming thru smoke screens to the shore. Some artillery and M.G. fire. Taking movies of the whole thing.

May 17th 42

A very hot night. Mosquitoes very bad. Buns were musty at dinner, and mouldy at supper, had worms, bugs and dirt in them. Heard that six of the kitchen staff are being yanked out. Some fools scribbled their names on the new latrine and the Japs threatened to tie them to a post for 12

hours in the heat of the sun.

May 18th 42

Torrential rains today.

May 19th 42

Rained all night and all day.

May 20th 42

Rain again. Some very bad flour in, musty and dirty, our buns are nearly black and taste horrible. We are supposed to be getting 10 oz of rice per day. Downey figures we are being fed on 10 cents a day, yet our government allows 1.00 per day. What will become of the difference?

May 22nd 42

Showers all day, a little gravy for supper tonight. Where does the meat go?

May 23rd 42

Torrential rain during night. After dinner we were all drawn up on the square and with the aid of an interpreter the camp commandant told us we must swear we would not attempt to escape while being held prisoner. This was an order from the Imperial Japanese army, and if we did not comply we would be severely dealt with. All the English Imperials had signed already, including General Maltby, and when our officers signed, we signed too, because it is not a binding oath that will hold in any court of law, because we signed under duress, were compelled. Also, we did not swear on the Bible.

One of the Rifles, an old man with white hair refused to sign, that he would not attempt to escape. He was taken out of camp, came back a week later. He had been starved and beaten every day till in the end he was forced to sign.

May 27th 42

Very hot. No tea, and the drinking water is lukewarm and so full of chlorine it upsets my stomach every time I taste it.

May 28th 42

Restless night, mosquitoes very bad. Very hot today. The roofs of our huts were mended with tar to fill up the shrapnel holes. Now the heat of the sun is melting the tar, it drips thru on to our beds, blankets and clothes. Every one seems to have some on the seat of their pants.

May 29th 42

There seems to be some movement on foot regarding writing home, as a long list of restrictions regarding the writing of letters has been posted up, on the bulletin board.

May 30th 42

Very little to eat today, but the heat helps to dull my appetite though it increases my thirst. Miss the tea terribly.

May 31st 42

We were issued a shirt, pair of shorts, and a tunic all old and dirty.

June First 42

A 20% cut in our rations makes our meals look mighty slim. Big event was cup of tea, black and bitter, but tasting good after lukewarm chlorinated water. The huts drew lots to see who would write home first.

June 2nd 42

130 men drew lots for 8 mosquito nets. I was not lucky. The men who wrote home have had their letters returned to them and told they must re-write them, shorten to 200 words and not ask for a single thing.

June 3rd 42

Cool and showery. Five Rifles and five Grenadiers, including Brig. Holmes and Major Bailey and myself took a trip today by bus to the dock, ferried over to the Kowloon side, took another bus and rode 4 or 5 miles to Jap H.Q. on the Kowloon side at Argyle Street, near St. Teresa's hospital.. We each spoke a short message into a microphone and a recording was made, then the records were played back to us. It is our hope that they will be broadcast, picked up and relayed till eventually they reach Canada³. We left camp at 12.30. Did not get back till 5, missed dinner, all the Japs gave us at H.Q. was two cups of pale, weak green tea. No cream, no sugar.

June 4th 42

Men have been ordered to shine their shoes. P.T. is before breakfast now. A grim paragraph has appeared on battalion orders, that anyone who wishes to make his will may do so. Japs have given us numbers of their own now. Mine is 5163. We must wear them on our shirts. Wild rumor sweeping thru camp that Germany has fallen again. No, buns today, ½ cup of vegetable soup for dinner.

June 8th 42

A heavy lashing rain, roof leaking like a sieve, right over my bed. Tigers on this island, one killed, four still loose. Another issue of Lifebuoy, each bar to be divided between 12 men.

June 9th 42

Quite windy, white caps in the harbour. There is one large ship close to camp that the Japs have been trying to raise for the last two months, have pumped day and night this last week, it is gradually rising, they have cables to the shore to keep it from rolling over.

June 10th 42

This morning the ship is down again, apparently sunk during the night.

June 11th 42

³ My people never heard a word from me Till 'July 31st of 1944 when two letters arrived. One had been written in N. Point Camp in 42, one in Japan in 43. My radio broadcast was picked up and sent to my people by three people in U.S. and one in South Africa on Oct 20th, 1944. Why did the Japs wait from 'June 3rd, 42 till Oct 20, 44 before broadcasting?

We were ordered to turn in all bed boards. Japs pumped the ship out today and it really rose out of the water.

June 12th 42 Fri

The ship sank overnight. Two men very sick with dysentery were finally granted permission by the Japs to go to the Bowen Rd. hospital, loaded on the back of a truck, one died on the way, the other just after arriving. I wrote my letter home today. Officers and CSMs are betting we will be free in August.

June 13th 42

Varcoe fainted dead away on roll call this morning, before breakfast. Japs working all night on sunken ship.

June 14th

Have raised it this morning, the highest yet.

June 15th 42

120 men went on a working party to Kai Tak to enlarge the airport there. It is on the mainland. They carried a bun for mid-day meal.

June 16th 42

Heavy rains . . . leaking roofs. Roll call inside huts.

June 18th 42

Our P.T. is a pretty gruelling affair before breakfast, sun is hot and our heads are bare. Have some very interesting discussions with old Cole from Swan River, and Bill Adams who used to work for Skinner at Dropmore. Both are good gardeners. This afternoon the Japs finally towed away the ship they had worked on so long.

June 20th 42

I was one of a large party who went out to the Kai Tak airfield on the Kowloon side, worked with pick and shovel and handled crushed stone, and big bags of cement. Just before we left to come back we were served with Zooki, beans cooked up with sugar. They are small and black and taste like a pea. Not accustomed to anything sweet for so long made some of the boys sick. Very tired tonight.

June 22nd 42

A big shake up in the kitchen, one guy up on orders, so he implicated everyone he could and dragged others down in ruins with himself. A scurvy trick.

June 23rd 42

Tonight the working party coming in complained of not enough to eat, and of being roughly treated by the guard.

June 24th 42

Some firing during the night, a bullet ricoched thru camp.

June 25th 42

Planes flew over dropping leaflets. Rumor says they are something about Harbin in Manchuria but no one knows for certain. I was one of a party of 39 sent to Bowen Rd hospital to cut grass and bushes around the electrically wired fence to prevent current from being grounded. We alternate daily with the Rifles in sending 200 men to work on the airport.

June 27th 42

Working at airport in rain, drenched to the skin, shovelling crushed rock and mixing cement.

July 2nd 42

Have been out working every second day since work began.

July 3rd 42

A big inspection of camp and huts. We were drawn up on the square, two white men in civilian clothed were with the Japs staff. They say one was the Swiss consul. A heavy rain again. For dinner one bun and a cup of greasy water with a little grass in it.

July 4th 42

We got our first Japanese pay for working on the airport, 30 sen worth 5 1/10th cents in Canadian currency. Bed bugs very bad. Reading "The Tudor Wench" by Elswyth Thane, the story of Elizabeth. The small makeshift detention barracks here will not hold all the men under sentence. There is a long waiting list, enough to keep it full till Xmas.

July 10th 42

Rained heavily during night, still raining, work party cancelled as airfield is almost flooded. Warned to fasten all doors and windows as typhoon expected. Reading Colonel Bramble by Andre Maurois, very entertaining.

July 11th 42

Clearing up. Storm must have passed though there were warning lights on the towers throughout the city last night.

July 14th 42

Japs are building a high watchtower inside our enclosure. Rain . . Rain . . day after day, roofs leak badly. The sgts have their own meals now.

July 16th 42

Incessant rain, very depressing.

July 20th 42

More rain. Three vessels with U.S.S.R. on their sides were towed past here last night. Today two barges that were in use by the sea wall (equipped with cranes etc) sank. They are being pumped out, and a diver is working down around them. Four men are pumping air down to him. More rain.

July 22nd 42

Rain every day. Arguments rage here day and night on every conceivable subject under the sun. In here it is hard to find absolute proof for anything to settle it. Old Cole draws endless plans of the house he intends to build when he gets home. Others figure up the cost of starting up a farm.

July 23rd 42

Some fellows with a few tools are doing some fancy woodcarving. McBride and Brezinsky very good at it. The garden outside so far has only produced a few cucumbers. Cigarettes are still the principal means of barter or exchange in camp. One fag buys a bun, 2 or 3 a stew. Half of one a sweet sauce or an issue of black China tea. Boys are beginning to play softball. Coutts is a patient up at Bowen Rd. He was working on a fatigue party up there and someone felled a tree on him. Several games of horseshoes going on.

July 25th 42

Prisoners for seven months today. One of our men was charged with using vile language towards a staff sgt of the postal corps, got 7 days extra fatigues. An open-air concert on the square tonight. Allister of brigade is an accomplished mimic, really a scream in the "Fred Allen Radio Broadcast."

July 26th 42

Work party at airfield carrying sacks full of mud between two men, slung on a bamboo pole 350 yards to the sea wall and dumping into harbour.. Trudging thru mud and water that often came over their boot tops. Kitkoski carving out a set of chessmen. Sgt. McCarthy doing some fine woodwork.

July 27th 42

Fisher and Ward doing a flourishing business manufacturing sandals of wood, belting or leather for the officers.

July 28th 42

More rain. Sentries stationed in the newly built watchtowers amuse themselves with firing at any Chinese fishing craft that ventures close. Searchlights probing the clouds tonight with long white fingers.

July 29th 42

A boisterous wind, whitecaps in the bay, the fishing fleet is drifting in, wallowing deeply as they come, two small sampans were swamped in the waves. Heavy squalls of rain throughout the day. Typhoon warnings up again tonight, usual colored lights on high towers.

July 30th 42

Cloudy, but wind abating, all the Chinese fishing fleet of sampans and junks heading out for the open sea again, tacking back and forth against the wind.

August First

More rain, a lance corporal was up on orders because he skipped a P.T. parade. Was stripped and reduced to the ranks. A new and smaller scoop used to dish out the rice tonight. Another man got

detention for talking back to an N.C.O. The Japs have telephones rigged to their watchtowers now.

Aug 6th 42

Martin fainted on roll call today. Burch is holding forth in a theological declamation on Revelations but Britton is not taking him very seriously.

Aug 7th 42

Murray and Weir have constructed a curious stringed instrument and are producing some weird sounds from it. Some confirmed gamblers who have a craze for card playing are playing for their dinners, tried to play all night by the light in the washroom but the Jap sentry chased them out. Our skins are drying up, and cracking, and peeling since there is no fat in our diet whatever. A lot of the men have sore mouths due to lack of vitamins. Lucas sent to Bowen Road with infected throat. Very bad case.

Aug 8th 42

Concert on the square. Ed Towes masquerading as a Russian Countess, Wills sang, splendid voice.

Aug 9th 42

Very hot. Terrible thirst. Taking shower; three times a day. Japs still engaged in salvaging sunken ships around here. We hear the nursing sisters at Bowen Rd will be sent to Stanley Internment Camp.

Aug 10th 42

A lot of wounded Japs coming into Kowloon and filling up St. Teresa's hospital.

Aug 12th 42

There is a lot of skin trouble in camp owing to our diet which is nothing but starch. The working party last three days have been cutting grass on the airfield on hands and knees with a sickle. The ration party that went out and across to the Kowloon side report a big warehouse full of tons of flour and sugar.

Aug 14th 42

Old Cole has erysipelas, his face swollen and bluish. Old J. Chapman sent to Bowen Road with quinsy. Hear that diphtheria is raging in Shamshuipo, 1 man dying every day, a total of 15 to date. Only one case here yet but we are warned to keep to our own areas, no mixing with the Rifles. No more softball games nor classes nor bat. parades.

Aug 15th 42

A Jap gunboat passed our camp aided by two tugs. She had sustained some damage, a hit on the crow's nest plainly visible. Four suspected cases of diphtheria sent to Bowen Rd. At dinner we tackled our first fresh fruit in 7 months. Each man had ½ of a Chinese pear, a dry woody fruit about the size of a turkey's egg.

Aug 18th 42

A Sgt struck a private and then laid a charge of slander against him dated Oct 25th, 1941. The camp was wild with indignation when the private was given 14 days detention.

Aug 19th 42

Raining, by noon the wind had risen to gale like proportions, harbor very rough, fishing fleet coming in. Spray from the breakers flying over our huts. A wild stormy night, hut shaking in the blast.

Aug 20th 42

Wind dropped, fishing fleet went out again. Cloudy and cool. After our usual morning roll call we had a second, and then a muster out on the square which kept us there till 2.30. Four men escaped last night. Sgt. Payne, Corporal Berzinski, Percy Ellis and Tiger Adams. They had a gun, a compass and a map, some canned foodstuffs, they climbed over the hospital instead of going thru the fence. Now the Japs are putting rolls of concertina wire along the ridgepole of the hospital. We suppose the four men intend to cross to the mainland, and take to the hills, sleep by day, travel by night and hope to reach friendly territory before being caught. The Japs officers are giving Nick, George's brother a hard time, beating and cross examining him. They think he ought to know something about his brother's escape.

Aug 21st 42

New orders up announce that the Japs warn anyone escaping that they expose themselves to a risk of death, etc.

Aug 23rd 42

The sentries are vigilant since the escape and screech and howl to one another all night long. One of our officers and a Sgt make regular rounds looking for disturbances, and some of our own men are detailed to guard our hut for suspicious movements of our OWN men.

