

WWII Primary Source

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Clerk, Dunedin, NZ

Sergeant William Denham Dawson

Service Number: 290703

Infantry Reinforcements

Served: Africa, Italy

Returned to NZ

Died in NZ 1966



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NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES

8th RE

S.S.R. 3 CARD SENT TO NATIONAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

WAR.

[Form N.Z. 307. (In pads of 100.)

HISTORY-SHEET.

Army No. 3/2/610

23 1/2 hrs Discharged.

C. of T. 20/11/46

290703

290703

Unit: 3 T. B. Ist Bn. Otago Regt
 Rank: Sgt
 Christian Name: William Denham
 Surname: Dawson

Outward.		Inward, ex "		Service.			
Date.		Date.	Place.		To	Year.	Days.
15/8/40	Embarked	8.45	M.E.	N.Z.	15.10.41	9.12.42	360
	Entered camp	30.9.45	N.Z.		1.10.45	12.2.46	135
1 DEC 1942	Embarked	12.2.46	Wston.	Overseas	10.12.42	30.9.45	2 295
5.1.43	Disembarked M.E.						
	At (Place.)	Reason for return and/or discharge: Info to Coast Pool on 9.12.46			58-28/12/45	Total	4 60.

Next-of-kin.	Relationship.	Address.
Mtr J.T. Dawson	Father	20 Sheen St. Roslyn, Dunedin N.W.I.

Address of soldier on return to N.Z. 20 Sheen St. Dunedin N.W.I. CASUALTIES. 10 Stevens Grove, Lower Hutt. C 5 Bm. 1. 20/4/54.

Cable No.	Date of Casualty.	Nature of Casualty.	NOTIFICATION SENT.		
			To	Date.	By
		DECEASED 2-6-66			

ACTION AFTER RETURN TO NEW ZEALAND OR DISCHARGE ABROAD.

Nature of Document issued.	Date.	By	Address sent to	Pay Office advised.
W.S.P. Certificate of Discharge no 40070	18.9.47	R/S	Schedule no 807.	RH. 23/9/47
M.I.D. EMBLEM				
1939-45 STAR				
ATLANTIC STAR				
AFRICA STAR				
8th ARMY CLASP				
PACIFIC STAR				
Assessed by: CB	Checked by: [Signature]			
		Appn. No. 54098		
		Date: 26.4.54		
		Initials: MP		

Diary William Denham Dawson

From 10 December 1942 to 30 September 1945

1942

Thurs Dec 10 Embarked with 8th reinforcements on HMT 'Aquitania' at Wellington. Lucky enough to get in same block (sleeping 102 men) with seven cobbers – Warwick Anderson, Roy Cameron, Stan Gilchrist, Sid Gaudin, Bill Reid, Bob Hillier and I. Arthur Chetwin in another block.

Friday Dec 11 Spent day finding our way about the ship. Uncle Jack, Aunt Dais, Ruth, Iris, Aunt Beatrice came down to wharf in the evening.

Sat Dec 12 Saw Uncle Jack and Ruth again at 6 am. Pulled out at 6.30. Cook Strait calm. Sailed along north coast of South Island. Land still in sight at nightfall.

Sun Dec 13 Out of sight of land, course SW. calm, but I disgraced myself by feeling a little crook. We had HMS 'Achilles' as escort.

Mon Dec 14 Heavy swell, I felt decidedly crook. Miserable all day. Course still SW.

Tue Dec 15 Calmer, my sickness gone. Anti-aircraft practice shoot by ship's guns – good shooting. Westerly course.

Wed Dec 16 Course changed round to NW. HMS 'Adelaide' met us and 'Achilles' left.

Thu Dec 17 Still very calm. We all worked up an appetite, but had to satisfy it on tinned fruit from the canteen, as food at meal times wasn't plentiful. Spent most of time playing cards with the boys.

Fri Dec 18 Persistent rumours that Japanese radio had announced sinking of 'Aquitania'. Weather still calm. Sid Gaudin and I put on small impromptu sketch "The OC" at concert in evening, without noticeable success.

Sat Dec 19 Joined by Dutch destroyer G84 in morning. General washing day – ship hung from bow to stern with washing. Usually fresh water was strictly rationed, but today it was open slather.

Sun Dec 20 Went to early communion with Arthur Chetwin, and when we came out the ship was in sight of land. Dropped anchor 9 am outside Fremantle. Loaded supplies from lighters, and oil fuel from tanker 'Hilda Knudsen'. Threw an illegal letter home to an Aussie soldier on the tanker to post. Thunderstorm with vivid lightning in afternoon.

Mon Dec 21 Beautiful sunny day. Vaccinated and went on guard in afternoon, my shifts on promenade deck from 3 – 5, and 9 – 11 pm. Left Fremantle 8 pm, accompanied by HMS 'Devonshire'.

Tue Dec 22 Weather heavier, some of the boys a bit off colour. Went on guard again 3-5 and 9-11 am.

Wed Dec 23 Led debate on subject 'That woman is the weaker sex'. Took affirmative against team led by Roy Cameron but lost narrowly. Meeting of a few chess enthusiasts in evening, and the gang had an orgy of tinned fruit. Slept on deck – much preferable to stuffy block.

Thu Dec 24 Xmas eve in the workhouse. Watched shoot from 'Aquitania's 6-inch guns in morning, firing at floating targets. Good results.

Fri Dec 25 Began Xmas day well by having to evacuate sleeping quarters on deck at 4 am because of rain. Went to communion 6.15 am with Arthur. Sang in choir at three carol services in different parts of ship in morning, and finished with sore throat. Xmas dinner only passable – beer warm. Made as merry as possible with tinned fruit. Evening stiflingly hot.

Sat Dec 26 Shoals of flying fish round ship in morning – reminded me more of dragon-flies than fish. Vaccination gave me its first twinges.

Sun Dec 27 Uneventful day, spent mainly playing cards. Watched 'Devonshire's amphibious plane having a fly round in afternoon. A lot of phosphorescence on water in evening.

Mon Dec 28 So hot in block that I went out to sleep on deck 4 am. Another quiet day, card-playing punctuated by eating fruit. Sighted a ship on horizon, but it didn't come any nearer. Crossed equator 8.30 pm, but didn't know it at the time.

Tue Dec 29 Another big washing day. Felt very crook with the vaccination in morning but took a couple of aspirins, slept all afternoon and felt better. Some more target practice by anti-aircraft guns in morning.

Wed Dec 30 Had very bad night, and woke up still crook, but improved afterwards. Much cooler. Led negative team in inter-platoon debate 'That the human race is better off today than it ever was'. Lost.

Thu Dec 31 Most unsatisfactory New Year's Eve, as I was feeling very crook indeed, with sore head, throat and chest. Sighted an island on horizon in afternoon, and correctly guessed it to be Socotra. Still sick in evening, and was just getting off to sleep at midnight when some enthusiasts made the night hideous seeing the New Year in. I cursed.

1943

Fri Jan 1 In sight of Somaliland coast at daybreak, and skirted south shore of Gulf of Aden. Went at snail's pace and on zig-zag course all day. Passed small freighter in afternoon. Big shoals of porpoises about all day. Ship's magazine issued, and I spent some time collecting autographs for it. Feeling much better.

Sat Jan 2 Quite recovered. Near Aden at daybreak, and saw its buildings, forts etc, on shore, and freighters and dhows. Speculations as to just where entrance to Aden harbour was. Stopped for two hours in morning, during mine-sweeping operations ahead of us. Passed through Straits of Babel-Mandeb into Red sea in early afternoon. Passed several more ships during day, and a large town on the Arabian coast. 'Devonshire' left us at Aden.

Sun Jan 3 Went to early communion with Arthur. Not much doing all day, but passed a few ships.

Mon Jan 4 Signs of preparation for disembarkation. Saw land on horizon in a few places, and passed a lighthouse fairly close.

Tue Jan 5 Sighted land early, and anchored off Tewfik about 10 am. Much cooler. Harbour full of ships. A few Egyptians came round in boats, and some came on board. Spent day waiting to get off 'Aquitania', and watching troops disembark on ferries and lighters. Left ourselves about 5 pm on a ferry, and after an hour's trip landed in dark. Went by lorry to a transit camp a few miles away, and

had fun trying to find our way round in darkness. Got more or less settled into a tent with some of the boys.

Wed Jan 6 Spent morning looking round camp and developing first impressions of Egypt. Filth of natives quite up to expectations. Went on short route march in afternoon, but country too flat to see much. Made our first acquaintance with Egyptian sand and flies, with English, South African and Indian soldiers. Saw some Italian prisoners at work.

Thu Jan 7 Went by train from Suez to Maadi via Cairo, and had plenty of opportunity of studying Wog life. Train surrounded by beggars and hawkers at every stop. Got impression of the best and worst parts of Cairo, and of its enormous size. Arrived at Digla Siding 2 pm, went by truck to Maadi Camp and drafted to 23rd Bn reinforcements, with Roy Cameron, Warwick Anderson and Stan Gilchrist. Had look round our area.

Fri Jan 8 Spent day on preliminaries, dental examination, digging in tents etc. Large amount of standing in queues. In evening had a look round various camp institutes – NAAFI canteen, YMCA and Church Army huts. Discovered one or two acquaintances.

Sat Jan 9 Brigade parade in morning. Spent afternoon investigating Maadi township with Stan Gilchrist, Geoff Phelan and Vic Robinson. Also investigated Lowry Hut and Maadi Tent, where we had tea.

Sun Jan 10 Went on conducted trip to Nile Delta Barrage, passing along Nile and through Cairo en route. Intricate system of dams and locks at barrage, and beautiful public gardens. Watched clever display of conjuring by a 'gully-gully' boy. Took a stroll into villages at either side of barrage, and got further insight into squalor of Wog towns.

Mon Jan 11 Got down to serious training, including an energetic bout of PT. Had our first taste of a desert route march, ploughing through soft sand and kicking it up into a cloud.

Tues Jan 12 Another strenuous day's training, with more PT and a route march.

Wed Jan 13 Went on conducted tour through Cairo's Coptic churches in afternoon. Visited oldest Egyptian mosque, St George's Church and cave where Holy Family is supposed to have lived, Ben Ezra Synagogue and 'Hanging Church', built on top of an old Roman fortress. Beautiful mosaic and carved work, especially in Hanging Church. Also shown through Church Missionary Society's hospital in Old Cairo.

Thu Jan 14 Went to camp dentist in morning and suffered there for 1½ hours. Went down to rifle range, zeroed my rifle, and then shot on 200 yd range, with mediocre results. Spent evening playing cards with Stan Gilchrist.

Fri Jan 15 Ordinary day's training, including the usual PT and route march

Sat Jan 16 Inspection of brigade by Brig Stevens in morning. Went into Cairo on leave, visited Museum of Hygiene (one of the most gruesome places I have been in), had a few frenzied arguments with gharry drivers, tea at NZ Forces Club, and saw 'King's Row' at Metropole Theatre in evening. Glanced in at a few cabarets – didn't think much of them. Home about midnight.

Sun Jan 17 Struck job of Coy Orderly Corporal, but went illegally on conducted tour to the Pyramids. Explored Temple of the Sphinx. As time was short, I had to choose between going inside Great Pyramid or climbing it, so climbed it – about ¼ hour's job, arrived on top feeling done out, but rewarded with a grand view of the Nile Valley and Cairo.

Mon Jan 18 Started a three weeks' Intelligence course at the School of Instruction a little way down the road from our camp. Able to gloat somewhat over the other boys, because through this I missed a night manoeuvre.

Tues Jan 19 Uneventful day, but course showing signs of being very interesting. A lot of notes and swot though.

Wed Jan 20 Went into Cairo in evening with the boys. Visited a few bars, and went to see 'Lovers' Leap' at the Opera House. Very good and amusing show. Opera House small, but a lovely place.

Thu Jan 21 Short examination in message writing in afternoon.

Fri Jan 22 Uneventful. Result of exam quite good.

Sat Jan 23 Exam in morning. Went to Cairo with Warwick Anderson in afternoon, explored the Mousky native bazaar, and visited silver-workers' and leather-workers' establishments. Treated to a cup of coffee at a perfumier's, and bought some perfume to send home.

Sun Jan 24 Went to communion in morning. Went to Cairo with Roy, Warwick and Arthur, and spent an interesting afternoon at the Zoo and the Gezira Sporting Club. Made hogs of ourselves on fruit salad and ice cream at the NZ Club. Back to camp early.

Mon Jan 25 Went to Maadi Tent in evening, and enjoyed three games of chess, winning two and losing one.

Tue Jan 26 Nothing outstanding happened.

Wed Jan 27 Spent afternoon doing a big wash.

Thu Jan 28 Interesting lecture on enemy weapons in afternoon. Went on a compass march in evening, and finished up fairly well, about 50 yds from final point. Had good view of a live shoot, with tracer ammunition, Verrey lights etc.

Fri Jan 29 Did a practice recce of the Helwan road (along the bank of the Nile) for 10 miles south of Maadi in afternoon, and saw a lot of new country, including some big factories on the way.

Sat Jan 30 Exam in morning, fairly easy. Went to Cairo in afternoon with Roy, Arthur and Butch Cotton, and visited citadel and Mohammed Ali Mosque. Lovely interior of mosque, with 165' dome, and grand view over all Cairo. In evening went to see 'Mrs Miniver' at Metro Theatre, and enjoyed it though it was somewhat harrowing.

Sun Jan 31 Rained at intervals during day. Suffering from 'Wog guts', otherwise crook stomach, and had nothing to eat all day. Went into Cairo in evening, and went with Arthur Chetwin to service at All Saints' Cathedral. A modern building about the size of St Paul's (Dunedin), but with bad acoustics. Good service and hearty congregational singing.

Mon Feb 1 Spent evening at Maadi Tent playing chess, but lost three games.

Tue Feb 2 Went to Cairo in evening with the boys, and saw Noel Coward's 'Private Lives' at Opera House. Quite enjoyable show but not outstanding.

Wed Feb 3 Spent morning on field exercises, desert navigation and field sketching.

Thu Feb 4 Uneventful day, save for message-writing exam. In evening listened to a classical programme by a Palestinian string quartet.

Fri Feb 5 More field exercises in morning. Got some mail.

Sat Feb 6 Course wound up with exam in morning, again fairly easy. Went into Cairo in afternoon with Roy and Warwick, took some photos in the streets, bought some presents in the Mousky, and visited the Blue Mosque. In evening went to see Walt Disney's 'Dumbo', and got a good laugh out of it.

Sun Feb 7 Went to communion in morning with Arthur. Again went to church at All Saints' Cathedral in evening.

Mon Feb 8 Without a doubt the toughest day I have so far spent in the army. Big route march, followed by night attack. I helped to guide platoon in. out until 10 pm.

Tue Feb 9 Posted parcel home. Feeling fit after big day. Got my first parcel – chocolate.

Wed Feb 10 Got cable from home. In afternoon held a tabloid sports meeting, managed to get in same team as the boys, and had a lot of fun. Went for short march in evening.

Thu Feb 11 All day route march through Dead City on outskirts of Cairo, past Citadel, along top of escarpment overlooking Cairo and Maadi, and home down hillside. Went to Cairo in evening.

Fri Feb 12 Got certain news that most of us were leaving Maadi to join the division very soon.

Sat Feb 13 Packed and handed in base kits in morning. Went to Cairo in afternoon, had good wander round, plenty to eat, went to see 'Lydia' in evening – not outstanding.

Sun Feb 14 Expecting movement order any time. Went to Maadi township in afternoon. Hired bikes, and went for ride along Nile with Warwick and Stan.

Mon Feb 15 Route march in morning. Spent afternoon getting ready for move. Final party in evening. Left Maadi 11 pm, loaded with gear, went in trucks to Cairo main station and entrained. Roy Cameron in party, but not Warwick or Stan. Spent a most uncomfortable night in the train.

Tue Feb 16 Train trip continued. Saw Alexandria in the distance very early. Breakfast at Amiriya. Passed Alamein in morning, and had first view of the battlefields. First glimpses of Mediterranean in morning. Signs of bombing on villages and stations, plenty of wrecked trucks, tanks and planes. Dinner at Similla, miles from nowhere. Slept under seat in cramped position, but quite comfortable.

Wed Feb 17 Detrained early in morning outside Tobruk and marched to a transit camp. Did nothing all day. Slept in bivvy tent with Butch Cotton, as big tents were too crowded.

Thu Feb 18 Hung around camp all day. Several drafts of men came in, including a crowd of South African negroes. Weighed in for a plane trip.

Fri Feb 19 Still stuck in transit camp. Route march in morning. Hot thirsty day. Water rationed to one bottle a day, so salty as to be undrinkable.

Sat Feb 20 Route march in morning to war cemetery, which we had a look at. In afternoon weighed in again. Watched raid over Tobruk in evening, quite a good show put up by anti-aircraft fire.

Sun Feb 21 Up by moonlight, left camp 7 am, and went to El Adem aerodrome. Signs of bomb damage all round. Sat there all day.

Mon Feb 22 Up 4 am and messed round in dark with gear. Breakfast 5 am. Hung round till 8 am, when we embarked on a Douglas transport plane for Tripoli. Landed halfway at drome beside Mussolini's Triumphal Arch to refuel. Arrived Castel Benito aerodrome 1.30 pm. Much damage all round drome, wrecked planes etc. Went in trucks to NZ Div's area and joined 23 Bn. Drafted to No 18 Platoon, D Coy, with Roy Cameron, and improvised a bivvy with him.

Tue Feb 23 Short route march in morning. Spent afternoon digging in bivvy and making it comfortable. Told in evening that we were both to shift next day – I was to go to the I section. Left camp 10 pm for work on Tripoli wharves.

Wed Feb 24 Rolled oil drums along Tripoli wharves in hour shifts till 7 am, for loading on 'Tureby'. Saw Ken Paterson and had a yarn with him. Air raid warning about 5 am, but nothing happened. At daylight saw extent of bomb damage on wharves, sunken ships etc. During trip back had first look at Tripoli. Much better-looking city than Cairo. In morning transferred to I Section, got settled and felt at home amazingly soon. Short compass march and messing round with maps and learning ropes in afternoon.

Thu Feb 25 First introduction to ciphers and codes in morning, and tried my hand at copying a map in afternoon. Played cards in YMCA hut all evening.

Fri Feb 26 Continued copying map in morning. Lecture on escape in afternoon by Capt 'Sandy' Thomas (an escaped prisoner of war) – told off by Angus Ross, the Adjutant, for appearing on an easy dress parade in braces.

Sat Feb 27 Met Neville Colvin in morning and had a yarn. Party in I truck in evening.

Sun Feb 28 Big church parade and march past Gen Freyberg. Went into Tripoli with Roy Cameron and Jack Bickley (I Sgt), and had a good look round. Much more impressed with Tripoli than Cairo – good-looking, clean city, but well knocked about. Beautiful harbour and promenade. In afternoon saw Kiwi Concert Party's show in a town theatre – one of the best shows I had seen.

Mon Mar 1 Warning order to move from Tripoli up into Tunisia. Spent day packing and getting I truck ready. Plenty of rumours around. Hurried final preparations in late afternoon. Got on trucks after tea and spent uncomfortable evening sitting there. Left 11.30 pm, travelling on Bn HQ personnel truck.

Tue Mar 2 Travelled all night, too much gear on truck for comfort, and got very little sleep. Passed small port of Zuara 8 am. Crossed frontier into Tunisia midday. Bad road, and got well bumped about until we reached Ben Gardane 3 pm. Passed through Medenine 6 pm, and left road about 2 miles past town. Went across country for a short distance and stopped in a sandy gully with one or two trees in it. Found out that we were in the line – not at all like what I had expected the line to be like; everything perfectly quiet. News of expected German attack next day – my first expectation of action, but I didn't feel excited one way or the other. Dug in roughly in dark, sharing bivvy with Charlie Lambert (IO's batman).

Wed Mar 3 Spent morning digging battle positions above our gully and resected in a company position by stepping it out. Very hot dry day. Artillery going in distance all day. Sorted out new maps in afternoon, and was called over to question an Arab in French. He had been found wandering

round our positions. Got nothing out of him. More news in evening – attack now expected next morning.

Thu Mar 4 Stand to 5.30 am. Expected German attack did not come off. In afternoon got nine letters. While I was reading them I experienced my first enemy bombing raid. Bombs did not come very close. Kept wanting to get up and see what was happening. Fresh expectation of attack in evening, and great excitement. In evening went out in I jeep with Jim Whitlow (its driver) to guide out some engineers who were to lay a dummy minefield in front of us. Did not know the way, but Jim, whose bump of direction was one of the best I have ever met, got to the spot by grand guesswork.

Fri Mar 5 Did picquet shift in middle of night, and stand to 5.30 am. Again attack did not materialise. Dog fight between our planes and Jerry's overhead at midday, and some anti-aircraft fire about. In afternoon went out in a carrier to locate a plane which had crashed near Medenine aerodrome just behind us. Thought to be a German plane, but turned out to be ours. Had a yarn with some English tankies living near the spot.

Sat Mar 6 Occupied observation post on a water tower at dawn. Long trek out to tower, and stiff climb up vertical ladder with rifle over one shoulder and telephone clutched under other arm. Didn't feel happy, as tower was very conspicuous. Shells passed overhead going back to the aerodrome. Jerry attacked in morning, but I couldn't see anything as attack did not come directly at us. Kept busy passing back information of whatever movement I saw. Relieved 1.30 pm by Stan Ralston. Dog fight overhead as I was going home.

Sun Mar 7 Artillery had fair lash during night, but quiet in morning. Plenty of air activity and dog fights, and for first time I saw an enemy plane shot down, some distance away over Medenine. Jerry planes overhead all day, and anti-aircraft fire sometimes got too thick to be comfortable. In afternoon copied out card index of enemy units for Butch Bailey (IO).

Mon Mar 8 Quiet day, very little German air activity. Jerry ground forces withdrawing. In afternoon had a trip to Div HQ with Butch Bailey in I jeep. On way passed a car containing Gen Montgomery.

Tue Mar 9 Very quiet, with much talk of an approaching move. Some reinforcements arrived in evening, and I found several 8th Reinforcement cobbles among them.

Wed Mar 10 In morning I Section went to see some Jerry tanks that had been knocked out on Mar 6. Killed a viper on way. Three tanks burnt in a group in a little gully, one with some charred remains in it. Another a short distance away. Got a lift back with some Maoris, then on Field Security truck, and on way stopped and had lunch at 5 Bde HQ. went to Bible Class discussion held by Padre Spence in evening. Got 7 letters.

Thu Mar 11 Beautiful day, and quiet. Preparations to leave on big flanking move. Went with Jim Whitlow in jeep to water tower and filled section's water cans. Did some washing in afternoon.

Fri Mar 12 Up early, packed and away 7.30 am. Travelled in back of I truck, cramped space and full of gear, and got well jolted about over terrible roads, and covered with dust. Went back the way we had come to Ben Gardane, then doubled back on ourselves on to a side road across the desert. Stopped all afternoon, moved on again late and passed Fom Tatahouine 6.30 pm. What we could see of village in dark looked good – big palm groves, and surrounded by hills. Got lost about midnight through following wrong convoy, and had to retrace steps across country. Altogether one of the most uncomfortable days I have spent.

Sat Mar 13 Arrived at assembly area in hills, miles from nowhere, 2 am, and bedded down where we stopped, as we were too tired to find our right spot. Found it in morning after much messing round, and got settled in. Rather unnerved by the discovery of numerous scorpions in area, also an asp and a horned viper that crawled out from beside Jack Bickley's bivvy. A bit on the jump for snakes in bed, as I was camped in a little rocky gully. Nothing happened, however.

Sun Mar 14 Windy day, with sand flying, very unpleasant. Played cards all day with Stan Ralston, Athol Lightfoot and Jim Sutton of the I Section. A small whirlwind passed right over my bivvy and blew some loose gear to a fair distance.

Mon Mar 15 Uneventful day. Played more cards, did a bit of work with maps, and wrote letters.

Tue Mar 16 Got news of our next move, and practical certainty of action within a few days. Otherwise uneventful day. Had a fair bit of work to do, but managed to get in a spell of card playing.

Wed Mar 17 Strong wind and sand storms. Quiet day. After tea went in jeep with Jim Whitlow to water point and filled cans. Went in dust storm and sharp rain shower, and on way back stopped and boiled billy. Saw some vivid forked lightning in distance. Dirty night, but I weighted down sides of bivvy with stones and was cosy inside.

Thu Mar 18 Cold day, with an annoying wind. In morning had talk by Brig Kippenberger on forthcoming operations. In afternoon had to issue big swag of maps. Steady rain set in in evening and I blessed my dry bivvy.

Fri Mar 19 Wind still blowing, but no rain, and intermittent sunshine. Packed ready for move. Found and killed a viper under I truck, after Charlie Lambert had nearly provoked a brawl by throwing it at Jim Sutton with a shovel. Moved off 7 pm. Not comfortable trip, but tolerable. Travelled on I truck again.

Sat Mar 20 Bedded down 1 am, and stayed put all morning. Beautiful day, and from our position we could see miles and miles of trucks stretching down a valley right to horizon. Lay in sun till we moved 1.30 pm, and got well bumped about on journey. Bedded down again 8 pm, and did picquet shift 9-10 pm.

Sun Mar 21 Rudely wakened 1 am by air raid. Bombs fell nearby, firing on ammo truck. Shifted into a ditch for safety, cursing fluently. Up 5.30 am, moved off smartly. Stopped 8 am, and spent morning waiting for news from ahead. Moved again in afternoon, confidently expecting action same night. Saw distant artillery exchanges in hills, and heard much activity at night, when 6 Bde attacked. We expected to have to go in in support, but did not.

Mon Mar 22 Quiet day, except for much air activity, mainly ours, and a big dogfight overhead in early afternoon. Played bezique all afternoon with Athol Lightfoot.

Tue Mar 23 Beautiful day, very little air activity. Saw big column of Italian prisoners go past in morning. Moved 3 pm to positions behind line, and the battalion dug in a defence line in case of a tank counter-attack.

Wed Mar 24 Spent whole day resecting in a company position, checking results and plotting on map. Plenty of artillery activity going on up forward, and a lot of enemy bombing attacks on positions a few miles up. Had excellent view of a Junkers 88 bomber shot down in flames – in fact I thought for a few minutes it was going to come close to me. Crew baled out, but some parachutes did not open. Big swarm of locusts passed overhead in early afternoon.

Thu Mar 25 Everything quiet in morning. Got news that we are attacking next day, and spent afternoon getting details. Moved off 7 pm for the start line, got lost, and spent some time trying to find our convoy. Bedded down at debussing area midnight, and dossed down in an old slit trench.