Aug 25th 42

One of our men got 7 days detention because he refused to sit up at night and watch for and report any possible escapes. In the evening, Dick Trick, Milt Dann, Jack Hay and myself sit around and talk farming from every conceivable angle.

Aug 26th 42

A lot of men are troubled with so called electric feet, almost impossible to describe, must be felt to be appreciated, a terrible thing, but just another symptom of diet deficiency; right now one of our Sgts is delirious with the pain. Some men came back from Bowen Rd. They brought the news of the death of Lucas and Jim Chapman. The latter died on the 14th and was buried on the 15th. One of the saddest things that has happened. He had quinsy and dysentery, was a married man with four children. Chapman had always been so optimistic, so enthusiastic, his booming voice and his hearty laugh were known all over the camp. Too generous for his own good. He enjoyed life, and just living so well, it was hard to believe he had given it all up for something better. He had lost a lot of weight and used to say it would be a labor of love to put it all back on again.

Aug 28th 42

C.S.M. Logan, C.S.M. Adams and Staff Sgt McNaughton were taken out off camp to be questioned by the Japs re the escape. Logan is sick, a 10c, McNaughton is an old man with white hair. Adams is just out of hospital. Today the Rifles had date pie with a good crust made with peanut oil, yet we get neither oil, pie nor dates, yet all supplies are shared evenly between the two units. We cannot help but wonder sometimes.

Aug 29th 42

We had got nicely to sleep when the lights went on, our officers entered, roused us and called the roll, then left and we were just asleep again when the lights went on again and six Jap officers came in and made a bed check, then we were ordered out on the parade square, regular muster in alphabetical order. A heavy cold, rain began to fall, we had had no time to dress, were in pyjamas or underclothes, were soaked in a few minutes. We stood shivering in the wind and rain and darkness for 4½ hours while the Japs counted and recounted and searched and researched huts. They are in an ugly mood and struck quite a number of us as we covered off and numbered in the ranks.

Aug 30th 42

This evening the three hostages came back, they had had no beds, had not undressed, had little to eat since they left. C.S.M. Logan had been quite ill all the time.

Sept First 42

Two Rifles died, one with dysentery, one with hiccougths. I will have to give up reading altogether I am afraid as my eyes are giving me a lot of trouble. At the instigation of Doctor Crawford the Japs are docking the officers' pay and raising a fund to buy a few extra rations for men who are far below the average in weight.

Sept 2nd 42

A Jap officer came into the hut today and told Nick his brother had been captured the same day he escaped, but we can't believe it or we would have heard before this.

Sept 3rd 42

The hut guard last night was found asleep and is up on orders this morning.

Sept 4th 42

Our buns are getting smaller all the time.

Sept 5th 42

More men are getting the terrible pains in their feet and hobble around on their heels to keep their toes off the ground, can't sleep at night with the queer electric shocks that run through them.

Sept 6th 42

Twice a day I draw pot permang for a queer rash on my legs called pellagra. It seems to be getting worse all the time. Doc says it's all caused by diet deficiency. Talking to Buzz Winram and the Currie Bros about Rock Lake, they used to live near there.

Sept 8th 42

About 20 men took after a rat today. A Javanese, part of the Dutch sub crew finally killed it with a shovel. The Jap sentries often wear a white cotton pad over nose and mouth supposed to check spread of colds. Now 40 of our men have been issued with them. A report came in that 130 P.O.W. have died at Shamshuipo, 70 escaped, 7 killed trying to escape. R.T. Johnston gone to Bowen Rd with throat trouble and foot rot.

Sept 9th 42

Japs went thru all huts and seized all tools, all iron, steel and wood, canes, running shoes, and rain capes. Today all men issued with bit of cotton gauze and ordered to wear it over nose and mouth. Tonight we heard LCpl Whillier died at Bowen Rd with ulcers in mouth and throat. He was a very fine fellow, was in the artillery with Victor Hart in the last war.

Sept 11th 42

Japs still salvaging in the harbor with a fleet of tugs. Bill Harkness sent to Bowen Rd today. He really missed Jim Chapman.

Sept 12th 42

Rocky Smith died in the camp hospital here during the night. He was an old Grenadier, very snort, (and before he was captured, very fat). Some of E Coy dug his grave this forenoon across the road on a rocky hillside. Only dug 3½ feet and they struck solid rock. Buried at 2 o'clock. He had dysentery, fever, throat trouble and malnutrition.

Sept 15th 42

My eyes are very sore, but many men have the same thing. Nothing for it.

Sept 17th 42

Old Dave Johnstone talking about the Pipestone Valley. He worked for Jeffrey Lothian and for Tom Forke before he enlisted in the war of 1914 - 18.

Sept 20th 42

Reports that 500 Imperials from Shamshuipo have been to sent to Japan and 1200 more are to follow. The weather is gradually turning cooler, especially at night.

Sept 21st 42

Everyone is suffering from skin trouble, face is cracked and peeling, rash across the shoulders. Heard today that Doug Moore, Hawkes and Harkness had died at Bowen Rd. Old Bill and Chapman will be together again, they were great pals, haven't been separated for very long after all.

Sept 23rd 42

Clearing all dysentery cases out of camp, also C bedded down, sending them up to Bowen Rd. Tonight each man got an ounce issue of what they call liquid yeast. Just a sour, sticky mouthful resembling flour and water.

Sept 24th 42

A large number booked for Bowen Rd have been cancelled by Jap order. 145 Grenadiers and 133 Rifles are getting the thiamine needle every day at the M.I. hut. All have sore swollen feet. A rumour we are moving to mainland.

Sept 26th 42 Sat

Reveille at 5, then all carried kit on to the square for the Japs to search and waited in the sun till noon before we move off down to the ferry and crossed to the mainland, got off at the wharf near the Jubilee building at Shamshuipo. Counted again for the nth time, and finally marched to huts, no beds, a long wooden platform along one side to sleep on, full of bugs.

Sept 27th 42

5 ounces of yeast this a.m. 8 oz of bread daily. More rice here than at North Point. Two isolation hospitals here, one for diphtheria, one for dysentery. Three funerals today of Imperials. Weather hot and clear.

Sept 28th 42

Every available man being grabbed for work party at airport. No hot water available in the camp. Since the 13th of this month there have been from one to three deaths every day in this camp. Japs want 640 men for work tomorrow.

Sept 29th 42

All men with bad feet are being taken out of hospital and fever patients put in their place. An Imperial corporal told me of the 4000 here, 50 had escaped, 115 died, 30 in this last month. Now 1600 have left in a draft and our 1400 from North Point are here. A double funeral today, a Rifle and a navy man.

Sept 30th 42

Every man was issued with a plug of tobacco, the cheapest vilest stuff imaginable. Cpl Iverach of D Coy died last night with diphtheria. He was from Isabella, Man, a very fine fellow.

Oct First 42

I am helping a little with the library tonight a regular gale and heavy rain. The guards were firing, all night thru at intervals of 3 or 4 minutes, seem to have the jitters in the dark.

Oct 2nd 42

More wind and rain. All men getting a throat swab test by Jap M.O. for dip. A big ship in harbour with white crosses on it. Another Rifle died, they have lost six since coming here.

Oct 4th 42

The Japs took away Halbert's pet monkey. He has made an electric toaster and water heater, must keep them hidden at all times as the Japs confiscate on sight. Another Rifle died.

Oct 5th 42

Nine Canadians died since moving here. Old Paddy Armstrong today. Clear and hot.

Oct 6th 42

Another Rifle died. Battalion drawn up in hollow square, one fellow who put an onion in his pocket while on a ration party put in centre, a very solemn warning delivered by O.C. on such conduct.

Oct 7th 42

Marcel Robideaux and Herb Mabb died of diphtheria. I knew them well, more likeable fellows would be hard to find anywhere. We shall miss them.

Oct 9th 42

W. Moore of B Coy died today. A supply of diphtheria antitoxin finally arrived in camp. One bun a day, but 20 oz of rice. A rumour has swept thru camp that the boat that left here was loaded with Imperial P.O.Ws with all hands, 1000 strong. Mass was said for them in the R.C. chapel this morning.

Oct 11th 42

Five men died last night. 3 Rifles, Percy Iles of B Coy and an Imperial. Like the most of the men I am getting dozens of pellagra ulcers on my legs, my tongue is swollen and so sore that eating is a painful business. There is no salt in rice or greens.

Oct 12th 42

Three Rifles died, one Grenadier. Second throat swab for dip.

Oct 13th 42

Yeast issue has been cut.

Oct 14th 42

Thomasson died, an old Grenadier, was on the old police force, it has suffered heavily. C. Fines did all he could for Thomasson, gave him Soy sauce etc, but all to no avail. Did his very best for him anyway. The Japs are beating up all men they see without a mask, or anyone going near the dip hospital. Used rifle butts on one man, Broke three ribs.

Oct 15th 42

A Rifle Sgt died. A spoonful of peanut oil on rice once a day now.

Oct 16th 42

A Rifle died today, also Forbes of A Coy, Grenadiers. Total deaths today were three Rifles and Forbes and Eastholm.

Oct 17th 42

My eyes are giving me great pain, and there is no more boric eye wash left. At M.I. room Japs blame deaths on hospital orderlies. Lined them up and slapped all their faces. Even struck Major Crawford our M.O. across the face with a rubber hose, drew blood.

Oct 18th 42

My eyes are much worse, cannot open the right one at all.

Oct 19th 42

Sent to Camp hospital.

Oct 20th 42

In hospital.

Looking back on my stay in camp hospital from this comfortable distance I recall it was one of the grimmest experiences through which I passed. About a dozen of us eye cases were in a hut by ourselves. All windows were boarded up to keep out the light. We had bandages over our eyes. It was torture to go out in the sun to the latrine only a couple of dozen yards away. The doctors were far too busy with dip. and dysentery cases to come around. The orderlies brought our meals, but my tongue was so swollen and the inside of my mouth so sore that all sense of taste was gone, after a few days I simply loathed the rice and the green horror which resembled firewood or clover stalks. I would choke down a mouthful of rice and hand the plate over to McLean who slept beside me and marvel at the day he ate it down. Freeman was in the hut, he had been dying by inches for a month, the orderly said, because he couldn't force down the rice and greens any more. He passed away on the fourth day I was in there. The sinister conviction slowly came over me that I would go the same way if I stopped eating. I thought to myself, Freeman lasted a month, I can't hope to last much longer at this rate. I must eat. Next meal, two spoonful of rice, no use, I couldn't work up any saliva in my mouth. Then - if I only had some salt, but where and how? One hope, I got in touch with Carl Jonsson, if he couldn't get me any no one could. He brought me two spoonfuls next day. But I couldn't even taste the salt'. I wondered dazedly, surely, surely this can't be the end, will I go out the way Freeman did, skin and bones, raving with his last breath about Red Cross parcels? I lay in that dark hut for eight days with a throbbing pain in my eyes that never let up, but though I stopped eating after the fourth day I had no pangs of hunger, no inclination to eat whatever. I was getting weaker but could not rest or sleep for more than a few hours at a time on account of my eyes. I thought there is one thing that could save me, if I could get up to Bowen Rd. That night the orderly said "No more patients going to Bowen Rd. It was like a death sentence.

So, I nearly cried for joy when Reid walked in on the 28th of Oct 1942 and announced "all eye patients get ready for Bowen Rd." I still believe that saved my life and saved the sight of the left eye and partial sight in the right one. When weighed after being a week a patient in bed all the time, I weighed 117 lbs. The eye specialist in charge of us told me I had a bad ulcer in the right eye, after three months it healed but, as he put it "It has left a scar tissue that is part of your eye. Your vision in that eye will always be distorted, like looking thru a bubble in a window pane."

We got our first British Red Cross parcel on Nov 30th of 1942. It was wonderful. The first week on the parcel, Jack Hardy and I both gained a pound a day. On Xmas Day we received ten yen, a gift from the Canadian Government. Then at the end of January each man received 16 yen, but canteen prices are very high and only a small variety of foodstuffs available. The draft of about 600 Canadians who took ship for Japan left about the 9th of January. On Feb 16th we got our second British Red Cross parcel.

I wonder if Jack Hardy remembers walking, or attempting to walk the straight line in hospital while the M.O. watched him? And the ward did their best to keep from bursting out laughing?

No more accomplished actor ever performed off the stage.

I hope Sgt. Major Harvey was reunited with his wife and family and that they are all in good health. He was one of the most interesting conversationalists I have ever met. Held Jack and I spellbound for hours. Our ward in Bowen Rd hospital would have been a dull place without Jack and the Sgt Major.

I left Bowen Rd about the 14th February 1943. I'll always remember the captain who treated my eyes, and Sgt Anderson of R.A.M.C who had charge of our ward. They still had a strong Scotch accent. We had some good concerts before I left, Lieut Londeau (Languedoc) of the Rifles was the driving force behind most of them. All the nursing sisters had been taken to Stanley. I often wondered if they missed us as much as we missed them.

Feb 28th 43

Back at Shamshuipo. There are about 2000 men of all units in the camp now. Over 700 of them are in the camp hospital, mostly with sore feet and cardiac beri beri.

March 2nd 43

A new order came out, no one under 50 can wear a beard.

March 4th 43

On fatigue carrying bricks in bags and pulling a big cement roller.