Fri Mar 26 Kept awake in early hours by our artillery, as an attack went in on our right. Could see our planes dropping flares and bombs. Breakfast 3 am, and moved off immediately to our start line, where we dug in and camouflaged ourselves away before dawn. Spent whole day out of sight in trench, reading and listening to intermittent artillery, with a sinking feeling that increased as time went on, but seemed to disappear when attack started. Got shelled just before starting, when tanks came up from behind and passed right through us. Set off 4 pm sharp, and advanced 3 miles behind tanks. I had job of counting paces (5000). Had my first taste of machine-gun fire, and didn't like it. Struck slit trenches full of Jerries on a hill, but the tanks going ahead scared them so much that they got up and ran downhill with their hands up. Charlie Lambert, who was beside me, got a bullet in his arm, and Butch Bailey and I tied him up in a slit trench beside a burning Sherman tank. Reached objective before dark, occupied Jerry slit trenches, and I had to talk to some prisoners. A Jerry anti-tank gun was making itself unpleasant firing low over our heads at another burning tank behind us. Saw my first dead man, a German anti-tank gunner. Went out fairly late in evening to find Garnet Blampied (I Cpl) who had gone out to contact the battalion's transport – it had found its own way up. Found him by good luck, but we got lost on way back and spent two hours wandering round. Got out front somewhere, and at one stage came across some people whom we suspected to be Jerries standing round a truck. We didn't wait long enough to find out for certain. Got back eventually, scrounging a drink of water from a Tommy tank crew on way. Slept in Jerry blanket, Jerry cloth cap and jersey, as none of our bedding was up.

Sat Mar 27 Wakened 3 am by a 3-ton truck running into my trench and getting its wheels stuck. Had to redig trench. Jerry started shelling us early in morning, and a Jerry machinegun kept Bn HQ quiet. At 10 am four shells landed right among Bn HQ, so we shifted to a wadi, and rest of day was comparatively quiet. Resected in a company in pm, and with them found Athol Lightfoot, who had not returned to I Section since attack. Several Jerry prisoners came in, and I got a watch from one of them. Hot thirsty day. Moved 1½ miles forward in evening, and dug in in a little wadi.

Sun Mar 28 Did picquet shift 1.30-2.30 am. Stood to 5.30. Very thirsty, and water scarce until 10 am, when water cart came up. Shifted early in day to a gully, and got a lovely posy in a shell hole. 26 Bn went through us in trucks, and I saw some of my cobbles, Sid Gaudin, Tom Lindsay, Arnold Milburn, etc. Moved on again 11 am on I truck, and saw some captured Jerries driving their own trucks back. Dustiest trip yet. During lunch halt had to go forward and question two stray Jerries. Just after lunch we were bombed by three Messerschmitts – bombs fell only 100 yards or so from I truck, and plenty of shrapnel flying. Travelled all afternoon in dust storm, and bedded down in dark.

Mon Mar 29 Moved early, but slowly and with long halts. Lovely sunny day, no dust. At one halt some Italians were rounded up, and I questioned one officer in French, which he knew infinitely better than I did. Reached Gabes early in afternoon, and got rousing welcome from French people there. Just past the town went through a maze of palm groves, and during a halt had a long chat in French with a native boy. German planes about, and had to dive for ditch once when one swooped low. Camped on edge of palm plantation, near a warm sulphurous well. Rained in evening, so I sat in bivvy sewing up rents in trousers. A day to remember, but marred by news of the death of one of my Maadi tent mates, Jack Brown.

Tue Mar 30 Made a beeline for well first thing, had grand bath and washed clothes. Moved in a hurry, travelled in fits and starts all morning, then a long halt. Too near salt marshes, and annoyed all day by hordes of midges. A few Junkers bombers round in evening, and plenty of anti-aircraft fire.

Wed Mar 31 Sat round till 2 pm, when we shifted a short distance to a forward position in low hills. Sandflies still bad.

Thu Apr 1 Stayed put all day with our artillery firing all round us. This attracted a few Jerry shells at midday, and again in the afternoon, when we had to leave a cup of coffee and dive under I truck. Put patch on trousers seat in morning, as it was in a bad way. Relieved by Highlanders in evening, and had long cold wait in truck before returning to spot we had left previous day.

Fri Apr 2 Arrived back 1 am, and bedded down. Felt pretty crook, sore throat and headache, so got some tablets to gargle from RAP. Hot sunny day, with one visit from Jerry planes in afternoon.

Sat Apr 3 Unpleasant day, cold and windy. Doctor said I had slight tonsillitis, and gave me some tablets. Intermittent showers in afternoon. Got two parcels in afternoon, and Roy Cameron and Athol Lightfoot helped me to make a hole in them.

Sun Apr 4 Two persistent Jerry planes dropped reminders round about before daybreak, and visited us once or twice during day. Church service in morning.

Mon Apr 5 Again disturbed in night by Jerry planes, which dropped flares and bombs. Got another parcel in afternoon. Bombing raid about dusk. Uneasy during night because of track light near bivvy, so shaded it.

Tue Apr 6 Wakened by our barrage 4 am. It continued till midday. Moved 10 am to spot a mile back from where we were. Our aircraft went over in large numbers during day, and good news of progress of battle for Gabes gap came in. Moved 5 pm in dust storm, and went short distance to position near main road. More Jerry planes bombing over to our right at dusk.

Wed Apr 7 Wakened by air raid 4 am. Moved forward 9 am, moving in fits and starts, making several unsuccessful attempts to boil up at midday. Same progress in afternoon, and we passed Jerry's abandoned positions. Slow progress ruffled our tempers, which did not improve when we had to make a night move with no tea. Rough bumpy going. Got bogged 9 pm crossing edge of a salt marsh, and had a lot of hard work with shovels and sand trays manhandling truck forward until another truck pulled us out. More bogged trucks all round us. Went ahead slowly, feeling our way and occasionally sticking in wet sand and having to manhandle ourselves out. Eventually found convoy waiting for bogged trucks. Reorganised and set out again.

Thu Apr 8 2 am found ourselves wandering round a maze of salt marshes, so bedded down on the spot. Moved again 6 am, and advanced 2 miles to a position, where our tanks shot up some enemy transport on our left. Found and looted some abandoned Italian trucks, and got a lot of handy gear. Moved short distance again, and stopped for day. Plenty of our bombers went over, but only one Jerry raid, in early afternoon, when one was shot down. Examined a lot of German documents during day. Moved forward 6 pm; dusty bumpy ride. Got stuck once, lost convoy, and found it again. Bedded down midnight.

Fri Apr 9 Unpleasant day, cold wind and dust storm. Reluctant to leave blankets. Travelled all morning, with one Jerry air raid, and stopped all afternoon. Broke porcelain cap off my front tooth eating army biscuits. Country more pleasant and cultivated, with plantations and barley crops, and occasional Arab tents. Bombing raids in evening and at night.

Sat Apr 10 Cold day, spot of rain early. Cleaned out I truck. Set out with idea of cutting Jerry off north of Sfax. Travelled 8.30-10.30 am, and again all afternoon, through olive and almond orchards. Camped out in olive grove. Air raid at dusk. Got some mail.

Sun Apr 11 Beautiful day. Expected two days' stay at this spot which was luxury as we were among trees again. Scare in morning that water from a well we had drunk from contained hookworm; but it turned out to be false. Got sudden and unwelcome order to move in afternoon. Moved 3-7 pm, then camped out. Luxury of cultivated country not unmixed, as the soil was becoming much harder to dig than the sand.

Mon Apr 12 Moved early, and advanced with long halts all morning. Did a brisk trade with Arabs, exchanging cigarettes for eggs. In afternoon got on to main road and went ahead flat out; saw El Djem amphitheatre in distance. Passed Msaken, and reached Sousse 5.30 pm. Went through outskirts of town, and got royal welcome. Stopped near a French house, and had a long conversation with its owner and family. Bivvied 5 miles past Sousse. 10 pm Stan Ralston and I went back to Hammam-Sousse, two miles away, teamed up with a French sailor, a black Moroccan soldier and a civilian, and had the weirdest party I have ever had, sitting in a paddock drinking wine out of a funnel – had to hold finger over hole every time it was filled. Much enthusiasm on both sides, international friendships cemented. Got back to bivvy in small hours.

Tue Apr 13 Moved 8 am. Passed through Sidi Bou Ali. Travelled through mazes of cactus lanes, and traded more cigarettes for eggs. In afternoon got out on to open country, came within Jerry's gun range, and got shelled in trucks. Stopped and dug in 4 pm. Waited for word to move further forward, and had just got to bed 9 pm when we had to go up to defensive position facing Takrouna hill. Army methods unpopular.

Wed Apr 14 Got shelled at breakfast time, and I truck moved back to B Ech. Resected in a company in morning, and did map trace of position in afternoon. Most of day's artillery activity was ours. Harried at night by mosquitoes.

Thu Apr 15 Went into Sousse as interpreter for Mr Reeves (Sigs officer) who was trying to organize some wine. Had a look round town, and inspected shattered waterfront. Had lunch at a tiny native café in Hammam-Sousse, and got around some more in afternoon. Back to battalion about dusk. Mosquitoes again plentiful at night.

Fri Apr 16 Occupied OP all day with Eric Young. OP among cactus on a ridge further forward than Bn HQ. Nothing much doing, and very little enemy movement. Grand view across valley to hills, with the precipitous Takrouna hill prominent. Kept interested for some time by a little tortoise. Came in at dusk.

Sat Apr 17 In morning went out with Butch Bailey on recce up towards Takrouna. Crawled up wadis and through barley crops, very inefficiently camouflaged with barley stalks. Had to cross open ground to get to a big wadi, and were on way over when a Jerry mortar crew fired on us with what I think was a machine pistol. Butch got into wadi, I dived behind a hummock of earth a few inches high, popped off a few pistol shots at the Jerries and then made a bolt for wadi. We retreated down wadi, covering each other in turn, and then stopped while Butch went up a side wadi to try to locate some Jerry guns firing near by. Two Jerries came down after us, and I had a few shots at one and made him scoot back. Butch came tearing down side wadi – he had lost his pistol. Took to our heels and ran down wadi until we were well out of the Jerries' road. Got back 2 pm completely done out. In evening rigged up mosquito net of blanket on sticks, and slept well.

Sun Apr 18 Occupied OP all day with Jim Sutton. Lovely day, had bask in sunshine and a yarn with Roy Cameron, who was living near by, in afternoon. Spent miserable night, because mosquito net got very hot and not very mossie-proof, and Jerry shelled us a fair bit, some landing very close about midnight.

Mon Apr 19 Woke in a foul temper and a rain shower. Hot muggy day, mosquitoes very bad. Spent day jacking up details for night attack on Takrouna, and felt less and less happy about it as time went on. I Section was to lay start line just behind our barrage, and in evening we measured and rolled 1200 yards of tape for this. Set off 10 pm. Barrage opened with a crash 11 pm, while we were still on way forward. I Section led battalion forward to spot where we were to follow 21 and Maori Battalions in. went out with Butch in jeep to find our landmarks by which we were to guide the battalion, and ran into a hole, bruising both shins badly. Had difficulty in finding way. Caught up with Maori Battalion, who were held up. Shells were coming round, and we fell into a very sticky spot in a wadi, being heavily mortared and machine-gunned. Lot of wounded there. Four I Section casualties – Jack Bickley, Garnet Blampied, Stan Ralston and Jim Sutton wounded. Don't remember very clearly what happened for a short time, but remember tying up Jack Bickley's face and trying unsuccessfully to get a bandage round Mr Reeves' behind.

Tue Apr 20 At 1 am got orders from Angus Ross to go forward and locate Butch, whom I had lost. Went up through olive groves alone, feeling uncertain who I was going to meet, and lay doggo once when I heard some people coming. Found half the battalion in low-lying ground between hills, Butch and Athol Lightfoot with them. Had to talk to a Jerry prisoner, who said that his mates up on the hills were willing to surrender. Got him to call out to them in German but got no reply. Other half of battalion came up before daybreak. Heavily shelled and mortared all morning, and sniped at from all four sides. Sandy Thomas, who was commanding battalion since Lt Col Romans had been wounded, got me to draw a rough sketch of positions. Helped to carry a wounded man out to where a carrier was waiting to take wounded away. Dug in myself in a deep wadi – not always too comfortable, because Jerry was sniping down it. Slit trench wet, but I was glad to lie in it, as Jerry shelling was continuing. Went down wadi in afternoon to collect some prisoners, but another crowd got to them first, and on way we had to dive to avoid a shell and I lost my eversharp pencil. Went out 9 pm to olive groves below Takrouna to try to find anti-tank guns which were coming up, didn't find them but found abandoned Jerry trench, and collected a few souvenirs. Relieved 10 pm by 25 Bn, and started on weary trek back to original positions. Had to wait for one company who got lost, and through that missed trucks which were waiting for us on a road, and had to walk all way. Lightly shelled as we went, and light rain came on. Way seemed endless through wet crops. Athol Lightfoot was completely done out, and I had to half coax, half bully him home.