March 5th 43

Rumor has it that the Japs asked the Indian troops to volunteer for service with them, and when they refused they starved them for a week till they finally gave in. Then 150 of them were put to guard an airfield in the New Territories and one night they all disappeared.

March 6th 43

Told on parade this evening that there is a ton of Canadian mail in the Colony for us, it has to be censored before distribution. On Sundays we get a large bun made from brown Indian Atta flour.

March 9th 43 Tues

Heavily overcast, drizzling rain, on fatigue in the kitchen scouring black, burnt, greasy old pots and pans with gravel and ashes. Assisted by Walter Jenkins. His company was the only bright spot in the whole day.

March 13th 43

Went to church, fine sermon. Two sgts. in the front pew with their shoes off.

March 16th 43

M. F. Durrant very, busy shoe repairing. Weir still trying to make a stringed musical instrument. Some even hoping he won't succeed.

March 19th 43

An issue of 1 lb of sugar per man. Claire Purse went into hospital with yellow jaundice.

March 20th 43

Garnet Stodgell died early this morning of dysentery, pellagra and malnutrition. Staff McNaughton has a lot of bets on re; the end of the war. Japs are making the boundary of our camp smaller, a gang of Chinese women are working on the fence digging holes, etc. Pigs, ducks, and hogs have been brought into camp by order of Tokanaga but none ever find their way to the kitchen.

March 21st 43

Ray Kirk got two letters from Peggy Lloyd in Jamaica.

March 22nd 43

Working in the garden, am getting badly sunburned. Bed Bugs are something fierce tonight.

March 24th 43

We are trying to irrigate the garden, have a number of lengths of pipe, several tanks, but have not sufficient flow of water for good result.

March 25th 43

Had my palm read tonight by Charlie Dragon of the H.K.V. Volunteers.

March 28th 43

Went to church. Sermon on Naaman being cured of leprosy, a little different to the way Billy Sunday told it in his book. Hank Lawson is talking about Oak Lake and wishing he were there. A few letters came into camp had been written a year ago. None for me yet.

April 1st 43

Old J. J. Davis died of heart failure. Went to a lecture tonight entitled "God in Education." While it was in progress we could hear strains of music and wild cries from a nearby hut where a square dance was in full swing.

April 4th 43 Sunday

I went to church then out with Lieut Maize (Maze) who is in charge of the garden party and planted some sweet potato cuttings.

April 5th 43

Jap sentries are trying to buy clothes from our men. Shirts, underwear and puttees. So much rain the big drain is overflowing, after it went down we saw numbers of dead rats drowned by the rushing waters.

Tonight Buzz Winram was telling me how he first started business at the Pilot Mound and how his wife proved such a splendid partner and helpmate.

April 7th 43

We were paid 10 Yen today. We donated 2 Yen per man to the kitchen.

April 8th 43

Worked in garden planting sweet potato vines.

April 9th 43

Kamloops discovered the Dutch Navy had a radio, seized it marched them all off to the guardroom, also took: some of our men he caught gambling. The Dutch were beaten up something cruel. Our men were forced to carry heavy loads of brick on the double for several hours.

April 10th 43

Two men were beaten insensible for talking to a sentry. Coarse rock salt with snail shells in it cost 65 Yen per lb and is going up. The canteen is almost always sold out of everything. We are lucky if we can get a little salt, soy sauce and bean curd.

June 1st 43

We are sleeping on the concrete floor since the raised board platform has been taken away. The Newspaper printed by the Japanese in English for our benefit has stopped coming into camp. We do not miss it though we sometimes got a good laugh out of it. Their propaganda is so outrageous it is ridiculous.

A big inspection by Tokonaga. Hot water showers are now working once a week. Concert last night had to be called off on account of rain, a roof leaks like a sieve. Tickets were given back.

June 6th 43

Old Dave Johnston⁴ went into camp hospital, has lost a lot of weight.

June 7th 43

Old Dave died this evening.

June 8th 43

I was one of the pallbearers. At 10.30 we carried the body to the chapel for service. There was Wilson and Carpenter, Jimmy Gard, Pop Wharf, Olcen and I, dressed in tunics, shorts, puttees, boots, belts, f.s. caps. We had to do some borrowing to get them all. I'll certainly miss Old Dave.

On the evening of June 26th, 1943, I received my first letter from home with. a Pipestone postmark of April 22nd, 1942.

Aug 14th 43

I am one of 430 warned of draft for Japan, 330 Canadians, 25 Dutch Navy, remainder are Imperials. We have had two pays, one of 24 Yen and a second of 30 Yen. Can buy very little as prices are exorbitant and supplies are very limited. I bought a pound of salt and a pint of Soy sauce. We have been vaccinated and had three inoculations and two stool tests. We have been penned off from the rest of the camp with barbed wire for the past week. The bakery has baked a batch of buns to feed us on the voyage.

Total strength of Grenadiers when we landed in Hong Kong, 915 Officers, N.C.Os and men.
Casualties in war 137.

⁴ Dave Johnston was a veteran of World War I. He had a silver plate in his head from the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Number of men we lost while P.O.W. up until Aug 15,1943 was 53.

We embarked on draft for Japan on Sunday morning Aug 15th, 1943. We were crammed into the hold on top of coal, so closely packed together there was never room for everyone to lie down at the same time. There were three hundred men in our hold and for some days only 10 men were allowed on deck to use the latrines at one time. As many had chronic diarrhoea this was a deplorable state of affairs. Red Cross supplies were put on board for us but the Japs used them their selves and what they couldn't use they threw overboard. Our buns we took on board were soon covered with a thick greyish hairy mould. We cut the outside off and ate the rest until the mould progressed thru the buns and made us sick. Then we ate rice and were served a fish stew so rank many could not eat it and those who did were sick. But the worst of all was when heavy planks were put over the hatchways and canvas over that and we sweltered in the terrible heat down below. We tore off every article of clothing we had and fanned ourselves till we were utterly exhausted. I have a good idea now what it must have been like in the Black Hole of Calcutta or in the dark holds of African slave ships.

I saw E. C. Harrison of Bury, Quebec while he himself was sick on voyage give up his blankets and bed space to another sick man who for lack of space was clinging to a ladder. Harrison then perched on the ladder himself for days. He was one of the most self-sacrificing men I ever saw. His brother, an unarmed stretcher-bearer, was killed by Japs while tending wounded men during the battle of Hong Kong.

Harrison himself died of dysentery in Camp 5B, Niigata, Japan. His parents have every reason to be proud of him, I am proud of the fact that I knew him and that he counted me one of his friends.

The mystery man on board was Sub. Lieut. Bush of the British Navy. He was said to have married a Japanese girl before the war, spoke the language like a native, still wore his naval uniform and cap and was allowed extra-ordinary privileges, on deck all the time. He wasn't allowed to do much for us but he did what he could. When we stopped at the southern tip of Formosa he managed to get one pomela for each of us, we were allowed to buy it. They are a poor imitation of a grapefruit mostly peel and pith, but tasted wonderful to us at the time. He was a tall, handsome fellow, looked every inch a naval officer. We often wondered if he would be allowed to join his wife or if it would turn out to be a mixed marriage tragically marred by war.

We lay at anchor for two days at the northern point of Formosa while we had another stool test. Very hot and hard to breath where we are penned down below. Our drinking water is rationed.

We finally docked near Osaka later afternoon of September first. Marched a short distance then climbed aboard streetcars, then changed to a train. The railway was laid along the coastline for miles and miles and we had a constant view of the open sea on our left as we sped north and of the mountains on our right. We passed thru many tunnels. When mealtime arrived each man was given a square wooden box (about 6 inches square and one inch deep) full of rice with a little seaweed and pickle in it. We travelled roughly 180 miles north before we reached camp 5B on the outskirts of the City of Niigata.

We had to learn to count in Japanese for roll call as soon as we landed in Japan.

ichi	nil	san	she	go	roku	sechi	hachti	ku
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	ju	ju ichi	ju nil	ju san	ju she	ju go	etc etc	
	10	11	12	13	14	15		

Many had difficulty learning this heathenish method of counting and a mistake in the count was a sufficient excuse for the Orderly Sgt to beat a man up.

Some of us were sent to work on the Marutso docks, others to the Rinko coal yard, a third gang to Shintetsu foundry. Our group started work on the docks on Sept 6th, 1943.

Oct 18th 43

About 300 Americans from the Philippines arrived here, all dressed in blue jeans and smocks and wearing blue composition sun helmets that the Philippine scouts once wore.

Oct 25th 43

I received a letter from my brother Dave, the second letter I have received from Canada since I left it two years ago.

Oct 30th 43

Working every day in the rain and wind. Chief Lorie of the Dutch navy died of pneumonia, due to exposure in all weathers at work.

Oct 31st 43

Socks completely worn out. Boots in bad shape, chafe and blistered feet, cause festering sores. Hands numb with cold at work today, two hailstorms and a lot of rain. No mitts, very hungry and miserable. 16 cases of pneumonia in this camp hospital now.

November First 1943

Work hard and heavy, loading manganese ore from dock with hand carts into railway oars.

Nov 2 43

Begin work at 8 and worked till 8 at night. Tired, hungry, footsore, two men died today.

Nov 3rd 43

My heels are skinned; every step is agony. One of the boys said he thought the fellows who died in battle at Hong Kong were the lucky ones. He envied them.

Nov 4th 43

Unloading charcoal out of a barge. Had the first hot bath since we reached Japan, after the coolies. Koster and Jenkins very ill at work today.

Nov 6th 43

Working at charcoal in the rain, soaked to the skin, very miserable. No place in camp to dry our clothes, shivery. A Yank died today.

Nov 9th 43

Still raining, still carrying charcoal. Infection in my hands, badly swollen. Heels raw, very miserable. Reid of Rifles died today. Makes eleven dead since we arrived here. At least they will

never be hungry or cold any more.

Nov 10th 43

Still piling straw bags full of charcoal up on a huge stack on the riverbank.

Nov 12th 43

Unloading potatoes from a ship into warehouse, raining again, waking wet. We all have bad colds.

Nov 13th 43

Working in rain. An American died today.

Nov 14th 43

Ray Kay died today. Tonight a few canteen supplies came in, 4 packets of fish powder to be drawn for by fifty men.

Nov 15th 43

Canadians have had their battle dress taken away. The only warm woollen clothes they had.

Nov 16th 43

Another Rifle died during the night named Sardy. Tonight after work each man has to hand in a shirt. Pretty soon we will be naked.

Nov 17th 43

Feeling tough, the enormous radish which they call daikoci does not agree with my stomach.

Nov 18th 43

Danyluk and Evans put in hospital. Cold in our hut. Can see your breath quite plainly.

Nov 19th 43

Another Yank died. Cannot get warm even in bed.

Nov 20th 43

Fischer a Dutchman died early this morning. About six inches of straw has been spread on floor for sleeping on.

Nov 21st 43

Rifleman Hailey died today. The Japs are issuing our battle dress to the Americans! We have been given old, dirty, torn Japanese uniforms, infected with lice and we have no hot water or any means of disinfecting them.

Nov 22nd 43

Knapp of Rifles died early this morning. Cpl Breen a little later.

Nov 23rd 43

Evans died today, and Stan Hunter. We have been ordered to turn in everything made of blanket material. We have just started to make sox and mitts out of blankets, the Japs found out, and so

the order.

Nov 27th 43

Loading coke into railway cars. Every week there is an inspection to see if we have broken any dishes issued from the Japs.

Nov 28th 43

Cold and rainy, loading barrels onto freight cars first, then later, loading charcoal into cars. Got very wet.

Nov 29th 43

Robertson died today . Loading charcoal, rainy, windy and cold.

Nov 30th 43.

Nick Charuk died today. We worked on charcoal, salt and bean curd.

December First 43

A white frost, the first we have had, over everything , a ¼” of ice on all the puddles. Worked on charcoal, rope and stone. Feeling tough with diarrhoea.

Dec 2nd 43

Dannyluk and Corp. Ingalls died. Worked on barrels and charcoal.

Dec 3rd 43

Very cold at work. Another Yank died. We were issued old Jap puttees and one pair of thin white cotton summer socks. No heel, shapeless from top to toe.

Dec 4th 43

Went to work after a bad night, up 7 times to go to toilet. Another Yank died.

Dec 5th 43

Bitterly cold. Hughie McTaggart, Sedan and an American died today.

Dec 6th 43

Got back from work tonight and heard Archie Rutherford had just died. Hard, very hard. He was an old Grenadier, like Hughie, Archie had always been so optimistic. Had done his best to cheer the boys up all the time we were in Hong Kong. Used to wear a little checkered cap on the top of his head and tell the weirdest yarns, anything to make the boys forget their troubles. No C Coy men will ever forget him.

December 7th 43

Windy, cloudy and raw. Loading charcoal and bean curd. Japs took back the dishes they had issued us because someone had broken a bowl.

Wed, December 8th 43

Another Yank died. Very mean weather for work, a howling gale, sleet, rain and snow.

Dec 9th 43

Cold and miserable, working on manganese ore and bean curd. Smith of Rifles died today.

Dec 10th 43

Snowing all day at work, wet, slushy and miserable.

Dec 11th 43

Snowing heavily, wet, slushy.

Dec 13th 43

Loading barrels on a barge, then cement on a boat and rice into warehouse. A Yank died today.

Dec 14th 43

A hard white frost.

Dec 15th 43

A thaw, very wet. Loading cement and rice.

Dec 16th 43

Milder, loading cement, meal and charcoal.