Wed Apr 21 After a most gruelling walk, got back to our old area 1 am, half carrying Athol, and absolutely exhausted. Most of the boys had gone back to a rest area 3 miles back, so we were disappointed in hopes of a meal and a bed, but fortunately there were a few sigs left cleaning up, so after splitting a tin of bully with Athol I scrounged a blanket from them and dosed down in the back of their truck. Uneven surface to lie on, but I slept like the dead. Moved back 7 am and rejoined battalion. Got a possey in some cactus. Day of rest; feeling listless and suffering from reaction. Promoted to temporary L/Cpl until Jack Bickley and Garnet Blampied should come back. Went early to bed and slept the clock round. Our possey was only a short distance from a captured Jerry long-range gun which was firing every now and again.

Thu Apr 22 Quiet morning. Moved 4 pm to a new area a few miles back, in a grass paddock near Sidi Bou Ali. Weather threatening in evening, with occasional rain and vivid lightning. Very muggy, and I was glad to have bivvy with mosquito net attached, after missing it at Takrouna. Saw a praying

mantis inside bivvy, and a great variety of insects attracted by the light. Wakened in night by heavy thunderstorm.

Fri Apr 23 Good Friday; beautiful day after rain. Church service in morning. In afternoon went in jeep with Butch Bailey back to Takrouna, visiting Div and Bde HQ and running into a salvo of shells on the way, then left jeep at Bde HQ, walked up gully where we had gone on patrol, and found the pistol Butch had lost. Returned through our gun positions, and nearly got deafened by their firing.

Sat Apr 24 Very quiet day. Had thorough clean out of I truck, and dumped a big swag of junk.

Sun Apr 25 Easter Day. Went with Butch in jeep to Sousse to try to buy some extra food, but no luck. Went out to Monastir, an old walled town with some nice villas outside walls. Good drive out from Sousse across causeway across causeway over lagoons. Saw General Leclerc's entry into Sousse – brightly coloured cosmopolitan crowd of Europeans, Arabs, and a bit of everything on the streets.

Mon Apr 26 Spent morning on maps, did washing in afternoon. A crowd of reinforcements arrived, and among them I was very glad to see Warwick Anderson, who was posted to the I Section, and Stan Gilchrist, who went to sigs. In evening went over with Warwick and Stan, located Roy Cameron and had a yarn.

Tue Apr 27 Went to RAP with leg I had bruised on the night of the Takrouna attack, as it was swelling up. Got it wrapped up in Elastoplast. Canteen supplies arrived at tea time, and we stocked up what we could. Swapped my battledress trousers, which were completely worn through the seat, for an old pair of Butch's, as he said I was a disgrace to the section in my present state.

Wed Apr 28 Very quiet day. Appendicized War Diary in morning. Roy Cameron came to see us in afternoon, and played cards. In evening went to a Bible Class discussion, and had to grope my way home through pitch dark.

Thu Apr 29 Went to mobile dentist in morning, and got porcelain cap cemented on to front tooth, but it came off again in afternoon. Paraded to hear speech by Hon F. Jones. News of a move and attack up the coast in afternoon was not welcome. Stan Ralston arrived back from convalescent camp. Another Bible Class discussion in evening.

Fri Apr 30 Not feeling the best, right arm stiff with a boil. Got it seen to at RAP. Washed clothes in afternoon. Another Bible Class discussion in evening.

Sat May 1 Nothing much doing. Got boil dressed again at RAP – arm pretty sore. Sat yarning in Warwick's bivvy till 11 pm.

Sun May 2 Had contents of boil removed, and arm felt much easier. Church parade in morning, followed by communion. Impending attack cancelled thank goodness, and rumours of move to reserve area, which became official in evening. Spent evening playing cards, and a very rowdy singsong in I truck.

Mon May 3 Moved 8 am to area behind Sidi Bou Ali, where we expected to spend some time, and dug in under olive trees in a grove. Had just got settled when sudden news came of move forward again next morning. Comments unprintable. Had more stuff removed from boil. Wild rumours of future activities flying. Spent some time in afternoon printing Codex strips for use on our code machine.

Tue May 4 Up early, moved 7.15 am. Travelled NW all morning in high wind and dust kicked up by wheels, and passed our previous positions. Went away out to the west of Takrouna. Passed

through Djebibina 10 am, and stopped soon afterwards. Fixed up map boards in afternoon, and got arm dressed at RAP. Moved to forward position 8 pm, arrived there 10 pm and bedded down on the spot.

Wed May 5 Up 5 am and dug in. Nice possy in barley crop, with I truck handy in a wadi. Went out with recce patrol from D Coy in morning, and got about 2 miles forward to where a road cut across our front; saw no Germans, but they evidently saw us, because we got heavily shelled and came back, with shells chasing us until we dodged them by going down deep wadi. In afternoon had a hit-and-run raid by some Macchis, including one which swooped very low over us, and a game of bezique with Athol Lightfoot, interrupted by a bout of shelling. At dusk went out in jeep to road in front of us to recce a route for guiding a patrol to its starting point, and on return found the boys moved forward over the road to a farmhouse. Dug in in cactus lane in back yard. Went to a well some distance away and got water. Old ruins just beside well – eerie place at night. Sleep disturbed by barking of farm dogs, and Jerry sent over some shells. Cursed him heartily.

Thu May 6 Up 1 am, and Warwick and I successfully guided patrol to its starting point. Jerry put over more shells during night, including one on to the road where Warwick and I were just going to pass on our return to Bn HQ. In morning found mulberry tree in front of our farmhouse, with ripe berries on it, and got in before the crowd. Got boil dressed again – much improved. Explored farmyard and found tap of lovely fresh water, and a tin bath, so wallowed in it and washed clothes. Took Elastoplast off my leg. Had a look at wrecked interior of farmhouse, and found a lot of stamps. Flies the worst we had met, round us in hordes and biting us through our clothes even. Found I had to go on another night guiding job that night. Got details from map, snatched a bit of sleep, and set out 11 pm.

Fri May 7 Job was guiding C Coy out on a company advance to occupy a hillock. Navigation hard over unknown country in dark. Jerry searchlight ahead of us shining our way, but never caught us in its beam. Got on OK until we came to a big rough wadi with our hillock on the other side of it. Terrible going in wadi, and company kept together with much difficulty. Ran into a Jerry outpost on hillock, and had a short sharp fight before taking it. One prisoner, and two dead Jerries in their slit trenches. Tried to question the prisoner, but not satisfactory as he was shaking with fright and almost incoherent, and Sandy Slee (the company commander) kept his pistol dug into prisoner's stomach and roared at him. Position on hillock most uncomfortable, as we were overlooked from higher hills all round, and Jerry sent up flares from all round us, so Sandy Slee decided to withdraw across wadi. I guided company across by telephone wire, tough going including a fall down a cliff, and we took up a position on the rear edge of the wadi. Hard digging, could not do more than scrape a shallow hole. At daybreak resected in position. Butch Bailey came up, and he and I went exploring down a little side wadi into the main wadi. He went ahead and to my disgust I fell asleep and was wakened by shots. Saw some Jerries on hill near where we had had our scrap in the night, so popped off a few at them and they scooted round back of hill. Butch came back driving 9 prisoners in front of him, and we made a masterly retreat up side wadi, being fired at by a machine-gun on the way. Left C Coy for Bn HQ just as Jerry started to mortar the company solidly. I got some money from one prisoner. After asking them questions at Bn HQ Butch sent me back with them to Bde HQ in case I was needed to interpret there – totally unnecessary. After long wait there returned in foul temper. Had bath in tin tub in farm outhouse, and felt much refreshed. Caught some fleas, which were very numerous and aggressive. Heavy rain in evening, which continued at night, so I put up my bivvy – awkward job in narrow cactus lane. Cheered up by hearing that Tunis had fallen and Axis troops in retreat.

Sat May 8 Slept off a lot of previous lack of sleep, and woke refreshed. Quiet day. Had to interrogate a few prisoners in morning, and had fun in afternoon making tea on a primus that would not boil water. More cheering news of position round Tunis. In evening played cards in I truck. Jerry sent over shells and multiple mortars at night, some landing close. Kept us awake.

Sun May 9 Caught an odd flea or two during day. Quiet day, best of news from Tunis coming in. Relieved 6 pm, and went back to position near Djebibina. All in high spirits, singing raucously on truck.

Mon May 10 Moved 7.15 am, and went back to position near previous rest area in paddock. Put bivvy up in long grass. In afternoon Warwick and I went with a party to beach through Hergla, and had first swim in Mediterranean. Most enjoyable, water warm and buoyant. Saw Roy Cameron there.

Tue May 11 Church service and communion in morning. Again went to beach, this time in I jeep, and had grand swim and sun bathe. Coming back in jeep we felt irresponsible, and had hilarious time eating prunes which the cookhouse had given us in mistake for a bag of rations, and spraying stones everywhere. In afternoon got more good news of battle's progress, indicating that Jerry was nearly finished in Africa. Saw 'A Window in London' at mobile cinema in evening, and while there ran into Verne Jones. Had great yarn.

Wed May 12 Another beautiful day. In morning went in I truck to mobile showers and had welcome hot shower. In afternoon piled into jeep and went to Kairouan, a holy Moslem city right out in the middle of an enormous plain. Rather disappointed; smelly Arab town, full of touts and souvenir shops. On way back called in to 26 Bn to see cobblers there, but missed them. In evening sorted a pile of ancient maps.

Thu May 13 Glad news of end of fighting in Africa. Arthur Chetwin, Sid Gaudin and some friends from 26 Bn came to see us in morning, and we made toast of a pile of accumulated bread and had classy morning tea. In afternoon heard at short notice that I was going on a trip to Tunis. Left 3 pm. Passed Enfidaville, saw strong Jerry positions along coast. Road lined with trucks bringing in thousands of prisoners, also crowds of them in occasional PW cages. Went through Bou Ficha, among miles of vineyards, through Grombalia and Hammam-Lif, and arrived Tunis 6 pm. Excellent impression – clean European town, people most friendly. Had look round main part of city in evening. Slept uncomfortably in truck.

Fri May 14 Set out early to do the rounds, with Hughie Coombe, Bill Reid and Jack Todd. Had good wander round centre of town and part of residential area and through gardens a little way out. Had yarns with several civilians, saw long queues for bread and to change money at banks. Had lunch (mainly macaroni) in small restaurant. Left Tunis 4 pm, arrived home 7 pm. Had final party in truck in evening. Everybody cheerful, shooting off flares and generally rejoicing.

Sat May 15 Packed up for trip back to Egypt. Left 9 am, and after slow start got going well. Passed Kairouan, then got off tar-sealed road onto a dusty bumpy road, very uncomfortable. Stopped 7 pm. Jack Bickley rejoined us. Went back in truck to see a burnt Tiger tank by side of track.

Sun May 16 Moved 9 am; day's trip alternatively over bitumen and rough dusty going. By-passed Gabes in early afternoon. Passed old Marath line positions, very strong and well placed. Passed Metameur, on top of a steep little hill. Passed through Medenine, and stopped 7 pm a few miles short of Ben Gardane.

Mon May 17 Moved 9.30. Passed through Ben Gardane and back along main road. Recrossed frontier into Libya 11 am. Good run on bitumen. Passed Pisida, Zuara, Sabratha, Zawia and travelled between lines of palm and gum trees and vineyards. Camped at Suani, just beside 3 NZ General Hospital. In evening Warwick and I visited hospital, and saw two old Maadi tent mates who had been wounded, Ray Jopp and Mauri Barclay.

Tue May 18 Had good clean up of I truck lasting on and off all day. In morning went to convalescent depot a few miles away, and saw Garnet Blampied. Also saw Archie Austin and had a yarn. In afternoon had good wash at nearby windmill. Got 8 letters, and a patriotic parcel issue at tea time.

Wed May 19 Garnet Blampied returned to section in morning. Athol and I shifted from I truck to Bn HQ personnel truck. Moved 8.30 am; road lined with kids yelling for backsheesh. Passed Tripoli, again went along avenues of gums and palms, olive groves and vineyards. Went through Homs and Zliten, and camped out just past Misurata.

Thu May 20 Wash-out on road delayed departure till evening. Watched more NZ convoys passing, and saw several cobbbers. Moved 8 pm, and had uncomfortable ride, sleeping occasionally.

Fri May 21 Stopped 2 am, and bedded down beside truck. Moved again 8 am, and went through Buerat, Sirte and Nofilia. Stopped 7 pm just past Nofilia, and shared bivvy with Warwick.

Sat May 22 Went ahead of convoy in I truck to Marble Arch, which we climbed by inside staircase. Grand view of miles and miles of sand from top. Convoy caught up 11 am. Passed Agheila, and travelled till 4 pm. Again shared bivvy with Warwick.

Sun May 23 Put clocks on an hour during night. Moved 8 am, and travelled all day, sleeping a lot of the time. Passed Agedabia. As we got near Benghazi I had first close view of a bomber drome with a crowd of Liberators on it. Passed Benghazi in distance, and camped a few miles further on. Church service and communion in evening, then Warwick and I looked Roy up and had a yarn.

Mon May 24 In morning Jack Bickley, Warwick and I walked to beach a mile away, met Roy there, had swim and lay on sand; most enjoyable. Got back 2 pm, and went into Benghazi on I truck. Ruins of a fine town, bombed and bashed to pieces. Issue of beer and canteen supplies after tea.

Tue May 25 Moved 8.30 am. Climbed Tocra Pass, with road winding up hillside in all directions. Country very nice, with macrocarpa and cypress trees covering hills, and occasional cultivation. Sat out in front of truck in sun all day. Passed Barce in afternoon. Stopped 4.30 pm, and lagered out in scrub.