Dec 17th 43

Out of our group of 50 men only 19 have been coming out to work, the rest have been sick in camp. The Japs forced an extra seven out today but they are not fit to work. Can hardly walk.

Little Waterhouse of the Royal Rifles, one of the gamest kids I ever saw. Too small for the heavy work, sick and underweight, he toiled uncomplainingly, sheer will power sustained him to the end, when a veritable walking skeleton, he tottered in from work, between two of us. Death came as a merciful release.

Dec 18th 43

Very wet, rain, loading rice. 28 men out today but some had a hard time getting back into camp tonight. The mile and a half walk was almost too much for them. Had to be helped by a man on each side.

Dec 19th 43

Raining, snowing, cold and miserable. Another Yank died.

Dec 20th 43

On return from work all our beds and kit was strewn around. Seems some rations have been stolen. Big McLaughlin just died. We did not get supper till 9.30. But men who were caught with stolen rations were thrown in guardroom and two of them were tied outside to a post all night.

Dec 21st 43

Raining, wet, miserable. Sgt Phillips of the Rifles died today.

Thurs, Dec 23rd 43

A Rifle and a Grenadier died today.

Dec 24th 43

Raining, raw, cold. Moving to another camp about a mile away. Carried our kit over on our back, then returned for the blankets and a load of straw, made a third trip for another huge bundle of straw. New camp only half finished, no doors or windows. Very cold. No kitchen equipment.

Sat, Dec 25th 43

Clear and cold. Had to go to foundry, a two-mile march, and carry breakfast back in big wooden buckets. It was spaghetti, not enough to go round, Krupp had to collect a large spoonful from each man to make up what he was short. Everyone is hungry. Everything in a turmoil. Nothing organized, confusion reigns. We were herded out and had our pictures taken, then the long wait for dinner, after one o'clock, none in sight, sky clouded over, beginning to rain, a cheerless prospect. Dinner finally arrived, a very small portion of rice, a little spaghetti. Then we were issued with four small oranges, just culls, miserable wizened specimens and a few sweet biscuits. The only bright spot in the day was when each man got 6 oz of bully beef and a piece of bread for supper. This is a bitter Christmas. We were hoping for mail.

Dec 26th 43

No got water to wash our clothes or our bodies, everyone is lousy, all have had colds from feet continually wet. The wind whistles thru this bleak barn of a place. No food in this camp. We marched out to where we work on the docks and waited for breakfast, when it came, the rice was raw, just nicely warmed up. We ate dinner and supper on the docks. Weather raw and rough, wind, sleet and rain. Soaking wet again. How long, oh Lord, how long?

Dec 27th 43

No floor in new huts, just loose sand. The second tier of bunks is 10 feet above the first and reached by a frail and shaky ladder. A high roof open to the peak, cold and draughty.

Dec 28th 43

Bitterly cold today, a piercing wind, stumbled back later thru mud and slush in the dark. Wallace has died, one of the Rifles, a very nice kid, should never have been in the army at all. Harding, another Rifle died at lights out.

Dec 29th 43

Raining again, loading pig iron and charcoal. Bolting our meals no time to eat properly.

Dec 31st 43

A dismal day, loading pig iron.

Saturday, Jan First 1944

About 3.30 early this morning when we were all sound asleep from fatigue, in the long bunk shed on the sandy hillside, I was awakened by the wrenching, creaking sound of straining timbers. All was in darkness, the hut seemed to be sinking beneath me, then. I heard the awful

screams of men crushed and trapped beneath the wreckage. The very first thing I thought was “earthquake!” as I felt the building settling over me. I was on the upper bunk but not all the deaths were in the lower. On my right beneath the beams died Staff Sword and Les Sanson (Sauson), on my left Harold Jones was killed, while in the lower bunk little Joe Furey, one of the brightest boys that ever enlisted, one of the most cheerful, most helpful, kindest hearted friends a man ever had lay lifeless beneath a heavy timber.

The rescue crew cut holes in the roof to get us out and without knowing it their additional weight on the roof was crushing us more. It was a night of horror, the cries of suffering men unable to move with the weight of the wreckage above them - when the first boards were ripped up above me I felt the wind and the drifting snow on my face.

Seven men died that night, and eight later and 17 men were put in hospital with cracked or broken ribs or pelvis'. They were put in casts and when the lice got inside the casts they endured the tortures of the damned.

Next day I was one of three men detailed to put the dead men in their coffins. It was a cold day, snowing and blowing. We were shivering. They lay stark naked in a row and cold as ice. The coffins, cheap, flimsy affairs, roughly and crudely made, were too short for the bodies . .

Jan 9th 44

We were issued with straw shoes; the snow just melted enough to give us very wet feet. Watson and Boulding died.

Jan 10th 44

A Yank caught stealing rations was beaten up and tied to a post all night. All other huts in camp are being propped up with rows of poles along each side in the hope no more buildings will fall down. It is a wonder they stand up at all, hardly a nail in them.

Jan 13th 44

Loading pig iron into 30 ton Gondolas and even into refrigerator cars that still have large blocks of ice in them. The slabs of pig iron weigh from 50 lbs up to 200 lbs, have jagged edges, very hard on the hands. We are issued with one pair of gray mitts per month. They are worn out in a single day.

Jan 14th 44

Unloading bundles of iron rods. Caruso died today and two Americans.

Jan 17th 44

Cold and frosty. Worked hard, long and late. No time to eat our suppers out there, had to carry it into camp in own dishes. Tonight American Red Cross boxes were finally released, each box divided between two men. I got one 12 oz tin of corned beef, 4 oz of coffee, 7 oz of butter, 8 oz of powdered milk, one bar of chocolate, 4 packets of cigarettes, 4 oz of canned salmon, 3 oz of mill pate, 2 oz of jam. The first really pleasant thing that has happened since we landed in Japan. It all tastes wonderful. I don't know which is best.

Jan 18th 44

Moved back to old camp.

Jan 20th 44

Atrocities in 5B, Niigata which I personally witnessed. I saw two men, Yetman, an American and Mortimer of the Royal Rifles tied to stakes one evening in midwinter, snow on the ground, clad only in shirt and trousers, barefooted, bareheaded, hands behind their backs, about 6 feet of slack rope to let them run around the pole which they did all night to keep from freezing.

Next morning we fell in and lined up for work as usual. Mortimer was still running around his stake, hands and feet badly frostbitten, Yetman was on his knees, the orderly sgt was beating him over the head with a club. When we came in from work at night Yetman was dead with a fractured skull, Mortimer was in hospital with frozen feet, gangrene set in and he died three days later. Why were these two men treated like this? There were Red Cross parcels in camp, and the Japs were eating them, throwing out empty tins. We were all hungry, these two men were desperate. They tried to break into the storeroom at night, they were caught . . .

Out to work every day till March 21st.

March 21st 44

When I am in bed with a badly swollen right leg.

March 22nd 44

Infection has set in. Our work party is down to eleven men. Old Ed Arseneau went out to work today for the first time since the crash in the other camp. I got a large hypodermic injection in my bad leg.

March 23rd 44

Another needle in the leg. A big inspection today. I am bedded down, told to keep off my right leg, it looks like blood poisoning. This evening American Red Cross parcels were issued, one between every two men. We are very thankful.

March 24th 44

I was ordered into hospital today. The room for cripples and beri beri cases. About fifteen of us in this little room. A tiny heater in the centre. Old Lew Young from Meadow Lake is in here, and Walter Jenkins. My leg is dark blue from ankle to knee and has a queer appearance, shiny like polished metal. Lanced today, seems full of bloody pus. I am very drowsy, can hardly keep my eyes open during the day. The Japanese took most of the powdered milk out of our parcels.

March 25th 44

Two cases came over from Shintetsu, both with broken limbs. I get a needle in the arm and had my leg opened up again and have it propped high above my body now.

Match 26th 44

Another needle in the arm. Bathed leg in hot water.

March 27th 44

Japs carousing in their quarters, we can hear their songs and drunken laughter. One of the coal gang carried in here with a broken leg. Fell off trestle.

March 28th 44

The usual wrangle going on between patients and orderlies, the beri beris are mad for water and mustn't have it, those on restricted diet want more food and can't have it, and there is a living skeleton here who has to be forced to eat by threats of cutting him off tobacco and water.

Tonight we were issued with some Red Cross clothing we should have had months ago, all of good U.S. manufacture. One wool blanket, shirt and pair of socks and heavy winter cap, and a pair of leather gloves. Mine are both for the right hand!

March 29th 44

Dull rainy day. Japs have taken out our stove. Hospital patients have actually been issued pyjamas. Fourteen American medical staff came in tonight, dressed in naval uniforms.

March 31st 44

A beri beri patient who is on a limited liquid diet got up in the middle of the night and stole some water. This morning he is all puffed up again. Moved back to other camp scene of the hut crash.

April First 1944

Hospital patients rode in back of truck on the top of luggage, very rough and cold. Very draughty in new camp.

April 2nd 44

No more isolation, dysentery patients mixed up with beri beri etc.

April 3rd 42

Lugow (a sort of barley porridge) today, a fish head for breakfast, I ate it all, even the eyes, I am very hungry.

April 4th 44

Boys do not care for the lugow, too much water in it, prefer dry rice or millet. Robinson, an American sailor 18 years in the navy, died today.

April 10th 44

Pereault, a Rifle died today.

April 16th 44

An American named Haglund, from Oakland, California came into hospital today, in the bed space beside me. He is a skeleton if ever saw one. Tonight we were issued cards and told we might write a few words home. Haglund asked me if I would write his card for him. I said certainly. What should I write? He gave me his mother's address and told me to say he was fine and they mustn't worry and to send his love. I hesitated, but he begged me to, so I wrote it and hoped his mother would forgive me when she eventually heard the truth.

April 17th 44

Haglund very weak this morning. I raised his head and gave him a mouthful of hot coffee and when he lay back he swallowed once and was gone. I never saw anyone slip away so easily. Now the doctor, Major Stewart, and Kenney are arguing whether they should allow his card to be mailed home or not.

April 19th 44

Fixing up a hot bath in camp. All patients had one today.

April 21st 44

Robley of the Rifles died today at 10 o'clock. He had beri beri, infected leg and amoebic dysentery. Total of ninety-two P.O.Ws out of 600 have died since we landed in Japan. Out of 300 who were Canadians, 75 have died.

April 26th 44

Discharged from hospital.

May 26th 44

After a week in quarters I went out to work again, worked for ten days and my leg was as bad as ever again. Back in quarters hoping a rest will effect a cure. The last issue of Red Cross parcels came in a week ago. Each parcel had to be divided up among five men. All men in quarters except those excused all duties are working hard, pumping and carrying water all day to fill the big wooden tank which serves as a bath tub.

The huts we slept and ate in were long barn like structures, about 200 feet long and 40 feet wide. Down the centre was just the ground in this case light loose sand which was full of fleas. There is a sort of raised platform which ran down each side of the building about a foot off the ground on which we slept and sat while eating. First a thin straw mat was laid on the platform, then our blankets. We had one good wool American Red Cross blanket and four thin cotton frayed Japanese blankets which were much too short for us. If you pulled them up to your chin your feet stuck out a foot. When winter came we were forced to turn in one blanket. You couldn't keep the fleas out of your blankets. When you woke in the morning and sat up they would be dancing around you like hundreds of young grasshoppers springing up around your feet as you walk through the new grass in the spring. They raised a big welt wherever they bit so you looked as though you had a bad case of the hives. They are vary hard to catch and hard to hold while you killed them. As soon as the men came in from work they would take off their boots and put on a sort of wooden sandal with a strap across the top known by various names as "skivvies" or "go ahead" as you couldn't walk backwards. The straps were always tearing off the sole, and so many men were prone to borrow a neighbor's when one of his became unserviceable. So this was a constant source of friction, I saw one real bare fistfight over that, "Whose got my skivvies?" "I have" someone answered. "Take the - - - things off". "And what if I don't?" "Why, I'll punch you on the nose" and putting his words into action he promptly proceeded to do so. I hear they really mixed it, and blood soon began to flow, but it was a clean stand up fight, both six footers and long and lean, no clinches, no knockdowns, after actually only two or three minutes both were winded, and gasping for breath, and badly marked, and the group leader

stepped in between the exhausted men and ended the fight and made them shake hands.

If you are hungry, worried, overworked and apprehensive, tempers fray and small incidents which you would laugh off in normal life lead to bitter words and quarrels.

By the time the first winter in Japan arrived (43) the soles of my shoes were worn through. There were always loose bits of straw rope lying around the docks where we worked, and I used to tie these around my boots to keep my bare feet off the ground. Needless to say the roping had to be renewed several times a day and was a great nuisance at best. The Jap civilians who watched us as we marched to work used to point and laugh at my feet. The ordinary footwear for the majority of the Jap warriors is what they call "Catawbis" and is a rubber soled shoe with a cloth top that hooks up the back. The big toe is divided from the other four toes. The foreman of the gang tried to make us wear some old worn out pairs. They were too small for us and the divided portion of the ties blistered the insides of our toes something cruel. The ordinary wooden sandal the Jap children wear looks like this so from this comes the idea of the divided toe. Some of the Jap soldiers, or "hayti" wore cheap lather shoes, but most, and all for combat, wore the divided rubber shoe. The sight of it always reminded me of the cloven hoof, and I thought of the "trail of the serpent and the mark of the beast".

The first winter in Japan there was only six inches of snow, we were issued with straw boots, woven entirely of straw which looked like this. If we had had heavy woollen sox to put in them and if the snow had been dry and frosty all the time, it wouldn't have been so bad, or even if they had been big enough for us, which they were not, if your foot was a nine or over your heel forced its way through the straw at the back. It was impossible to keep them dry, and once wet they became a sodden mess, with no way of drying them. Night after night I have gone to bed with cold, wet feet, so bone tired I slept the sleep of utter exhaustion until wakened by the cold which roused me from my stupor, and so lay and shivered from four to six when we rose to start another day of slavery. I used to dream at night, fantastic dreams of good leather boots.

It's hard to remember all the different things we handled on the docks. For days we carried charcoal out of river barges and stacked it in huge piles near our shack, some of it was put in straw bags, some in wicker framework, we handled coke with the yo-yo shoulder pole, handled huge crocks of acid spray, long iron rods, army goods, clothing, etc. Crude rubber looted from Malay, compressed with steel bands into huge square blocks, very heavy. Creosoted ties, a dirty heavy job, all sorts of commercial fertilizer, lumber and poles, and a lot of dried fish in huge straw bales, and some sort of raw shark with an odious smell, a white chemical they called 'eon' and huge bales of something like raffia, might have been gun cotton, drums of fuel oil and cases of canned goods.

Dysentery was rife in camp and the camp commandant had some queer ideas as to its cure. He told us we caught cold in our stomachs and we must guard against this by what seemed to us to be absurd precautions. When we stood to, for Tenko, or roll call, every morning and night we had to have a blanket tightly wrapped around our middle. It must be able to stay in place without holding.

Did you know it is a deadly insult to call a Mexican a Mexican? They prefer to be called Spanish

and still speak what they call Spanish, though I suspect it is far from the pure Castilian the conquistadors used. Anyway, one of the Spaniards was late for the evening roll call, and grabbing his blanket he slung it loosely about him and held it to his sides with his arms, unfortunately he was in the front rank (we fell in by fours) and the orderly sergeant spotted him and ordered him to raise his arms. The man raised his right one. "Raise the other" was the crisp command. The man dropped his right and raised his left, "Raise them both" thundered the irate Jap. The trembling Spaniard raised his arms and the blanket dropped around his feet, the Jap clenched his fist - - -

Military discipline amongst the Jap armed forces is invariably some form of corporal punishment administered on the spot. While in Hong Kong, in North Point camp, I remember an officer making the rounds and a guard being lax on duty. The officer called him stiffly to attention shouting "Kiotski" then using the flat of each hand alternately on the sides of the man's face, in a regular sideways round-house delivery till he was panting with the exertion, and the private's face was red and swollen.

In our camp at Niigata when the camp commandant became enraged, just for instance if his bath was cold, he called the orderly sgt and administered a thorough drubbing, he in turn beat up the corporal, who retaliated on the private, and the private had no one to vent his spleen on but the prisoners. So he hastened to the huts and if he couldn't find an excuse easily, why he didn't bother looking for one. We had chairs but were expected to sit upright in a stiff unnatural manner on our sleeping platforms while eating. The guard (privates) used their rifle butts if they saw us reclining at meal times. They delighted in calling us to salute them many times. "Kiotaki" "Kerai".

When first held as prisoners in Shamshuipo, rice was cooked in old gas drums which had the tops knocked out. They were propped up on stones and a wood fire built under them. There was not even salt to savor this watery paste that resulted from several hours boiling.

Many men had lost their mess tins and all sorts of containers were used. When the long line formed (we were fed twice a day, about a large cupful each time) there was a strange variety of dishes presented for each ration. Some men took the lining out of their steel helmets and used the outer shell for a huge bowl. Others used the reflectors around electric lights. They were lined with white enamel, and of course a wooden plug had to be inserted where the bulb originally had been. Some picked up a flat piece of flat tin and bent up the sides to form a shallow pan, others made small boxes out of boards to hold their ration.

In order to prevent scurvy we were fed what we called the "green horror", some sort of coarse weed stews, some looked like bits of hollow reed, we called them "whistle roots". Sometimes we had the green tops of the sweet potato plant. They ran like a creeping vine over the ground and the last six inches of each vine was used. All tended to have a bitter taste, and was anything but appetizing, just practically a coarse fodder. The rice, in Hong Kong was of very poor quality, sweepings of the godowns (go downs they were called) which were the warehouses all sorts of refuse, insects etc. Some was mouldy in the form of balls about the size of a walnut inside of which was a large worm. When we moved to North Point camp a small amount of whale meat came in, and squid or young octopus, the latter had a very disagreeable odor, and the sight of the

tentacles with the suction discs on the bottom side gave you a very queer feeling in the stomach. We had some buns, but as there was no yeast they were very heavy and sour and the flour like the yeast had insects in it.

North Point camp was on the island of Honk Kong on the very edge of the shore including one of the pillboxes which Jap artillery fire had splattered. We heard these were built by a German construction company some years ago because they had put in the lowest tender of all. The outer inch was concrete, the inside was similar to poor mortar or plaster. You could pull out chunks with your hand. When the Japs strung electrified wire around us, and when they charged the wire around the compound, this first victim was the pet dog which belonged to the Jap orderly sgt. When the wire around Shamshuipo was charged there was a dog or cat in the wire every second or third morning. Then the current would be shut off, and the short was soon discovered, as there would be a crowd of hungry Chinese waiting for the animal to be taken off the wire and thrown out, when they would pounce on it. I always remember an old woman dragging away a large black dog.

We had a terrific craving for salt, never had realized before in our lives how important it was, nor thought its absence would be so noticeable in our diet.

One of the first things the Japs did which seemed so childish was to use some black substance (possibly axle grease) to smear over all English signs or anything in English printing. Reminds me, in the city of Niigata in Jan, the only signs I saw in English were "No Smoking".

The Japs tore down all the bronze statues in the city of Victoria on the island of Hong Kong including one large one of Queen Victoria we presumed they melted them down for armaments. They began to build a large monument on Mount Cameron to commemorate their victory, but after the base was finished, and a high scaffolding erected around it paused, possibly a doubt had crept into their minds (this was 45) as to whether it was a victory, anyway it was never finished to my knowledge. I left Japan for Japan in August of 43.

In Japan, in the city of Niigata, camp 5B, we put in the most frightful winter of ourselves. In for months time, in that winter out of 300 Canadians, 75 died, thru overwork, exposure, starvation, dysentery, beri beri, pellagra, etc. We would come in from work at night and some one would ask "Well who died today?" "Oh," the answer would come, "Kitteringham⁵ and one of the Royal Rifles".

"Well" someone would briskly interpose, "What's for supper". We didn't want to dwell on the subject of death too much, we never knew who would be next, our best friend, or yourself. When our doctor remonstrated with the camp commandant, he laughed scornfully and said there were "toxon cheesi hookoo" (plenty of little wooden boxes) to hold the cremated ashes of those who died.

White rice was scarce and expensive in Japan. We were fed mainly on a mixture which at times was mostly "coryon" a sort of bluish red millet seed, and sometimes rolled barley, often only half

⁵ Actually Kittering's death cast a pall of gloom over our hut. He was a better man than any of us. Why do we always lose the best?

cooked, as fuel was scarce and hard to get. Many of us found this hard to digest, and many found it bloated their stomach. John the Baptist ate locusts but had wild honey to help them down. The grasshoppers we had in our diet looked exactly like the ones we had in Manitoba in 1934, and may have been that old too. They had never been cooked, just soaked in soy sauce, a dark bitter liquid with salty taste, which both Chinese and Japs use. I always tore the hind legs of my hoppers, they were like little wiry sticks and got between your teeth while the barbs would tear the inside of your mouth. I always ate my hoppers headfirst and gave the head a good crunch when I remembered how they had devastated my field of Alfalfa in '34. The snails which were issued as part of our rations were eaten but certainly not enjoyed. They came in alive, in an open tub, and the night cook, George Dunn, said they kept crawling up and fallen over the edge onto the floor. They were boiled a few moments and served on, or rather in, the shell. You had to use a pin, or piece of wire to pull them out. You can figure we were pretty hungry when we ate them.

There was a great scarcity of metal kitchen equipment. Except for the large cast iron soys (a huge bowl set on a square of bricks) for boiling rice, all kegs and pails were wooden and very unsanitary. They absorbed flavors and odors, especially fish.

The Rinko gang that worked in the coal yard used to bring in lumps of coal into camp in their pockets, at the close of the day's work, and donate it to the kitchen fires to help cook our meals. Often fuel was so scarce there was no hot water for tea.

When we first reached Niigata 5B - all our good battle dress was taken from us and we were given dirty, worn out Jap uniforms that were simply crawling. We had no hot water or means of sterilizing clothes. Needless to say they made life even more miserable and as they were cotton they were cold. They took our knives, razors, valuables and money. The latter they said they would send to Tokio "to keep safe for us". We were given money just before we left Hong Kong for Japan which amounted to 45 Chinese dollars. I believe this was sent in by the Red Cross. When the war was over and before we left 5B, they paid us back our money in Japanese Yen; to give an idea what this was worth we decided to all chip in and buy a good beef animal, slaughter it, and have meat for the camp. The old farmer who led the miserable, shambling creature into camp next morning took off his old straw hat and wiped his sweating brow, he seemed greatly relieved that he had gotten the animal inside the gate before it collapsed. When dressed, weighing the bones as well, we had 200 odd pounds of meat (?) for over 700 men. This cost us 5000 Yen.

We divided up into groups, each one had a leader, our group lost three leaders, Captain Laurie (a C.P.O. of the Dutch submarine Hh Ms 0.20 of the Royal Dutch navy sunk by Rota Maru Coast, Malaya Peninsula, 150 miles north of Singapore). Laurie was our first leader, he died of pneumonia, from being soaked to the skin while we were working in the rain day after day. Next leader, staff Sword died in hut crash, third leader, MacHawes, a handsome young giant, beloved by all his men, died of poison only a month before the war ended. Out of our group of fifty men a few were employed in camp but most were sent out to work on the docks. Sickness took such a toll, at one time during the first winter, our work party was down to 10 men, who were still going out steadily, while the rest were sick in camp. Every man who could walk out to work kept going out as long as he could, for the dock company provided us with a little extra nourishment in the form of a soup, often a mixture of anything edible which was handy, but the last summer

consisting mainly of soy beans, which I firmly believe helped us more than anything else except the few Red Cross parcels which came in. If a man stayed sick in camp, his rations were cut as a punishment for not being out at work. In addition they were forced to do dirty camp fatigues such a cleaning out the latrines in mid winter and carrying the contents out in wooden buckets, emptying outside the camp.

Out on the docks one of our main jobs was loading pig iron. It came in, in big ships possibly from Antung, Manchuria, where the Soybeans came from. As soon as the ships docked they began unloading. The net which brought large rough slabs of pig iron out of the hold were made of steel cable which had thick lengths of rope woven throughout. These ropes soon frayed and tore to pieces and there was always a gang of coolie women threading fresh rope through the spare net. The winches and donkey engines were always run and handled by women. When a ship was unloading iron, you could hear the dull clash and clank a half mile away, and when we heard the sound and saw the tall masts of a big ship towering up on the far side of Okeedasan's warehouse or Obasan's warehouse, we shivered apprehensively. We could stand it, we said, in summer, but in winter when we had to dig the iron out of the snow with bare hands it was misery pure and unadulterated. The iron had come right out of the mould, the slabs averaged two feet long by 10 inches wide, and weighed up to as high as 200 lbs. Sometimes the odd mould itself was there to be loaded and it weighed much more. The edges of the slabs were rough and jagged like crystals of ice forming along the edge of the horse trough in late fall. We were issued one pair of straw mitts per month and you could wear out a pair in a single day. They were too small for us, woven out of rice straw, looked like this

Later we were issued small square rubber pads hooked as if they had been torn from the mat around the clutch and pedals of the model T. We were told to handle pig iron with these, holding them in this manner, using thumb to hold them in place. We loaded pig iron into every type of car they had, except their passenger cars, onto flat cars, refrigerator cars that still had a foot of ice in them, and were high, with narrow doors which made them difficult to load, into ordinary freight cars, 10 tonners, 12 and 18 tonners. Into open gondolas whose sides let down whole length, 22 tonners up to thirty tonners, where we piled the slabs six pieces high, along the edge and filled all in level behind. Into stock cars with slatted sides, and second floors or shelves in them for sheep or pigs, we had to crawl under the second floor on our hands and knees, to fill up the floor out to each end of the car. While we loaded in the door two were needed in the car to throw back to each end of the car. The "bosha's" or oxcarts were entirely of wood, except for a steel axle and rubber truck tires. The animals which pulled them were not oxen, but poor old thin cows, looked like Jersey. They had a ring in their nose and were led and pulled around by Japanese coolie women. They loaded up on the dock, and pulled around the row of warehouses, and dumped their loads along side the railroad track. If cars were waiting and ready, and we were there, they would pull alongside the coal car, and two of us would get on top of the cart and throw directly into the car. After a few months the Japs put a quota on our work. Each man was to load 15 tons of pig iron per day. This was held over us like a club. If we hadn't completed our quota it was an excuse to cut our rations, or work longer hours.