Wed May 26 Moved 8 am. Travelled through steep wooded hills with long halts in morning. In early afternoon descended zigzag road down escarpment, with lovely view over coastal plain and Mediterranean, and passed through Derna – nice looking town, not so badly knocked about as I had expected. Had magnificent view from escarpment on other side, where we climbed it again. Passed some grass fires, and in one place an old petrol dump (presumably) exploded violently about 300 yards away just as we passed. Passed Tobruk in late afternoon – town and harbour well battered. Near Tobruk transit camp passed big fire in an ammo dump. Lagered out further on.

Thu May 27 Moved 8.30, and travelled through debris-littered desert. Passed Bardia in distance, passed ruins of Capuzzo, and crossed Egyptian border 3 pm. Went down steep Sollum escarpment and through remains of Sollum. Lagered out 5.30 pm.

Fri May 28 Moved 8.30 am. Slept most of day on truck in various uncomfortable positions. Passed Sidi Barrani, and laged out near Matruh. Met Watson Rosevear and had a yarn, also located Verne Jones in evening.

Sat May 29 Short day's trip to Daba. Moved 9 am, arrived 3 pm. Went with the boys to beach two miles away, and had grand swim, arriving back tea time. Warwick and I had another feed at Naafi canteen nearby, and amused ourselves watching two-up rings outside.

Sun May 30 Another short trip. Moved 9 am, passed remains of Alamein line and Burg el Arab. Camped out 3 pm at Amiriya. Night made uncomfortable by sharp attack of Wog tummy.

Mon May 31 Inside still crook in morning, but better in afternoon. Moved 7.30 am, and travelled through desert all day, with long halts. Passed Pyramids in afternoon, drove through Cairo and arrived back in Maadi 4 pm. Got settled into our battalion area away out the back of the camp. Got mail and parcels after tea.

Tue Jun 1 Reintroduced to camp life with battalion. Parade in morning. Got base kit and sorted out gear. Got 5 more parcels in afternoon. In evening Roy, Warwick and I went over, located Arthur Chetwin and Sid Gaudin, and had a party.

Wed Jun 2 Memorial service in morning. Butch Bailey told me he had recommended me for CCTU, and I had a short interview with Lt Col Fairbrother (CO) in afternoon. Did not succeed, fortunately. Met several old cobbers in Church Army hut in evening.

Thu Jun 3 Nothing much doing.

Fri Jun 4 Wind and sand flying. Very pleased to hear that CCTU idea had fallen through. Went to Cairo in afternoon, and met several cobbers in NZ Club. In evening had a dinner with I Section and sundry others, best meal I had tasted since NZ but not a very good party. Finished up by going to see 'Shut my big mouth' – very third-rate.

Sat Jun 5 Unpleasant wind and sand storm, everything in tent covered with dust. Jack Bickley, Garnet Blampied and Eric Young went on 14 days' leave, leaving me to manage I Section temporarily. In evening saw Kiwi Concert Party's show in Lowry Hut – had to stand on table at back, and a lot of dialogue was inaudible, but I enjoyed it.

Sun Jun 6 Very hot. Went to Cairo in afternoon with boys, went to Cathedral in evening with Athol Lightfoot, and afterwards to see 'Tortilla Flat' – first time I had been to church and the pictures the same evening.

Mon Jun 7 Spent day in tent we were using as I office, pretending to work. Had charge of beer distribution to Bn HQ in evening. Had farewell party with Butch Bailey, who, with Stan Ralston and Bert Hanning (our truck driver) was going back to NZ on furlough.

Tue Jun 8 Another lazy day. Enervatingly hot. Got patriotic parcel issue in afternoon.

Wed Jun 9 Uneventful day.

Thu Jun 10 Had unpleasant job in morning, as escort at a court-martial. Went to Cairo in afternoon and collected photos I had taken over a period of months, which had been in getting printed.

Fri Jun 11 Another escort job in morning; Warwick and I had to go in a truck to Helwan to escort a prisoner from hospital.

Sat Jun 12 Nothing much doing. Sorted out messages for War Diary appendices.

Sun Jun 13 Uneventful day. Wrote several letters. Looked up Verne Jones and spent evening with him.

Mon Jun 14 Went into Cairo with Athol, and bought some things in Mousky bazaar. Met Ellis Dick (MO on 'Oranje') in NZ Club.

Tue Jun 15 Met Bill Watkins and Archie Austin in YMCA in afternoon. Nothing much doing.

Wed Jun 16 Very uneventful.

Thu Jun 17 Very hot and sweaty day. Wrote letters.

Fri Jun 18 Went to Cairo with boys. Went on hectic shopping expedition in afternoon, and in evening went to see 'In Which We Serve'.

Sat Jun 19 Jack Bickley and Garnet Blampied got back early from leave. Warwick, Athol, Roy and I left camp 10 am to go on fortnight's leave – NZ Club's conducted tour of Palestine. Left Cairo main station in Jerusalem express 2.15 pm, travelling third class on hard seats. Passed Benha, Zagazig, Tel el Kehir, Ismailia 5 pm. Hunger allayed by tomatoes and eggs bought from Wogs on station. Crossed Suez Canal by swing bridge, and had makeshift tea at Kantara. Slept quite well in spite of hard seat.

Sun Jun 20 Woke up in time to see when we passed Gaza 4 am. Changed trains at Lydda 7 am. Passed through gorges covered with olive groves and crowned with villages, and arrived Jerusalem 9 am. Struck at once by cleanliness and good outlay of modern town. Taken to Hotel Palatin where we were to stay. Went by car to Bethlehem, along road running along crest of hills overlooking Valley of Raphaim. Saw through Church of Nativity at Bethlehem, supposedly built on site of manger where Christ was born. Went back through Jerusalem to Mount of Olives, from where (and also from Mount Scopus on the way) we had a great view of city, also of Dead Sea and Jordan Valley. Visited Church of Ascension, where an Arab tried to work a souveniring racket selling rosaries. Went to Garden of Gethsemane and Church of All Nations beside it. An old priest showed us through, and afterwards was quite disappointed that none of us wanted to buy snaps of the church. From there went out past Bethphage and Bethany, a half ruined village on the upper slope of Mount of Olives, through wild hills of Wilderness of Judea to Jericho. Crossed Jordan by Allenby Bridge into Transjordan, and had papers stamped by Customs people there. Went to excavations of old Jericho a mile or two from modern town, saw 'Elisha's Well' where according to the story Elisha made salt water fresh, also Mount of Temptation and St George's Monastery perched halfway up its side. Went to Kallia, winter resort on Dead Sea, and had bathe in it – most pleasant sensation floating on water unable to sink, but not so pleasant when water got in our eyes or mouth. Went back to Jerusalem for tea. Afterwards went a stroll along main street with Athol. Enjoyed sheets for first time since leaving New Zealand.

Mon Jun 21 Went round Old Jerusalem in morning, entering by Jaffa Gate and going along David St to narrow bazaar areas. Some of the bazaar streets were completely covered-over alleyways, sometimes going uphill in steps, and filled with the smells of spice shops – very nice smell, different from Mousky in Cairo. Went past Wailing Wall to Mosque of Omar and Dome of the Rock, built on site of Solomon's temple, containing most beautiful mosaics and stained glass, and a huge rock pierced with a hole, where the old Jewish priests used to make sacrifices. Went through Via Dolorosa, along which Christ is reputed to have carried his cross, through more bazaar areas to Mt Calvary and Church of Holy Sepulchre. Interior of church very dark and not particularly beautiful.

Told all the legends concerning the many shrines in this church, and were blessed by an old Greek Orthodox priest who then charged us five piastres. After lunch Athol and I had good wander round streets, visited St George's English Cathedral, and back home by various routes. In evening had a look at YMCA Club, a palatial building.

Tue Jun 22 Left Jerusalem early, drove through steep hills and more wild country northwards. Six of us in car – Warwick, Roy, Athol and I, and two Div Sigs, Carl Birch and Reg Hallett, with whom we got on very well. Visited Jacob's Well, passed through Arab town of Nablus built across narrow Valley of Sicheim, passed site of Samaria, and crossed wide Plain of Jezreel, with its modern Jewish settlements. Turned eastwards past Mount Tabor, the most symmetrical hill I have seen, and over tops of ridges towards Sea of Galilee. Most beautiful view of sea looking down into a sort of hole in the hills. Road wound down hillside to Tiberias. Had look round town and lunch, and short row on lake. Watched small boys in the nude diving off a wharf for coins, but was feeling Scotch and did not throw any. In afternoon went back westwards to Nazareth, passing through Cana on way. Went to Church of Annunciation in Nazareth, and Church of St Joseph and cave where Holy Family lived, according to the yarn. Drove on to Haifa, past Jewish farms and big factories. Had look round main part of Haifa and waterfront, and in evening explored town unsuccessfully for dances. Stayed at Hotel Weiss, on hill a little way from centre of town.

Wed Jun 23 Left hotel 9 am, went up Mount Carmel, rising behind Haifa to Carmelite monastery, where we were shown round by a priest. Magnificent view of Haifa from mountain. Came down again and drove south along coast road, through fertile farm country, and past several Jewish colonies, to Tel-Aviv, the modern Jewish town. In afternoon explored beach and promenade, and main part of town and Services' Club. City beautifully laid out, with very wide streets and ultra-modern buildings. Beach and promenade very popular – half the town seemed to be enjoying itself there all the time, especially in early evening. Stayed at Hotel Palga – worst we had struck.

Thu Jun 24 In morning went to Tel-Aviv museum and saw collection of paintings, then explored book shops. Conducted tour finished, so as we could now stay where we liked we shifted after lunch to King Solomon Hotel – cheaper, cleaner and only a few yards from beach. Went for swim and sunbathe. Went to dance in Services' Club in evening, and enjoyed it in spite of a big crowd. Carl and Reg stayed with us.

Fri Jun 25 Went in morning to Mikveh Israel Agricultural School, and learned a lot about present-day Jewish methods of farming. School built on former sand dunes made fertile by irrigation, like a vast stretch of the country round Tel-Aviv. In afternoon investigated more of town with Athol, and went to a performance of Beethoven's 9th symphony -had to search for hall, and arrived late, but it was well worth it. In evening went to Services' Club, where we now had to get all our meals except breakfast, which was served in garden of hotel.

Sat Jun 26 Strolled round town in morning, and had bathe in afternoon, where I ran into Verne Jones on beach. Athol and I went to tea with a family of French Jews named Sanua, and afterwards went with the family for an evening stroll and to an open-air café where they had music and dancing. Thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Sun Jun 27 In morning went on trip to Jewish communal farm at Givat Brenner, and were shown over it. In evening went to see 'Major Barbara' at Tel-Aviv's best theatre, but disappointed in theatre, very poor for such a big town.

Mon Jun 28 Spent most pleasant day at smallholders' village of Kfar Shmaryahu as guests. Village made up of people who had come into Palestine with a little money, more so than those on

communal farms. All local industries centralized and made cooperative, especially poultry farming, which was a local specialty. Visited kindergarten, and I made tremendous hit with a small girl named Jael. Athol and I enjoyed magnificent lunch at house of some German Jews named Kleeman – food all produced on their farm of 6 acres, ending up with the biggest strawberry pie I ever saw. In afternoon had yarn at house of our official hostess, Mrs Goodrich (an English Jewess), who told us the history of the village. Back to Tel-Aviv late in afternoon, and in evening went to dance at Services' Club and had good time.

Tue Jun 29 Athol and I decided to have another two days in Jerusalem, so we left the other four and went to Jerusalem by bus. Got beds at Hotel Noga, a small boarding house. In afternoon went to Rockefeller Museum, then walked at our leisure through Old City, exploring much more of it than we had been able to do during the hurried visit on the conducted tour. Rambled over old Citadel and Tower of David. In evening went to house of an English Jewess, Mrs Olshen, with several soldiers, had yarn and my first taste of arak, the famous Palestinian liquor, which I thought foul. Back midnight.

Wed Jun 30 Took bus to top of Mt Scopus, and wandered round among pine trees admiring view. In my opinion, the most pleasant spot I had been to since leaving NZ. Shown over modern Jewish Hadassah Hospital on top of hill. In evening saw film of 'The Mikado' – disappointed in it.

Thu Jul 1 Wandered round modern residential part of Jerusalem, and listened to organ in YMCA auditorium. After lunch took bus back to Tel-Aviv and rejoined rest of party. Had swim and sun-bathe. In evening went to performance by Palestine Folk Opera company of 'Cavalleria Rusticana' and 'Pagliacci'.

Fri Jul 2 Had good long bathe in morning, and for the first time tried to teach myself the art of shooting breakers, with fair success. Caught train for Cairo 3 pm, and at Lydda changed trains and got into a carriage crowded with soldiers of all nationalities. Terrific row in carriage all night – uncomfortable and restless, with only a few winks of sleep.

Sat Jul 3 Slept on and off until we got to Cairo 9 am, and felt better after a shower at NZ Club. Loafed round club all morning and spent afternoon lying on banks of Nile reading. Went back to Maadi camp after tea, and found a parcel from home.

Sun Jul 4 Church parade in morning. In evening Athol and I went to service at All Saints' Cathedral in Cairo.

Mon Jul 5 Went to Cairo with Jack Bickley in afternoon. Met Ralph Pile in club. Went to see 'Pardon my Sarong' – a slapstick comedy.

Tue Jul 6 Uneventful. Had knock round at cricket practice in evening.