We handled many different commodities on the docks. When the big ships unloaded soybeans on the docks there was a pile of beans as high as an ordinary house, and two or three times as long. The beans were in ordinary large size bran sacks which weighed 180 lbs. It took three men to lift,

and load one of these on the back (high up, right across the neck) of the man who was going to carry it, through the warehouse and up a plank and into a freight car. To put it mildly it is hard work, particularly the last few yards up a steep plank. When the huge pile on the docks got a heavy rain the bags weighed 200 lbs, when they were swollen up, some bags would burst. Most grain, all rice anyway, was in straw bags, and all coolies carried hooks, or "coogi" for handling straw bags similar to this a wooden handle with a steel barb in the end, a small or "cheesi" one and a long one. A common article of diet was bean curd. It is a mixture of mung beans and rice and salt, and fermented, very sour to the taste. It was packed in 50 lb wooden kegs and the tops were seldom tight, and often the several inches of oily juice which floated on the top would leak and run down your back as you carried your keg off the dock through the warehouse and up the plank into a freight car.

The first winter (43) in Niigata, (180 miles N of Tokyo) only had 8" of snow, the second (44) we had four feet on the level. We spent weeks shovelling out the railroad tracks. When we had piled the snow up over our heads, and it still fell, we tied ropes on straw mats, piled snow on and dragged them to the dock and emptied the snow into the harbor. Or after we had loaded a car with pig iron, we would shovel snow on the top, all the car would hold, and ship it out just to get rid of it. I often wondered who the poor devils were who had to unload the iron, and hoped they weren't P.O.Ws.

There were no yard engines to spot cars, and we often pushed cars up one track, switched across and down another, for an hour before we could begin work when the snow was deep the second winter, and we had a large gang out, we have had, at times, a long heavy rope attached to the car with a dozen men pulling on the rope, and ten pushing on the car behind. When a car was heavily loaded and could not be moved, we would bring up an empty as hard and fast as we could, hoping the impact would jar it loose, this was "dingarossi". When a gang of us were on the hawser of a barge towing it along the waterfront, I will always remember Bobby McLeod striking, up the chant of the Volga boatman. He always did his best to keep our spirits up. I will always regret that he did not live to return with us. He died a month before the war ended, 1 July 1945.

Any Japs who talked to us and asked the same set of questions invariably. They would ask how old you were, then were you married and how many children did you have? If you weren't married, why weren't you married? When I couldn't understand it myself, how could I explain it to a Japanese?

Witchcraft is not dead, black magic still flourishes in Japan. When men were swollen up with beri beri the Jap 'quacks' doctors (?) laid oily paper on their stomach and legs and set them on fire with glowing charcoal. These burns only resulted in festering sores and a great deal of additional suffering.

When we first went to work on the docks the Japanese women were frankly afraid of us. We may have been the first white men they had ever seen. The first day they ran and hid. After that they stared at us from a distance, and finally they decided to ignore us, and pretend we never existed. The last summer they were beginning to be interested, and would have been friendly if we had given them any encouragement, particularly one of the girls who handled one of the "boshas"

(carts) and learned to giggle and roll her eyes.

The only human beings in Japan who showed me any kindness were some of the old ladies who worked on the docks. They were 50 or 60 years old. If none of our foreman were watching, they might slip us a sweet potato, or a handful of “hen monies” which were nothing, but parched Soybeans. They would take a shovel full of beans and hold them over the fire, rolling or stirring them till they uniformly browned and the skins cracked opened. They tasted like peanuts, were hard to chew and hard to digest, but must have had some food value. All Japs had a handful in their pockets, tossed them into their mouths one at a time. One morning walking down the track we came across the body of a large black cat lying on the rail, it had been cut in two by the train. We immediately exclaimed “here’s something for the soup”. Joe Falcon skinned it and Tommy Wilson cooked it in the soup. If you didn’t know what it was you might have thought it was rabbit. After we had finished eating, Walt Jenkins said “You know I’ve been thinking, a cat is supposed to be the most agile animal there is, and any cat that couldn’t get off the track must have had something wrong with it.” Actually it was easily explained. We had shovelled the snow and thrown it up in a high steep bank eight feet in height on each side of the track. A week after, our foreman came along dragging the body of a police dog, which he said had been killing chickens. Joe had just skinned it and cut it up when the foreman grabbed the two hindquarters and walked off with them, and they had all the best meat on them.

Many of the train crews were just youngsters in their teens, and when they were shunting they hit for all they were worth. Three cars all coupled together were derailed one day by the crossing next to Mar Shag’s. We saw a big 30 ton gondola loaded with loose soy beans which had had its coupling (which normally projects 18” to 2’ from the bed of the car) driven completely under, and the loose beans were pouring out around the break onto the ground.

But the funniest thing was an open gondola full of four gallon tins of “aubra” or lubrication oil which had been hit so hard the tins had lapped over one another, the oil was running through the floor of the car in a dozen places and a Jap with a pail was running from one break to another.

Speaking of leaks, the first winter, car after carload came in of leeks, just a first cousin of the green onion. The bulb is the same size as the green stalk, the whole thing two to three feet long and a very mild flavor. There was no room for them in the warehouses and so we stacked them in huge piles outside where they froze, and then heated, and turned black and rotted, and the steam rose in a cloud on the frosty air.

We handled a lot of “Manga” or manganese ore. It resembled a sort of heavy sticky clay, dumped on the dock. We had to shovel it onto wooden boxes on hand carts and pull them past the warehouse to the track, dump them on the ground and shovel them into cars, hard and heavy work. We handled “dogo” the same way. It was a sort of grey rock.

We carried thousands of bags of sulfur in straw bags. It was in rock form about the size of your fist. When it spilled to the floor of the warehouse from broken bags it crunched under your feet like frosty snow.

We handled many bags of rice, storing it in warehouses one week, then loading into cars the

next. Handled huge cases of crated machinery, some the full length of a gondola, and huge spools of undersea cable.

The picture is a typical case. I think they must have been loaded by a huge crane they fit in so tight they were jammed. We had the devil's own time with bars and blocks, prying one up so we could get the others loose, very heavy, had to be rolled. When loading large crates of machinery into a barge off the rotten dock on the riverbank, there were no close convenient mooring posts or piles. The mooring lines were too long, and when levering a great heavy crate off the wharf into the barge, it always had a tendency to push the barge away, and leave a gap above the water. Finally a crate with in with a splash and took two men with it. It took all afternoon to rig up a tripod and set of pulleys to raise the crate from the oozy bottom. The Jap foreman laughed so much at our men in the river, that he didn't beat us up for letting the crate fall in . We hated handling cement as the cheap paper bags were always breaking and the cement dust was hard to wash off our clothes.

Ever since the four Canadians had escaped from North Point camp on the island of Hong Kong we had been forced to take turns at hut guard. We have no proof that the four ever reached safety. They were Sgt. Payne, Berzenski, Ellis and Adams.

The hut guard had always to be on the alert, dare not smoke or sit down. Must keep all men covered up, which was a job in itself as some continuously kicked blankets off. Must know the number of men in his hut and recite his list of duties. When Major Boone, the arch traitor, was orderly officer in Shamshuipo and made the rounds at night with the Kamloops Kid (The Jap who was born in B.C.) the two delighted in interrogating Canadians. The kid said he had been ridiculed as a child in B.C. and he swore Canadians would pay for it. He was particularly vindictive.

The first winter (43) in Japan there were no bathing facilities whatever. We were allowed to take a bath once every two weeks out at work after the coolies had had theirs. We were forced to undress outside, snow on the ground and leaving our clothes out, walk naked in and climb into a square wooden trough like a big stock tank. Water was commonly 110 degrees, often higher. Soap was very scarce and hard to get. Camp 5B was set high on the edge of a range of sand hills which were covered with a scrubby growth of evergreens. Four wells in camp, but very seldom that more than two were functioning at a time. The water of two wells, the kitchen and the electric well was good. The other two were polluted by the latrines. The soil was a pure blowsand, the farmers had little plots and depended on human fertilizer from latrines to grow their garden stuff. This human waste was poured into huge half barrels, almost buried in the ground at the edge of the fields, about 6' across and 2' deep. It was allowed to age in these containers for some time before they spread it along the rows of vegetables. We marched past these every day on our way to work, and the stench was almost unbearable.

Their commonest and most popular vegetable was the "daikon" which was simply an enormous white radish, two feet long and four inches thru (on the average). They were about 95% water and had a hot burning taste. These were sliced and boiled with a spoonful of bean curd for soup or stew. Eggplant was common and so were cucumbers in season. I think more Irish potatoes were imported than grown, we unloaded a good many shipments on the docks. Sweet potatoes

were grown locally, wheat and barley was grown in small plots. When they harvested they pulled it by their roots and carrying it home laid it on a straw mat in front of their door and beat the heads out with a flail.

Rice plants were pulled out by the roots and hung head down on high open walls or wooden framework which was made after a lattice fashion about 30 feet long and 20 feet high. The last summer in Japan we had a camp bath fixed up for us, it was made of plank and held about 50 men at one time. It was electrically heated and at one time there was a short somewhere and we got quite a shock getting into the water. At the last we were bathing three times a week, water about 115 degrees, soap very scarce.

The Japs had a small brown bowl made of some plastic material and it was a standard measure for dishing out our rations, whether the meal was rice, or barley, or millet seed, or a fine yellow substance known as "Awa". The server out would get the wooden bucket on the ground between his knees and using a wooden paddle would pack the steaming mixture into the small brown bowl, and level it off. There might be a small dipper of straw to go with it or a piece of salty yellow daikon pickle, or two spoonfuls of grasshoppers. If the server saw he was going to be short the cry would go forth "hold onto your rice" and he server would go round with a spoon and collect a spoonful from each or more, till he had made up the ration he was short.

At one time we were getting so called bread made from a mixture of ground bean flour and coryon flour. It was about the size and thickness of the palm of your hand, if cooked all the way through it was burned black on the outside, if just crusty brown on the outside it was dough in the middle, but it was a novelty and the mania of trading for food grew up, a loaf or bun of bread would trade for two brown bowls of rice. Then some fellow who was very hungry, or so hungry he thought he would rather have plenty to eat tonight and go hungry the next night would holler "Whose got bread tonight for bread tomorrow night?" Some wag would answer "I have a bun but I've taken a bite out of it!" "O.K." the first man would shout "I'll take a bite out of mine before I pay it back to you!"

In order to eat heavily for the present some fellows would have their meals traded off for weeks ahead. Eventually they got in so deep they had everything going out and nothing coming in. The Major made the men turn in a statement of their indebtedness and laid down a routine whereby they could pay off at a meal a day. They were sternly forbidden to do any more trading. This didn't work as they continued trading, so the doctor took a hand, he ordered them to report to hospital, he had their meals served there and watched them eat so they could not carry anything out to trade. They were known as the 8-ball club.

Labor was so scarce that gangs of convicts were put out to work on the dock close to us. They wore straw sandals and light blue flimsy cotton coat and trousers and caps. They were the most depraved, degenerate looking specimens I ever saw, all bent over, fear, cunning, suspicion and hatred all written on their faces. They were treated brutally. Their guards were in a fancy black uniform carrying a long sword, smug and complacent, drunk with power, childishly eager to "show off" in front of us and demonstrate their power of life and death over their miserable victims.

The biggest men I ever saw in Japan were a gang of Chinese P.O.W. They could carry more than

any Jap and still seemed to have some spirit. They had not been entirely broken.

One odd commodity we handled was what the Japs called "Mommy Cuss." It was soy bean compressed into a large round cake about 3" thick, 3' in diameter, principally used for stock feed but we often saw hungry people eating it. It always brought on a violent attack of diarrhoea.

The camp was a good mile and a half from the docks where we work but after a long day's work we were often forced to carry in bags of coal on our back, or bundles of brush for fuel for use in camp. Or we took turns pulling on the sleigh in winter, or cart in summer that was loaded with rations for camp.

We received two Red Cross parcels while in Hong Kong (42), they were from the British Red Cross and were like Manna from heaven. I was Bowen Road hospital at the time and Jack Hardy and I each put on a pound a day while eating the first box. We made it last seven days. It's hard to say what we enjoyed most of all, some said the can of condensed milk, some said the can of bitter pudding.

While in Japan (43 - 45) received four and one seventh American Red Cross parcels. They were very good and a wonderful help to us. We often wondered what the Canadian parcels must be like.

I want to take this opportunity paying a tribute to Freddy Drover of Newfoundland He was the finest medical orderly we ever had. The only orderly who never lost his patience or his temper. He never lost hope and always did his best to inspire it in others.

We put on a few entertainments in our camp in Japan. Two Americans, Bill Barbour and George Francis were largely responsible for the concerts. Anyone at 5 B will not soon forget the two plays "Eddie was a Lady" nor "Romeo and Juliet". The bard of Avon might have been profoundly shocked if he could have heard Romeo borrowing Hamlet's speeches but an audience of W.O.S was not critical.

The Jap camp staff enjoyed the third act of "Eddie was a Lady" so well they ordered it repeated a second time. Was it only a rumour that the commandant was disappointed when he discovered that Eddie was no lady but only Sgt Neal masquerading as one? What would the commandant have thought if he could have seen Sunny Castro in the "Biaderes" at Shamshuipo?

The first B29s we ever saw over Niigata were so high they were like a meteor streak, only the long vapour streams that followed them being clearly discernible. Half a dozen came over at different times in the spring of '45, taking pictures I presume. Then in the summer they started coming over at night dropping mines in the harbour, even dropped some on dry land. When they came over at night all the searchlights in the country side went on, all the ack ack opened up, and we were chased out of camp up a high hill where a few fox holes had been dug and kept there till near morning. We only saw one B29 shot down in flames.