Wed Jul 7 In afternoon went with boys to Maadi baths (in Maadi village, some way from camp) and had grand swim. Made my first attempt at diving. Cricket practice after tea.

Thu Jul 8 Went to mobile dentist in morning, but after waiting all morning was told they could not fix my front tooth. Went to Maadi baths with boys in afternoon, and had hilarious fun pushing each other in. Swam length for first time.

Fri Jul 9 Again went to baths in late afternoon, then had tea at Maadi tent with Warwick, Roy and Athol, and saw South African concert party – not bad in spots.

Sat Jul 10 Back to training again. Reveille 5 am, though we did not get up till 5.45. Parade 6.15. Heard about future training – elementary work all over again. Got news of invasion of Sicily. Went to Cairo in afternoon with Garnet Blampied, saw 'Flying Cadets' and 'South of Pago Pago' – not bad programme.

Sun Jul 11 Church parade and communion in morning. Went to service at Cairo Cathedral in evening.

Mon Jul 12 Beginning of training, working hours starting 6 am and finishing at lunch time. In evening had game of chess at Maadi tent with a South African, and won.

Tue Jul 13 In afternoon played bezique with Athol. Otherwise quiet.

Wed Jul 14 Uneventful day. Padre's discussion in evening, first of a series.

Thu Jul 15 Went to RAP in morning with heat rash. Route march in evening.

Fri Jul 16 Getting fed up with elementary training, but no let-up. Went to Cairo with boys in afternoon and saw 'The Thief of Bagdad' at open-air theatre.

Sat Jul 17 Gruelling hour of battalion drill 7-8 am. Quiet day, felt pretty crook in evening, with sore face, so went to bed early.

Sun Jul 18 Feeling better, but not quite right. Church parade in morning. Went to Cairo in afternoon in padre's truck, and went to Cathedral service, and afterwards to musical concert at 'Music for All' services' club.

Mon Jul 19 Not feeling too hot, slept part of day. Went to initial meeting of battalion bible class in evening.

Tue Jul 20 Spent afternoon receiving site of manoeuvre to be done that night. Went out on manoeuvre in evening, I Section assisting officers to find their way around. Home 11 pm.

Wed Jul 21 Did not go on battalion parade. Quiet day.

Thu Jul 22 Again quiet, spent afternoon asleep. Got 9 letters.

Fri Jul 23 In morning went to Bde HQ with the section and had lecture by Bde IO. In afternoon went to town with Warwick, and poked around shops.

Sat Jul 24 Went to RAP with rash under my arm and got it dressed and anointed with some greasy stuff which got all over my shirt. Nothing else doing all day.

Sun Jul 25 Church parade and communion in morning. Went to Cairo in afternoon, went to Cathedral with Athol, and afterwards to orchestral concert at 'Music for All', which we enjoyed thoroughly.

Mon Jul 26 Dental examination in early morning. Went to Maadi tent in evening to play chess, but found that evening had been changed to Tuesday.

Tue Jul 27 More lectures by Bde IO at Bde HQ in morning. In evening played chess at Maadi tent.

Wed Jul 28 Got news that Athol Lightfoot was leaving us to go to Bde HQ. got 5 parcels in morning.

Thu Jul 29 Athol's shift cancelled – good news for the rest of us. In evening went to Otago High School Old Boys' reunion at Slade Club, Abbassia, and had enjoyable evening renewing a few old acquaintances. Home 1 am.

Fri Jul 30 Went out in morning and prepared ground for a night stunt, and had meeting re a debate to be held on following Monday. Night stunt went off OK.

Sat Jul 31 Went into Cairo in afternoon and did a few jobs. Hottest day yet.

Sun Aug 1 Brigade church parade in morning. Went to Cairo with Athol in afternoon, went to concert at Empire Club and then to musical recital on Cathedral steps. Enjoyed both.

Mon Aug 2 In morning cleaned out I office tent, and mapped out a route for a night compass march. Took part in debate at YMCA hut in evening against 6 Fd Ambulance team, whose leader was Watson Rosevear. Subject was 'That Youth Organisations in NZ should be incorporated in one compulsory State organisation'. Good go. We won by small margin.

Tue Aug 3 Quiet day, slept all afternoon. In evening went to padre's weekly discussion.

Wed Aug 4 Gave lecture on map reading and compass work to a platoon. Went to dentist in morning, and got front tooth fixed again. In afternoon had most enjoyable outing with Athol, to Maadi baths, to tea at Maadi tent, and for a bike ride along Helwan road. Went to Bible Class on return.

Thu Aug 5 Gave another compass lecture in morning. In afternoon went to Cairo, met some old friends and did some shopping.

Fri Aug 6 Went out in morning on another recce for a night stunt. Had enjoyable swim in afternoon, and not so enjoyable manoeuvre at night, navigating a company attack.

Sat Aug 7 Had TAB (TB? Ed) injection in morning, and consequently arm stiff in afternoon.

Sun Aug 8 Arm still stiff in morning, but improved during day. Athol and I went to Cairo in afternoon, went to Cathedral and then to orchestral concert at YWCA Services' Club.

Mon Aug 9 Gave another map lecture in morning. Again went to Cairo in afternoon, and saw 'The Great Dictator' – very enjoyable.

Tue Aug 10 In morning went out on resection exercise with Brigade I Sections, very successful show. Went to baths with Stan Gilchrist in afternoon, and had grand time practising under-water swimming.

Wed Aug 11 Very quiet. Had swim in afternoon with Garnet Blampied. Bn HQ cricket practice in evening, and Bible Class – lively discussion.

Thu Aug 12 Both Warwick and Roy in hospital – Warwick in RAP for a day or two, Roy in Helwan Hospital with stiff back. Played cricket in afternoon, Bn HQ v C Coy, and got well beaten.

Fri Aug 13 Went to Cairo in afternoon, and went to a civilian dentist, Dr Levin, about my front tooth. Had a party with Bruce Tuck in evening, and a yarn with some Yanks.

Sat Aug 14 Went through gas chamber in morning. In afternoon again went to dentist in Cairo, and then went with Athol to see 'Nothing but the Truth'. Funniest picture for a long time.

Sun Aug 15 Church parade and communion in morning. Went to town again in afternoon, and went to Cathedral with Athol.

Mon Aug 16 Bruce Tuck and I went for short cipher refresher course. Went into Cairo in afternoon, and went to dentist again. Warwick came back from RAP.

Tue Aug 17 Cipher course finished. Went to Cairo again, got new front tooth put in, met some old cobbles in club, and went to 'Rio Rita'; got a good laugh out of it.

Wed Aug 18 Had swim at Maadi Baths with boys in afternoon. Bible Class in evening.

Thu Aug 19 Quiet day. Again went to baths in afternoon.

Fri Aug 20 Went out on battalion stunt in morning, and resected in a company. Suddenly felt very crook in the middle of it, and by the time I walked back to Bn HQ I could hardly drag my legs. Spent afternoon on my back. Had miserable night, feeling very sick, and got very little sleep.

Sat Aug 21 Went on sick parade, and told to lie down in RAP. Doctor put stethoscope over me, and forthwith packed me off in an ambulance, first to Maadi Camp Hospital, and straight to Helwan Hospital with pneumonia. Did not care whether I lived or died. Had visit from Stan Gilchrist in afternoon. Got dosed up with Sulfa tablets, and some foul brown stuff, and had shot of morphia in evening.

Sun Aug 22 Spent wretched day on my back, getting dosed every four hours. Tablets made me sicker, and I couldn't eat. Warwick and Bruce Tuck came in in afternoon, and brought me 12 letters. Awake all night.

Mon Aug 23 Feeling slightly better, but still very cheap. Again ate nothing. Tablets and medicine knocked off in evening. Slept well.

Tue Aug 24 Bad patch over thank goodness, and doctor's report very encouraging. Able to sit up and take notice again. On light diet.

Wed Aug 25 Quiet day, still improving. Got a parcel in afternoon.

Thu Aug 26 Feeling pretty good, but lazy, and still not allowed to get out of bed. Got 9 more parcels.

Fri Aug 27 Nothing much doing.

Sat Aug 28 Visited by several of the boys in afternoon, and had a good yarn. Made big step forward in evening, getting up for half an hour.

Sun Aug 29 Up for half the afternoon, wandered round and wrote letter. Feeling OK, but weak in the legs.

Mon Aug 30 Up all day, feeling fine. Caught for potato-peeling job in morning, and gave a hand in ward during day.

Tue Aug 31 Again messed round ward all day, and was told by doctor that I was going to convalescent depot very shortly. Had visit from the boys in afternoon. Saw Roy Cameron in evening, and went for stroll with him, meeting Arnold and Doug Milburn in street.

Wed Sep 1 Had job sweeping out ward. In afternoon had another visit from some of the boys, and we picked up Roy and spent afternoon at Kiwi Club, then went to see 'Hudson's Bay' at Helwan Theatre in evening.

Thu Sep 2 Again had ward-sweeping job, and spent afternoon at Kiwi Club with Roy.

Fri Sep 3 Daily hopes of being shifted to convalescent depot, but disappointed. On job serving out breakfast in morning. Loafed round as usual, got news of the British celebrating 4th war anniversary by invading Italy. Again spent afternoon at Kiwi Club.

Sat Sep 4 Served out breakfast again. Got leave from doctor in afternoon and went to Maadi, saw the boys and collected some gear. Had tea at Maadi tent and got back early.

Sun Sep 5 Went to service at St Paul's Church in morning. On job serving out dinner. In afternoon went into Cairo without leave, met Ray Clarke in NZ Club and went to Cathedral with him. Back just before 9.30 (lights out time).

Mon Sep 6 Served out breakfast. Quiet day, went to Kiwi Club with Roy in afternoon, and played chess with one of the boys in the ward in evening.

Tue Sep 7 Nothing much doing, except a vigorous game of monopoly with the boys in the ward. Went to Kiwi Club with Roy again in afternoon, played miniature golf with him, and served out tea in ward.

Wed Sep 8 Had busy morning peeling vegetables. In afternoon went unofficially into Cairo with Roy, had plenty to eat, and went to see 'The Black Swan'. Got welcome news of Italy's surrender in evening.

Thu Sep 9 Served breakfast, and spent afternoon at Kiwi Club as usual.

Fri Sep 10 Same programme. Still wondering at delay in discharge from hospital. Bad go of toothache, had restless night.

Sat Sep 11 Quiet day. Had swim and game of golf with Roy at Kiwi Club in afternoon.

Sun Sep 12 Left hospital midday with draft for El Arish convalescent depot on Palestinian border. Went by truck to Cairo main station and then by train, first class seats but not very comfortable. Got meal at Kantara. Dozed at intervals during night.

Mon Sep 13 Arrived El Arish 1.30 am, drew blankets and piled into bed. In morning spent time finding way round and learning ropes. Nice place, situated among palm trees right on coast – sea 50 yards from our hut. Had swim in surf, and good sunbathe. Ran into some acquaintances from hospital. Had medical examination, very cursory.

Tue Sep 14 Struck cookhouse fatigue, and had greasy day among pots and pans. Dental examination in afternoon, and another swim.

Wed Sep 15 Voted in General Election for first time in morning. Had strenuous game of soccer, South v North Island, 25 a side. Also had usual swim in breakers.

Thu Sep 16 Volunteered for job sandsoaping plates to take rust off them in morning, otherwise uneventful day. Concert and community sing in evening.

Fri Sep 17 Again on same job in morning, and had swim. Strenuous soccer match in evening, South v North Island, very even game, lost 3 – 2.

Sat Sep 18 Feeling pretty stiff after game. Quiet day. Played cards in hut in afternoon.

Sun Sep 19 Very brief church parade in morning, and quiet day. Had first taste of figs straight off the tree, and enjoyed them.

Mon Sep 20 Had job as mess orderly, not heavy job. Gruelling day at dentist's, 2½ hours in chair, 7 teeth filled. Had usual swim and messed round.

Tue Sep 21 Medical inspection in morning. Promoted from Grade B2 to B1.

Wed Sep 22 Short route march in morning, and strenuous game of soccer.

Thu Sep 23 Got fillings polished at dentist's. Usual day's programme, swimming and loafing round.

Fri Sep 24 Went on guard in morning, did shift from 3.30 to 5.30 pm, and again in middle of night.

Sat Sep 25 Guard shift 5.30-7.30 am. Another uneventful day, same programme as usual.

Sun Sep 26 Nothing much doing. Played soccer in evening against an English team, drew 1 all – good hard game.

Mon Sep 27 Route march in morning, past town of El Arish, and short game of cricket. In evening went to camp theatre to see 'Beau Geste' and enjoyed it.

Tue Sep 28 Short but hard game of baseball in morning, and grand swim – sea like a millpond. Getting fitter every day.

Wed Sep 29 Went on guard in morning, and had medical inspection, passing fit for discharge. Guard shift 3.30-5.30 pm. Spent evening playing cards.

Thu Sep 30 Guard shift 12.30-1.30 am, and 6.30-7.30. Loafed round all rest of day, usual swimming and cards. Spent two hours in evening with the boys on brain-teasers, went to bed with brain still whirling.

Fri Oct 1 Struck hut picquet job, so had lazy day round hut. Slight shower in morning. Left El Arish for Cairo 10.30 pm after long wait on station, and got pretty uncomfortable 3rd class accommodation, but slept on and off.