One forenoon, summer of '45 we were on the Marutso docks working on the American side. The donkey engines or winches that worked the cables, swinging booms, and nets, that unloaded the

cargo were out of order and so we had to climb down the hold, load up the bags of rice on our backs, carry them up the ladder, drop them on the deck, while others carried them into the warehouse. I was one of a dozen in the hold when the air raid siren went, our foreman, old Sebu-San would not let us out of the hold until he sighted the planes, and by the time we gained the deck they were right over us. They were American fighters, and some said there were 15, some said 20. I did not wait to count. They were after a gunboat in the harbour about a half-mile from us. She opened up with everything she had on board and the noise was deafening.

She made it too hot for them, they sheered away, then came back, and strafed along the dockside, sunk a boat a hundred yards from the one we were working on. Inside our warehouse an officer had a squad of soldiers drawn up at attention. When the planes dove on the gunboat, when the first deafening bursts of gunfire smite their ears, the squad scattered like leaves before the wind. The officer was left alone waving his arms, his shouted commands drowned by the pandemonium outside, and unheard and disregarded by his panic stricken men. It was the only comic note in the whole situation.

In the beginning, our camp 5 B Niigata, had 300 Canadians, then 300 Americans from the Philippines were sent in to join us in Nov 1943. In early summer of 45 about 50 Imperials, Royal Scots and Middlesex from Hong Kong (who had been in southern Japan for several years) joined us. In mid-summer about 75 U.S civilians who had been taken at Wake Island and held in China joined us.

CAMP 5 B NIIGATA (130 miles N of Tokyo)

We had two Jap foremen for a long time, Ko-Bio san or “squeaky” and Sato-san or the “Little Monkey”. Squeaky was lazy, conceited and mean. He loved to sit close to a glowing charcoal brazier which he had placed in a well sheltered spot and toast dried fish over the coals, munch her a mommies while we worked out in the wind digging pig iron out of the snow and loaded it into cars. He delighted in cutting out our company soup at the slightest excuse. How he relished the phrase “Osta soupa noda” (Tomorrow there will be no soup). He rolled it over his tongue like a sweet morsel and his wicked little eyes glittered with malice. His idea of Company soup was daikon tops or greens boiled up. The other foremen would scrounge for our Monday soup, potatoes or fish. or sometimes a little flour to thicken the soup, or let us dig up and take to the shack a few of the millions of sprouting soybeans along the track. Those bean sprouts when about two inches long are quite edible and rich in vitamins when boiled in soup.

Sato San the “little monkey” was one of the most active men I ever saw. We used to say all he needed was a tail and any zoo would be glad to get him. He was a hard worker and was never happy unless the gang was going at top speed. He loved to shout “speedo, speedo, speedo”, and “hike”, “Mhiku” at the line of cart men toiling past him. Unlike squeaky he was always ready to lend a hand stacking bags in a warehouse or packing the last layer of bags into the top of a freight car in a confined space. He was a wizard at that because he was so small and yet so very muscular. Like all coolies who had worked on the docks all their life, he was an adept at using the hooks with which they handle all bags and use in countless ways.

Many men were unable to stand the gaff on account of illness and under nourishment. If a man

was slow it was a cardinal sin in the monkey's eyes. He would puff out his cheeks and glare venomously while he fairly spat out the words, "srow, srow, dummy, dummuy"! He would strip to the waist though and work inside a hot car till the sweat rolled off him while Squeaky strutted around with his hands in his pockets.

All the lame and the halt were put in the "gizzie, gizzie gang" which might be put to work at odd jobs as they were not in shape to carry bags of beans weighing 180 lbs, though when the whole gang was on beans some who couldn't carry could keep busy sweeping up loose beans and shovelling them into straw sacks, or carrying drinking water, or pulling or rolling sacks down from the top of the pile or keeping tally with the "Mombo" sticks, this latter is one of the most primitive customs. Each time a bag of beans came through the door, one man would take a stick (a small hardwood stick about an inch and a half wide by 8" long) out of one box and hand it to someone else who gravely placed it in another box. But as a rule this job we handled by Nips and coolie girls. One heavy dangerous job was unloading large packing cases full of paper. I never knew paper could be so heavy in the bulk.

One of our men was badly crippled by a falling case in the car that struck his knee. Other paper came in huge round rolls. We loaded some sort of pickled greens in wooden kegs, some in straw bags so rotten they were falling apart, had been stacked on the dock for months but we loaded it into freight cars and it was shipped out. I can't imagine what for, or where, as it was fit only for fertilizer. We handled wooden kegs of daikon and cucumbers which were pickled and packed in bean curd. We carried many tons of salt on our shoulders all in straw bags while in camp salt was a luxury. Which reminds me of one time in camp when each man was issued with a rare treat, a slice of watermelon for supper, and Moonie hollered down the hut, "What's the offer on a slice of watermelon?" There was a moment of silence and he added "There was a little salt sprinkled on it." Instantly three guys yelled "What do you want for it?"

First the Monkey" was called up for the army and a few months later "Squeaky" went the same way. (He had been accumulating some large reserves of beans, rice and flour in his compartment in our mess shack). There was snow on the ground I remember the day he left, for he had a big load on a small wooden hand sleigh and had two of our men push I part way for him.

The coolies who worked on the docks really lived well as they had access, unofficially, to all the foodstuffs which came in or went out by ship or train and you never saw a dock laborer, male or female, going home at night without something wrapped up in their apron. All wore aprons during work, canvas on the outside and some soft material on the inside. Whenever they were carrying anything they had the apron over their head and shoulders for protection, when handling pig iron it would be tied round their waist, the stacker stacking rice sacks in a warehouse had an apron to his ankles. The women who worked on the docks were very short and very heavily built and carried 180 lb bags of soybeans just as easily as the men. I am speaking of the young women. The older women of 40 and 50 worked in a gang by themselves at less strenuous jobs. They wore straw sandals and a peculiar straw headgear.

Old Sebu-san, or the Biscuit, as we nicknamed him was an odd character even for a Jap. He wore glasses, a bushy black beard and had two gold (they looked like brass) teeth in his upper front, then a silver tooth, then two more gold.. His favorite expression when enraged was "Demerica,

demerica” or “Dis is”. His common ordinary every day cuss words were the same as Squeaky’s and the Monkey’s ”Baccaro” and “Konyaro”, But the Biscuit actually took a queer sort of personal pride in his gang, in us in fact. He bragged to the other warehousemen or to the Marutso office staff about how much work we did. When we had so many cars of rice to load down at Marashiangos, and ran up and down that plank till we finished in record time he fairly beamed. When canned milk powder was stolen from a warehouse and a search proved (?) we at least had none on our person or in our haversacks among our mess kit (at the time) but several of the Spanish boys among the Yanks did have some, the Biscuit fairly glowed with delight. We were his white haired boys on that one momentous occasion at least. He searched us first, sick at heart, angry and sorry at the same time, and when he found nothing he was flabbergasted, incredulous, amazed but Oh so relieved and so happy. His solemn confidential warning, accompanied by a sober head shaking for days afterwards was “Stealo dummy dummy, segoto toxon, sabis toxon, stealo toxon, sabis Nu, stick manny many” “O.K.”? Which being interpreted in a broad literal way meant: It is very hard to steal, if you work hard we’ll give you something for it, if you steal we’ll give you nothing but beat you many times, do you understand?”

The only expression of ours which the Nips picked up was “O.K.” It spread like wildfire, even the urchins in the streets shouted it after us.

Siga-Nara san, or Henry as we called him was the one comic among our foremen. He was a very pompous individual who took himself very seriously and yet seemed to be one of the few Japs who had a sense of humour. He was a regular parrot, if an English sentence was repeated to him three or four times he would repeat it quite readily and pronounce the words, a thing extremely difficult for the average Jap. If Henry could have dreamed of the meaning of the lurid phrases he was taught, or realized how he was defaming himself, his origins and his habits when he glibly repeated them on all occasions when he had an audience he might not have been so pleased, when he went into gales of laughter.

I have heard plenty of the boys say they never want to see or taste rice again but if I have it the way my mother used to prepare it with milk and eggs and sugar and spice and raisins I’ll it and I’ll enjoy it too.

Food and freedom were the two main topics of conversation over there. Some fellows collected recipes and raved about what they would eat when they got home. One long lean Yank from the Arkansas Mountains said he hoped he’d be home in time for Thanksgiving. When asked what he has he said “Bear meat and Beans”.

The Christmas of 44 – 45 was a great improvement over the one the year before. The day was declared a holiday, each man received an American Red Cross parcel and some mail came in. I received a letter from my brother John (it was only a year old) had a photo in it, the only photo I received while a prisoner, of Kay and the two little boys, Donald and Graeme, sitting beside the decorated Christmas Tree. I really got a lump in my throat. Everyone around wanted to see the picture, if one man looked at it, I bet fifty did.

The kitchen had been hoarding up a few extras to give us good meals on Christmas and along with the parcel I am sure everyone was full for once. We had a concert and it was one of the best

English concerts ever held in Japan. Red Barlow as Little Red Riding Hood (in the play by the same name) brought down the house when he cried in a shrill falsetto “But Grandma, you’ve got a nose just like Humisky’s”.

If I recall correctly, the last day we ever worked on Marutso dock was the 18th of August, that morning on our way out to work a B29 went over at a great height dropping millions of leaflets, they looked like snow flakes fluttering down, the air currents would take a great swirl of them off in one direction and then back again. They began to fall several hundred yards ahead of us. The Jap civilians were picking them up and reading them, when they saw us they began tearing them up. Our guards were running back and forth along the sides of the column to make sure we did not pick any up but one of the boys managed to and when we reached camp at night we got a hold of our interpreter and learned that Russia was in the war. Then we were put to work carrying in large green evergreen logs from the pine forest that covered the sand hills behind the camp. A few days of that and we ceased work except for camp fatigues. On Aug 23rd, we got a new camp commandant (very clever to spirit away the old one before things broke wide open). The Imperials nearly mobbed Major Fellowes (the American major who ran the camp under Jap jurisdiction) because our rations were so small. A huge sign about 20 by 30 feet was erected on the hill behind the camp, black and orange, lettered P.O.W. for identification by aircraft.

At 20 to nine on Aug 25th 1945 a flight of American planes flew over our camp, circled, wheeled, dived and rolled, eleven Sikorsky’s, one Grumman fighter. We all crowded in the square and waved our hands and yelled our heads off. It was a time of great rejoicing, we felt we were almost free.

This afternoon two different flights came over, dropped some toilet articles, cigarettes, chocolates, books, magazines etc. Thereafter, every second or third day the B29s began to come over and opening their bomb bays would vomit forth 40 gal steel drums full of food supplies. Sometimes they would be in twos, the bottoms welded together. Too often they broke away from the parachutes and dropped like a stone and when they hit the ground they crumpled up like paper. It was maddening to see tomato juice sprayed over the ground. At times the dropping supplies were actually dangerous. A Japanese woman 200 yards outside the camp was struck by a case of canned peaches. Sgt Neal said it was the best thing that ever hit her but it killed the poor woman. One of our men saw a drum dropping through the treetops, he leaped right out of his wooden sandals and ran. When he went back to look for his sandals they were beneath the drum!

Several bales crashed through the roofs of our huts. One pilot dropped a bale right through the middle of the big P.O.W. sign, others dropped their loads as far away as a half mile from camp. We had to form a picket line around the outskirts of the area to keep the Japanese civilians away. Most planes flew too low and did not give the chutes a chance to open, but the ones who flew high and judged accurately provided a wonderful spectacle for us when the chutes opened and slowly drifted down they were a beautiful sight. They were white, blue, red, orange and green. They were fascinating to watch for they brought food, and food meant life.

When the first planes came over Major Fellowes persuaded the Japanese interpreter to go with him to Tokyo and make arrangements for our camp to be evacuated. We really gorged on the

supplies dropped to us and had American K rations to carry with us on our train trip. We left 5B forever on the night of Sept 5th. When we left our camp the guards were still armed and the nearest Americans were many, many miles away. We rode in trucks to a lonely part of the railroad far from any station, and still a small curious crowd collected out of nowhere.

During the four years that I was away I received about a dozen communications. Most were issued to us after the war was over and we were waiting in camp for our release, some had been held up many months.

After I reached home and my 40 days leave was half over I received a parcel from my parents which had been sent me in 1941! It had reached Japan as it had Japanese characters stamped on it; my brother Jim looked over the contents, he had helped pack it. "Well!" he remarked "its been strafed, the chocolate bars and the soap were gone!" It had evidently lain out on the dock or in a leaky warehouse as the clothes were quite musty. Later on I got a Xmas card from McKenzie King for 1943!

When we had quit work on the docks, and before the first planes dropped anything in camp, naturally the wildest rumours were rife and I scribbled this down:

When we shake the dust of Nippon from each shoe, and our days of long segotoing
are through,
When Marutso docks are fading out of view,
Add we're eating, yes, and drinking with the crew of the ship that's sailing home
across the blue,
Then perhaps we'll realize this news is true'.

It was one of the Middlesex on the train to Tokyo who quoted Kipling's:

Trooping, trooping, trooping to the sea,
Here's September come again, the six-year men are free,
We must leave the dead behind us for they cannot come away
To where the ships are coaling up that takes us home today.
We're going home, we're going home, our ship is on the shore,
And you must pack your haversack for we won't come back no more.
Oh don't you cry for me my lovely Mary Ann
For I'll marry you yet, on a four penny bit
As a time expired man.