Sat Oct 2 Arrived Cairo 9 am looking most disreputable, waited on station for 2½ hours, then went by truck to Base Reception Depot at Maadi. Got in same hut as chaps I had palled up with at con depot – Doug Corser, Don Atkinson, Jack Kirk. Thundery, showery afternoon, and sand storms at night. Found Maadi pretty full, although the division had moved out.

Sun Oct 3 Hottest and most enervating day yet – 108 deg in shade. In morning issued with full gear, got base kit, and went to communion, taken by Mr Groves. Had a yarn with him. In afternoon went to Helwan hospital and saw Roy Cameron, and learnt he was Grade 2. Went to Cairo and saw some old friends in NZ Club, including Ramsay Armstrong. Heard Archbishop of York preach at Cathedral, church crammed, and I had to sit on a window ledge. On way home in train got talking to some Wog soldiers, who gave me some dates and cakes they were eating.

Mon Oct 4 After much waiting round in morning marched out to Transit Depot, 33rd Bn, where I met Sid Gaudin and Herb Longbottom (ex-1 Sgt 23 Bn in Maadi). In evening had to look after library in Church Army hut for an hour.

Tue Oct 5 Medical inspection in morning, and for no reason at all I was put on light duties. Had typhus injection. Dragged into cookhouse fatigue later, through not disappearing out of the tent lines quickly enough. Spent afternoon eating ice cream with Sid.

Wed Oct 6 Caught in morning for job marking out football ground. Made poor job of it, all touch lines crooked. In afternoon went to Cairo with Sid and did Xmas shopping, and went to see 'The Amazing Mrs Holliday' in evening.

Thu Oct 7 Again caught for cookhouse fatigue, but finished early. Went to Helwan in afternoon, and saw some cobbers, but missed Roy unfortunately. In evening saw Ensa revue 'Hello Happiness' at El Djem Amphitheatre in Maadi camp, and quite enjoyed it.

Fri Oct 8 On morning parade half a dozen or so of us were chopped off the end of the platoon and had to pack up and leave Maadi at short notice for a three weeks' job at an unknown destination. After a lot of messing round Bludgers' Hill finally got away in early afternoon. Went in truck through Cairo and on the Alexandria road. Truck broke down en route, and eventually we were towed to our destination at Amiriya, near the salt marshes at the back of Alexandria. Arrived in dark and settled into tent on spot.

Sat Oct 9 Learned that job was to man cookhouse to prepare meals for NZ transport drivers on their way to embark for Europe. Worked hard all day getting cookhouse organized, as it was merely a tin shack and had nothing arranged. Saw some of the 23 Bn boys, and learned that the battalion was not far away, a mile or two up the road.

Sun Oct 10 Worked all day on the coppers which were our only means of cooking the meals. Worked flat out till 6.30 pm in blinding dust storm. One or two cobbers came in for meals, including Eric Young, ex-I Sec.

Mon Oct 11 On vegetables, again going hard all day.

Tue Oct 12 On coppers again. This was a job at which there was no let up, because the fuel was pressed cotton seed or very light wood, which burned away quickly and required continual stoking. I was always absolutely filthy after a day on the coppers. A few more old cobbers came in for meals during day.

Wed Oct 13 Again on vegetables, but finished comparatively early. A much easier day's work than the coppers.

Thu Oct 14 Easy day on coppers, as only a few customers in. In evening saw Tom Mackie, 23 Bn IO, and Keith Esson, my former platoon commander in 1/Otago, outside Naafi canteen a short distance up the road from cookhouse. Learned that the boys were in the neighbourhood.

Fri Oct 15 Nothing doing all day, as there was nobody to feed. Did some washing in morning, and after lunch went over to Ikingi transit camp and located 23 Bn I Sec, and had good yarn. Hoped to get straight back to battalion, but could not manage it.

Sat Oct 16 Another easy day. Spring-cleaned cookshop in morning. Had yarn with Ken Paterson at Naafi in afternoon, and in evening went and saw the boys again, taking them an illegal gift of various kinds of tinned food, which we had plenty of but the battalion was short of. Heard they were embarking next day.

Sun Oct 17 Woke to find cookshop had been raided and all our tea stolen, but were lucky enough to have it replaced unofficially without any questions asked. Peeled vegetables all day, finishing fairly early. One or two more cobbers came in with convoys.

Mon Oct 18 Uneventful day; peeled vegies and washed dishes as usual. Party in evening.

Tue Oct 19 Long hard day on coppers, finishing 7 pm. Saw a few more old friends.

Wed Oct 20 Fairly easy day on vegies and washing. In evening heated copper and had wonderful hot bath, first since leaving NZ.

Thu Oct 21 Lazy day, no customers at all. Got 6 letters and wrote a few. Vivid lightning in evening, and heavy shower in the night.

Fri Oct 22 Not much doing – a few vegies and a bit of washing. Amused by the antics of a toad in tent in evening.

Sat Oct 23 Small crowd came in, moderate day's work.

Sun Oct 24 Big crowd in, did whole day on vegies. Just as we were washing tea dishes a torrential shower came on, making a river through our tent in a few minutes. Had to work hard shifting gear off ground onto boxes etc. Slept on boxes and sacks, and kept dry that way.

Mon Oct 25 On coppers. Hard day's work, finishing late.

Tue Oct 26 Crowd thinning out, pretty easy day on vegies. In morning dug trench on uphill sides of tent, and had just finished essential part when a heavy shower came on. Trench prevented big flood in tent, being just deep enough to carry away all the water.

Wed Oct 27 Fairly big day, new crowd in, among whom I saw some cobbers including Doug Harvie (ex-1/Otago). Had a lot of fun with some beer our quartermaster had been getting illegally from Wogs – cooks had been hiding it away from cookhouse hands, and we (the cookhouse hands) found it, removed two bottles and replaced them with bottles of water. Afterwards we had the joy of hearing the Wogs accused of the crime.

Thu Oct 28 Water trailer pinched in night by Wogs, and we found it half a mile away minus its wheels. Consequently water supply very precarious, we had a big crowd in and I was on coppers. So had a big day. Rigged up some very fancy burglar alarms in cookhouse.

Fri Oct 29 On vegetables, big crowd and big day. In evening went to pictures and saw 'Gunga Din', but not thrilled either by picture or by presentation.

Sat Oct 30 Wind and sand flying all day. Saw another ex-1/Otago chap, Stan Vernon.

Sun Oct 31 On coppers again. Long day, but uneventful.

Mon Nov 1 My 23rd birthday. Had a day's spell off job, and went on leave to Alexandria with two of the cooks, Reg Rowe and Alf West. Hitch-hiked in along road over salt marshes, which it crossed by causeways. Alexandria cleaner and nicer than Cairo, but narrow streets. Had good look round native quarter and bazaars in morning, and round European quarter in afternoon, and spent evening going the rounds of cabarets and clubs. Had meals at Jewish Club, very nice place. Home 2 am.

Tue Nov 2 Saw Bill Reid, just arrived with a convoy. On coppers, hard day's work. Saw big flock of flamingos flying past.

Wed Nov 3 Vicious rainstorm in early morning, but clear by breakfast time. Big job on vegetables. Another storm in night, and had to shift my bed to avoid a leak in the roof.

Thu Nov 4 Uneventful day. On vegetables again.

Fri Nov 5 Big day on coppers. Finished up job at teatime, and celebrated the meal with a sudden storm, which sent everybody rushing for shelter.

Sat Nov 6 Went into Alex on leave, had good walk round waterfront and tram ride past docks, and tea at Carlile Club. Went to see 'Who Done It?' but very poor show. Cold ride back in truck, home midnight.

Sun Nov 7 Cleaned up round cookhouse in morning. Afterwards hitch-hiked into Alex with some of the boys, had grand swim at Stanley Bay, good tea at Springbok Club, and went to a dance at Jewish Club.

Mon Nov 8 Were to have left Amiriya for Maadi in morning, but news came that we were not going till next day. Played cards and messed round all day.

Tue Nov 9 Left in trucks for Maadi 10 am. Good fast trip. Had snack at Halfway House, and got to 33rd Bn 4 pm. Got into same tent as Sid Gaudin. Went to Cairo in evening.

Wed Nov 10 Loafed all morning, and had job on butt party at rifle range in afternoon. Crook stomach, ate nothing all day, and went to bed early.

Thu Nov 11 Still off my food. Issued with winter gear in afternoon, and had two injections. Saw Jack Bickley, and also Noel May (ex-1/Otago). In evening played piano for Armistice Day communion service in Church Army hut.

Fri Nov 12 In afternoon went to Helwan with Jack Bickley and Sid Gaudin, and bade farewell to Roy Cameron, who was to be invalided home. Went from there to Cairo, had lash at ice cream at NZ Club, and saw 'Hitler's Children' – not a pleasant picture.

Sat Nov 13 Busy packing for move out with draft to rejoin division. Careless enough to be caught for escort job in afternoon. Again went to Cairo in afternoon with Jack, had my first (and presumably last) ride in a Cairo tram, and final go at Club ice cream. Met Mr Groves in town.

Sun Nov 14 Breakfast 4.30 am, and moved out in trucks 6 am to Digla Siding to entrain. Long but good and fast trip to Amiriya, where we arrived 2.30 pm. Marched 2 miles to transit camp and settled in before dark.

Mon Nov 15 Check parade in morning, spent rest of day doing nothing.

Tue Nov 16 Got instructions for move next morning. In evening went with Sid Gaudin and Buzz Anderson to see 'Lady of the Tropics', and spent my last Egyptian money at Naafi canteen.

Wed Nov 17 Up 4.30 am, packed, and embussed at 6 am for Alex, crammed like sardines in truck. Embarked on 'Cuba' 9 am, and pulled out into stream 1 pm. Great lot of shipping in port, and much of interest. For the first time saw a submarine coming into port. Pretty crowded quarters on 'Cuba', but good position on ship, and slept well on deck.

Thu Nov 18 Left 7 am, and formed up in convoy with 'Tegelbereg', 'Niew Holland', 'Staffordshire' and several other ships whose names I could not find out, with escort of 6 destroyers. Beautiful calm

day, course easterly. Spent time roaming round decks and playing cards with Sid and Buzz. Mixed crowd on ship, Tommies, South Africans, Yanks, Kiwis, with a French crew.

Fri Nov 19 Practice AA shoot in morning. Watched escorting destroyers laying a smoke screen. Grand day, spent lazing round decks. Had another typhus needle in afternoon. Passed within sight of Derna late afternoon.

Sat Nov 20 Overcast day, sea a bit choppy, but 'Cuba' rode well, with only a small roll. Lazy day, spent playing cards, reading and sleeping. Wrote letters in evening.

Sun Nov 21 Overcast and squally. In sight of Sicily early morning, and convoy turned off towards it except for 'Cuba' and 'Staffordshire'. Went to communion 7 am. On fatigue scrubbing floors and stairs, but only a small job. Otherwise lazy day, slept all afternoon. Rowdy evening in our quarters, a lot of crown and anchor schools, pontoon games and so on going. Made preparation for disembarking next day.

Mon Nov 22 In sight of land at dawn. Outside Taranto 8 am, and waited for two hours before going in. Berthed in outer harbour – rather disappointed, as I had been looking forward to going through narrow canal entrance into inner harbour. Disembarked 11 am, and had to march through Taranto and a short distance out of town through olive groves. Taranto somewhat knocked about, at any rate the part we saw of it, and very dusty and dirty. Got good view of harbour and docks as we marched, because our route led up a hill before we got outside town. Stopped among olive groves to wait for trucks. Plenty of hawkers around selling fruit. Transport picked us up, and we went past more olive groves and orchards, past mountainside towns of Massafra and Mottola, to NZ Advance Base at Stazione S. Basilio Mottola, well out on the Taranto-Bari road. Advance base very rough, just a new camp, and tents had been pitched in long grass. Got into same tent as Sid and Buzz.

Tue Nov 23 Hade to shift tents to put 23 Bn reinforcements together, and got in with a fairly good crowd. Torrential rain in afternoon, and had trouble with a leaky tent roof, but managed not so badly. Camp very muddy and ground uneven. Made stew over charcoal brazier in tent in evening.

Wed Nov 24 Spent day improving tent and surroundings. Had party in evening to celebrate a birthday in the tent. We had no palliasses, so I was sleeping on a mat of branches I had pulled from bushes round about.

Thu Nov 25 On job carting rocks to make roads throughout camp all day. Light rain in afternoon. Played cards in evening.

Fri Nov 26 Still on job carting rocks, making path down between tent rows and flooring tent with stone. Played cards all evening.

Sat Nov 27 Raining in morning, but cleared up later. Struck line picquet, very easy job, and spent rest of day playing cards and continuing work on path.

Sun Nov 28 Carried on with same programme, but didn't do much work. Went to song service in YMCA tent in evening.

Mon Nov 29 Cold frosty morning, fine day. Played card most of day, spent evening yarning round brazier in tent. Took on job taking down daily war news from radio and writing it out for company notice board – good thing as it got me off some morning parades.

Tue Nov 30 Had to parade in early afternoon to hear a sentence for theft promulgated – a most ridiculous proceeding. In afternoon worked in quarries, but did very little work. Yarned round brazier in evening.

Wed Dec 1 Uneventful day, spent writing letters, playing cards and reading.

Thu Dec 2 Went for route march in morning, through lanes and back roads, and had a look at the country. Played cards in afternoon.

Fri Dec 3 Usual programme. Got mail, and expectation of more. Played chess with Frank Edwards, one of my tent mates.