SEPT 5th, 1945

Camp 5 B Niigata, Japan

Tonight we are leaving this camp forever. A lot of the men have been trading off their blankets and the old clothes to the Japs down in the village for Saki. Moonshine Mooneghan is dancing, shouting and giving his famous invitation to a train whistle. The one time model camp for cleanliness, discipline and order presents a startling contrast. So much food was dropped from the air the ground is littered with tins (empty of course), boxes, cardboard, paper, rubbish scattered about. Men shouting, singing and staggering about. For once, for the first time, the Jap guard is very quiet, modest and self-effacing. No more strutting or swaggering. At 8 o'clock

tonight, clad in our new raiment dropped from the air, we climbed into buses and drove to the nearest railway track, no station, not even a siding, just a lonely stretch of track. Before the last truck left, our bugler played the Last Post. We waited in the dark by the track for a good hour. We are carrying dry K rations and a can of fruit juice, all dropped from air. We rode all night, very cramped, never slept a wink, as dawn broke we heard the vast area of ruin that was once Tokio. We changed to an electric train at 7.30 and many men in an exuberant mood throw gum and bars at every pretty face they saw near the track. We finally reached Yokohama at 8.30. Got a thrill when we saw the first American troops, sentries posted, M.P.s and most marvellous of all, white women! American Red Cross nurses, they actually looked beautiful. A great day.

We piled into trucks and rode for five miles. Saw engineers at work, big cats, bulldozers levelling ruins. We reached the docks, entered a large warehouse fixed up by the Red Cross, saw more nurses, and a long counter piled high with golden donuts and steaming cups of hot coffee, wonderful. I ate more than I should, spoke to a Red Cross nurse, Miss Opha Thompson of Belmont, Iowa.

Our group was called away so we had to go. Our kits were sprayed and disinfected, had a good shower, filled out a long questionnaire, name, age and ailments etc, then we had an X Ray; through a long line of doctors who checked us on most points, filled out another questionnaire and sent a wireless message home to our people.

Met Major McDougall, a Canadian officer who took our pictures. Then we climbed into trucks, rode five miles, then climbed down into a Higgins boat, a powerful motorized barge, square across each end. We covered about three miles in a smother of foam, leaving behind at the docks two big white, beautiful hospital ships, the U.S. Marigold and the U.S. Benevolence.

We reached the Ozark, a transport for troops and vehicles, regular cruiser hull, a crew of 450 capable of carrying 800 troops, armed with five inch guns, 8 forty M.M. guns and 4 20 MM guns. Built in 1941. Saw action off New Guinea where she took off 1000 wounded marines. She is 460 feet long. We filled out another questionnaire as soon as we boarded her, then given a ticket which showed us to our berths. We sleep on hanging shelves one above the other four high. At three o'clock we had ice cream served to us, it seemed as though nothing ever had tasted so good. When supper came round it seemed too good to be true. We had meat, potatoes, salad, spinach, bread, pie, jam, an orange and hot cocoa, saw a talkie movie on the upper deck, went to bed and slept like the dead on a clean white sheets and white fluffy pillows.

Sept 7th 1945

Wonderful breakfast. Two American navy live like kings. Bread, butter, bacon, hot cakes so rich, so light, so fluffy they melt in your mouth, and coffee and an orange. Where we are anchored inside a breakwater the sea is almost as smooth as glass, only tiny surface ripple. Yesterday was very hot, today is cooler, quite a heavy mist. Conditions on the Ozark are almost ideal. No fatigues (yet). No officers, no P.T. The drinking water is ice cold and of excellent quality.

Most of the ship's crew wear blue denim trousers, faded from many washings. No one is allowed to wear shorts on the upper deck. This afternoon at three served with ice cream, an apple and an orange. Tonight in the show there was a sports review of Eastern Canada. Saw the kilties, heard

pipe band of Highland regiment, saw Canadian Mounties, brought a lump into my throat to see them marching in a parade to the bagpipes.

Sept 8th 1945

Two Canadian officers just out from Canada were here. The boys bombarded them with questions till I think they were glad to go ashore. Noon today this ship is underway headed for Guam 1400 miles away.

Sunday, Sept 9th 1945

A Catholic service on the upper deck but it rained. Cleared up for the protestant service later. Chicken, Maryland style for dinner, delicious.

Wed, Sept 12th 1945

We sighted the Island of Guam about 5 o'clock this morning. Reached pier about 7. A great deal of activity here. Ships loading and unloading, trucks of every size, some monsters, racing here and there. Caterpillars, Bulldozers etc, all busy. We left the ship and climbed into trucks and busses and drove for miles over a splendid hard wide smooth road which had a continual stream of traffic running both ways. Passed hundreds of Quonset huts, cheap, quickly put up, fine for hot, dry weather but no good for the heavy rainstorms which are raging now. The rain drives in the windows which run the full length of the hut and have no glass, only wire screening. We are getting thorough medical checking up and general examination. The food here is wonderful and all you can possibly eat. I wrote an airmail letter home today.

Sept 13th 1945

The rains continue. Quonset huts are leaking. Tonight Charlie Ruggles in person and Mary Brian, and a cast not so well known put on a show in the mess hall. It was very funny. I asked Charlie for his autograph which he gave me quite willingly but forgot to ask me for mine'. He was in a hurry anyway.

Sept 14th 1945

Windy rainy weather. Paid \$5.00 by the American Red Cross.

Sept 15th 1945

Last night we filled out a long questionnaire on war crimes. Now we are getting a form filled out for clearing us from the island. Tonight we boarded the Ozark again.

Sept 16th 1945

Tied-up to the wharf all day. More repatriates boarding, boat packed to capacity. Weather hot, the island of Guam is 28 miles long and 8 wide, natives' dark brown in colour.

Sept 25th 1945

We pulled into Pearl Harbor today. There was a colored band on the dock playing "Hail, Hail The Gang's All Here". A dozen American officers, three or four white women (one with a little girl about two years old), a clown in costume with huge flapping feet, whose favorite trick was pilling ladies lingerie out of Sailors blouses, a WAAC or WAVE was looking everywhere for her brother among our ship's personnel, finally found him, a Russian, Mike Sofranoff. Two

American women meet two very dear friends after what must have been a long separation. One lady hung four Leis, or flower wreaths around her lover's neck. It looked kinda silly to me but he didn't seem to mind it. I guess all depends who hangs them on you. They went off arm in arm and we all heaved a deep sigh.

The marines were allowed off the ship an hour before us, were issue new uniforms and another \$50.00 in pay. They were given \$100.00 at Guam, so they bought out the nearby stand of all its pineapple juice, when we got off there was nothing left so we went back to the ship. The show tonight was Donald Duck.

Sept 26th 1945

There are a lot of ships here in Pearl Harbor, many anchored, others coming and going continually,. A big aircraft carrier across the bay. Her crew all in white lined up for inspection, look like penguins. Planes seem to be in the air continually, all sizes and models.

We have a huge streamer floating from the top of the mainmast. It has a star for every officer on board and a foot in length for every member of the crew. It is red, white and blue in color and is borne aloft by five large balloons. It serves as an announcement to all and sundry that we are **HOMEWARD BOUND**. Two wonderful words.

A large Canadian hospital ship is anchored near, the Leticia. She left Halifax Sept 1st. Supposed to be going to Manila.

Twelve noon, pulling out, bound for Frisco, should make it in five days.

October 2nd 1945

A dense fog this morning, first sighted a buoy with a bell on the top that tolled dismally, then a coast patrol boat, more channel buoys, and finally the dim outlines of the Golden Gate Bridge. Then shortly after we passed under the huge span, a ferry with about 203 beautiful girls aboard, a band playing "California here I Come". A big banner on the side, Welcome Home, came careening alongside. The girls all-waving like mad, we didn't wave much.

Ship docked at noon – huge crowd, two bands played the "Star Spangled Banner" first, then "O Canada". Many joyful meetings, about thousand Americans left the ship right here, but we were not allowed to set foot on the dock. About two we disembarked on to a ferry which took us across the bay to Fort McDowal on Angel Island, supposed to be the oldest U.S. Army post in existence.

We climbed a steep hill to the barracks, fell in, and got paid \$20.00 per man. Had a speech from the adjutant, General of Canada. Then an excellent supper. I drank four large cups of milk.

Italian P.O.W.s are working in the kitchen and mess hall here. They look very fat, greasy and happy. They have all they can eat and are paid 60 cents a day in American money. Tonight we saw a horror show with Boris Karloff, a bit of a newsreel showing the Allied occupation of Hong Kong. Slept well in spite of foghorn blowing continuously out in the harbor.

Oct 3rd 1945

Splendid breakfast, all the milk we could drink, eggs, pineapple jam etc, and. fresh fruit, both pears and apples. This forenoon the amplifier was broadcasting a game between Detroit and Chicago. The latter won 9 - 0. I sent a few postcards home. Excellent dinner, beefsteak, ice cream etc. The only effect the good food had on most of our men aboard the Ozark, while crossing the Pacific, our legs and feet became swollen. Our feet were so big we couldn't get our boots on. After dinner we boarded the ferry and crossed the bay under the Oakland Bridge. It has heavy traffic, trains, streetcars, and motorcars. Reached shore and found a train waiting. It pulled out at five, regular Pullman, Negro porters, diners, hospital cars, air-conditioned, windows must be kept closed or it won't function. Roast turkey for supper. Pullman bed is certainly comfortable, clean white sheets, deep soft mattress.

Oct 4th 1945

Heading due north. Snow covered peaks on either hand, travelling into a country of rolling hills, heavily timbered at first, dwindling into level plains and finally farmland. This is a long train, 18 coaches. Reached Klamath Falls about 9. On a siding stood a string of flat cars loaded high with huge logs.

Out into farm lands again, combines working in the fields. Now passing through a chain of lakes on either side and into hills covered with Jack Pine.

When we saw Mount Shasta we had left California and entered Oregon. Passed thru quite a number of tunnels, saw another large lake, some splendid timber, deep gorges, vast canyons far below. More tunnels, I've counted eight so far. Some huge peaks running up beyond the canyon.

At one stop in Oregon we were only a dozen yards from an Apple Orchard. A lot of fruit on the ground beneath the trees. Jenkins and I almost persuaded Red Barlow to raid the orchard for us. We pushed him off the train and encouraged him with threats till he was at the fence when a large dog came up and showed his teeth and Barlow lost heart.

Oct 5th 1945

We pulled into Seattle about 6 this morning. Climbed off and boarded the Princess Alice for Victoria. Docked at noon, tremendous ovation. Piled on busses, drove out to Gordon Head Camp, about 14 miles, issued with uniforms, kit etc. I wired home.

Oct 6th 1945

Dashing here and there all over camp today getting badges, flashes ribbons, then the long line up for our medical examination, even took our fingerprints and our photos. A big crowd waiting in the tailor shop to have flashes sewn on battledress blouses. While I was waiting there, who should walk in but Ewing McLaren, my second cousin, and Robert Harper whom I used to go to school with at Paramount. It was great to see someone from near home. We talked for several hours. Then Millis and I went to the canteen and drank milk and listened to one of the Red Cross volunteers play the piano.

Oct 7th 1945

Roll call in the drill hall, checked our kit, took busses at 10, drove to park, marched to the dock.

Met Robert Harper and his wife again, they gave me a very tasty lunch and a number of issues of the Reston Recorder, the old local paper, so I got caught up on a little news though much was mystifying, its hard to bridge the gap made by four years.

Boarded a ferry, good smooth sailing, reached Vancouver about 5.30, enormous crowd, band, cheering, met McSween, train waiting, crowd surging up and down alongside, hunting relatives, pulled out later, very tired. Wired home.

Oct 8th 1945

We are in the Rockies, trees in all their glory of autumn color. A rushing mountain torrent zig zagging by but always roughly parallel to the track. It is shallow now, and rocky, but swiftly flowing. The sun is setting now and we are in the foothills of Alberta. A great welcome at Calgary, a band, crowds, all auxiliaries of every denomination on the platform with doughnuts, coffee, chocolate bars and cigarettes.

I wired ahead to Regina and to Kipling. Cousin Dave Forsyth, his wife and son, were on the platform bearing gifts when the train pulled into Regina. It was certainly good to see them.

My Aunt Florence, Uncle Tom, Lillian, Larry and Betty Toppings were on the platform at Broadview. I could hardly believe my eyes the way the children had grown up. It was amazing.

On to the train again and speeding eastward, each man has been issued a gallon can of condensed milk by the Red Cross. Bears the label Powdered High Protein Milk Supplement. We stopped for a few minutes at Elkhorn, and Big Tommy Thompson (the strongest man in the Royal Rifles) spying a woman on the platform with two babies in a carriage, stepped off the train and dropped his can of milk into the baby carriage. "Lady, here's something for your babies" he said. The mother was so utterly astonished she could hardly thank him.

It was dark when we pulled into Winnipeg. Said goodbye to Austin Roberts and Jimmy Webb and ether Rifles we had known so well. The rest is history. It was all in the papers next morning. The biggest crowd that ever jammed the station. The wildest most excited mass of surging humanity I ever saw.

The thrill, the joy, the heartfelt gratitude of being spared to meet my loved ones once again. My own family, my own friends, my neighbors. "Kiss all the girls you can, while you can," was the sage advice of my brother Jim. "In a couple of weeks time they will be slapping you again!"

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