Sat Dec 4 Made appointment with camp dentist about my front tooth, which was loose. Later in morning went on march through bush on hill above camp, but a few of us split off from main body and came home in our own time. In afternoon played more cards. Spent evening in YMCA tent.

Sun Dec 5 Lazy day. Church service and communion in morning, listened to recital by 6 Bde band in afternoon.

Mon Dec 6 Usual programme – cards etc. Party in tent in evening.

Tue Dec 7 Went to dentist in morning, and had front tooth re-cemented in. Spent day doing nothing, wrote letters in evening.

Wed Dec 8 Uneventful day.

Thu Dec 9 Had to go in both morning and afternoon to a training ground near camp, and had so-called weapon instruction from Tommy sergeants. Very novel experience. Amused and horrified at poor quality of instruction and 'bull-ring' attitude of instructors. In afternoon did some shooting. In evening went to show by Tommy concert party in camp, some clever turns put on. Got 11 letters.

Fri Dec 10 Went on leave to Bari with Bob Wadsworth, Frank Edwards, Ron Melvin and Bob Speden from my tent. Long drive in, through towns of Gioia, Casamassima and Capurso, and between miles of orchards, olive groves and scrub land. In Casamassima one truck hit a wall and capsized; fortunately nobody was hurt. Before lunch hired a boat and had a row on Bari harbour. Afterwards, in company with Bob Wadsworth, had a good look round slum areas. Saw old cathedral, some terrible areas of narrow alleyways and dirty buildings, and old Castle of Frederick II of Swabia. Found a series of underground vaults in castle, inhabited by a mob of kids looked after by an old woman – probably as shelter against air raids or something. Nearly got mobbed by kids, but managed to escape finally. Walked round waterfront. Afterwards went out to NZ hospital, in a big block of buildings on outskirts of Bari, and saw some acquaintances. Rain came on in evening, and we had wet ride home in open trucks. Didn't mind it very much, as I turned my collar well up and stood with my back to the way we were going. Terrific thunderstorm in evening about 9 pm, and tent leaked somewhat, wetting most of our beds and gear. Several tents came down, so we were reasonably well off. Had good night's sleep in spite of dampness.

Sat Dec 11 Spent morning drying out tent. Took a wander through trees above camp in afternoon.

Sun Dec 12 Lazy day, spent writing letters.

Mon Dec 13 Another lazy day, played a lot of cards. In evening said cheerio to Jack Bickley, who had been in camp with us, but was leaving on a course.

Tue Dec 14 Did a bit of tentative stone-breaking in afternoon, but it didn't last. Heard good news that I was going back with a draft to 23 Bn, but sad news of the death of three coppers, Bill Ashman, Stuart McDonald and Bruce Wright.

Wed Dec 15 Spent day fixing up gear ready to leave, and final bout of card-playing.

Thu Dec 16 Up at an ungodly hour, and left camp 7.30 am on trucks. Travelled on canopy with Ron Melvin most of day, until driver went crook. Went through a lot of towns, but not Bari, as we took a back way to avoid it. Passed Foggia with its famous aerodrome, and saw a great deal of bomb damage there, and flights of bombers continuously passing overhead. Filled up with petrol there. Entire trip had been over flat ground until there, but after Foggia it began to get into rolling country. Stopped 4 pm outside San Severo, and pitched bivvy with Ron Melvin on what we took to be the local rubbish dump. It was pretty filthy anyway. Went into town after tea and had a look round.

Fri Dec 17 Set out 7 am and travelled all day. Left plains and got up into wild hills with winding zigzag roads. Went through several villages, and crossed several rivers, mainly by Bailey bridges replacing those blown up by Jerry. Lost convoy several times, and had fun in afternoon wandering round hills trying to find our whereabouts. Finally found convoy again. Stopped 4 pm on a bleak hilltop, and Ron and I made our bivvy habitable with straw from a nearby stack, meeting the farmer's protests with solemn promises to put the straw back in the morning. Could hear artillery fire and see gun flashes during night.

Sat Dec 18 Off again 7 am, along winding mountain roads, and arrived at Rear Div HQ, on the banks of a little stream, 9 am. Took opportunity to have a shave. Waited until midday for trucks to take us on to 23 Bn, and heard that the boys were out of the line. Finally trucks arrived, and we travelled over more muddy mountain roads, got lost, ended up at 23 Bn B Echelon, and were redirected by them to Bn HQ near village of Castelfrentano. Arrived there 3 pm. Had a joyous reunion with I Section, somewhat marred by news that two members, Athol Lightfoot and Monty McClymont, were out wounded, and that more of my acquaintances had been killed. Got settled in I Sec's billet in a farmhouse, with Italian family living there too. Shared sleeping room in the farm kitchen with Garnet Blampied and Bruce Tuck, on a big mattress which was rolled up against the wall in the daytime and brought out at night. Considered this the best room in the house, as it contained a big fireplace which always had a fire in it in the daytime, and so the room was warm at night – a great thing as the weather was very cold.

Sun Dec 19 Got back into I routine again. Not much doing, but we had plenty to talk about. Church service 1 pm, and then we sorted and distributed a lot of maps. Some of the boys got parcels in evening, and we had a high and hilarious supper.

Mon Dec 20 Finished sorting maps with John Harrison. Savage artillery duels near us all day, mostly our guns attacking town of Orsogna, which we could see on a hilltop a few miles away. They were helped by a few bombing attacks. A fair bit of Jerry shelling coming back too. In afternoon Warwick and I went through Castelfrentano to 26 Bn on a hillside further back, overlooking a valley containing our artillery, and saw Arthur Chetwin, Tom Lindsay and other coppers. Had great yarn.

Tue Dec 21 Uneventful day. A lot more artillery exchanges. I was on dish-washing for the section, not a very arduous job.

Wed Dec 22 Watched our bombers knocking spots off Orsogna after lunch. Heard news of Lt Col Romans' death from wounds, and also possibility of our going into action on Xmas eve. Got patriotic parcel in evening, and had a party with the boys.

Thu Dec 23 Did some more work with maps. Otherwise quiet day.

Fri Dec 24 Wakened in early hours by barrage as attack went in up front. Miserable wet day, felt very glad we were out of line. Got 5 letters. In evening got together and had grand party.

Sat Dec 25 Best Xmas Day I had spent in the army, and again felt thankful we were in rest position. Church service, with lusty singing, and communion in morning, and good Xmas dinner held in a hall in Castelfrentano where our YMCA was established. No more indication of our re-entry into the line.

Sun Dec 26 Miserable cold day with drizzle. Felt a bit crook, with bad head and sore throat, so went to bed after lunch and spent afternoon and evening there.

Mon Dec 27 Throat still sore, but feeling brighter all round. Cold day, with a bit of sleet, and not much doing. Got some parcels.

Tue Dec 28 Messed round as usual. Went on wood-hunting expedition out past Castelfrentano in afternoon, and had small passage of arms with the chatelaine of the premises from which we were removing the wood.

Wed Dec 29 Cold, and more rain, with a promise of snow. Went in jeep to mobile showers, on main road a short distance through Castelfrentano, in morning. Got three more parcels.

Thu Dec 30 Went for stroll round Castelfrentano with Bruce Tuck in morning. Otherwise nothing doing.

Fri Dec 31 Took over job of keeping enemy identifications catalogue, which I had had in Tunisia. Watched several air attacks on Orsogna during day. In evening had big New Year party, but a snow blizzard about 9 pm put a damper on the party, which broke up before midnight.

1944

Sat Jan 1 Woke to find ground covered with a foot of snow, and a drift piled high against door. Very little movement out of doors. Spent afternoon writing up enemy identifications in exercise book. Got dismaying news of move up to line next day.

Sun Jan 2 Beautiful day with sun on snow. Spent morning packing gear. Took affectionate farewell of Italian owners of house, and left on trucks 2 pm. Went in trucks as far as River Moro, then walked another 2 or 3 miles, up a steep hill along a slushy road which in places was screened from Jerry's observation by scrim hung above it. Turned off this road at the top of a ridge across country, and had to walk over snow up a gentle slope. On way passed 26 Bn cobbbers going out; saw Arthur Chetwin, Sid Gaudin, Arnold and Dough Milburn, Jim Gemmell and others. Got to house near the top of the ridge where we were to establish Rear Bn HQ, and after a hunt for accommodation got settled into a small room on ground floor of house, containing Bruce Tuck, John Harrison, Jack Linklater and I from I Section, and Mac Taylor and Friday Jones, battalion provosts. Went back ¼ mile and brought up bedrolls, which had been taken up to there in jeep.

Mon Jan 3 Passed comfortable night – borrowed a stretcher from RAP net door to sleep on. Fairly quiet day, except for a walk up to Main Bn HQ, about half a mile forward but a hard trudge through snow, with some I gear. Fair bit of Jerry mortar fire all day, but not very close to us. In evening played bridge with the padre and some of the boys in the RAP.

Tue Jan 4 Another beautiful sunny day. Got up early and carried rations up from a road a few hundred yards over to our right. Not much doing for rest of day, except for a trip to Main HQ in afternoon, not very pleasant, as someone put a shot over my head on the way. Finished trip crouching down behind a low hedge, with (as I learnt afterwards) Warwick laughing at me from an upstairs window in Main HQ. Fair bit of shelling and mortaring all day, but again not very close.

Wed Jan 5 More snow in night, and bitterly cold day. Spent morning in bed. In afternoon John Harrison and I helped to assist Italian refugees who were being sent back in trucks. I helped an old woman from our house over to the road. Refugees in pitiful plight, under-clothed and undernourished. Played a lot of cards in afternoon and evening.

Thu Jan 6 Got some German letters to decipher. Also helped another lot of refugees through snow to road, and had to dig out their truck, which had stuck, in a savage snowstorm. On way back Bruce and I helped to unstick a jeep which had stuck. Snowstorms continued all day, got a parcel in evening.

Fri Jan 7 Had to do picquet shift 12-1 am, cold as charity. Stayed in bed all morning, and had very little to do all day. Another picquet shift 10-11 pm. A bit on edge following Jerry raids on our companies, and consequently got a shock when our Vickers guns opened up close to us just after I had finished my shift. Jumped out of bed in my shirt and got a very poor hearing from the other boys for disturbing them.

Sat Jan 8 Another lovely day, nothing doing except to decipher an almost illegible Jerry diary, which I did in company with an American ambulance driver, Newell Jenkins, who was attached to us. Some mortars landed close in evening.

Sun Jan 9 Expecting to be relieved next day. Very quiet day, fine but cold.

Mon Jan 10 Picquet shift 1-2 am. Beautiful night, full moon lighting up snowy ground. Another uneventful day, spent reading and playing cards. Got news that our relief was postponed. Heard of death of an old High School master, Dave Murray.

Tue Jan 11 Saw a Jerry hit-and-run air raid in early afternoon, planes coming over fast and dropping bombs when almost above us. One plane blown up by anti-aircraft fire right overhead, great flash of flame and no plane. Heard we were to be relieved soon by 4 Indian Div.

Wed Jan 12 Picquet shift 2-3 am. Restless night, not much sleep. Another lovely day. Had good view of bombardment of Orsogna in afternoon. In evening had long yarn with IO of 1st Royal Sussex Regt, who were to take our place.

Thu Jan 13 Very little to do. Did picquet shift 8-9 pm, and played bridge with two members of Royal Sussex I Section, who spent night with us.

Fri Jan 14 Cleaned up room and surroundings, and got instructions re our move out next day.

Sat Jan 15 Up early, packed and off in I jeep 8 am. Had most hair-raising trip along road like a morass, clinging for dear life to the top of a pile of bedrolls, and reached Castelfrentano to find I truck gone. Had to tour country to find our new billets, but finally got there and settled in village school of Caporali, a tiny village among hills. Had to rig up coverings for windows, which were all blown out. Got a new member into section, Clarrie Boyd. Squally windy night but had cosy evening round fire in a tiny scullery. Got 3 parcels.

Sun Jan 16 Fine day after wet night. Had good sort out of food boxes. In afternoon started off for Castelfrentano with Tom Mackie in jeep, but turned back owing to engine trouble, and had one very bad moment when jeep ran away down a steep lane before Tom managed to turn it into soft ground and stop. Slept night by fireplace, nice and warm.

Mon Jan 17 Got a lift in an ambulance by a very roundabout route to Castelfrentano with Warwick, and got my watch, which I had left at a house to be mended by an old chap. Visited owners of our old billet, and had great fuss made of us and an affectionate farewell. In afternoon sorted out a lot of old maps. Took down radio news in evening to send to companies.

Tue Jan 18 Spent morning doing trace of route for move back south, which we were doing next day. Packed up very leisurely, and loaded truck before dark.

Wed Jan 19 After snatching a bit of sleep got up, had breakfast 1 am and left 2 am, travelling on I truck with Warwick. Bitterly cold ride. Stopped 5.30-7.30 am by roadside, then moved on. Travelled all day, passing through Vasto, Termoli, San Severo, and bivvied down 3 pm by roadside, near a farm where we got straw to sleep on. Shared bivvy with John Harrison. Got startling news that we were going across Italy to west coast.

Thu Jan 20 Up 6 am in bitter cold, moved off 8 am. Very interesting trip through Apennines, passing Lucera, Ariano, Avellino and other towns. Lovely wild mountain scenery, and crowds of civilians all along roads. Warwick and I were in a good mood, singing most of the time and playing the goat. In afternoon came out into plains and saw peak of Vesuvius in distance, topped with a plume of smoke and an occasional red flame. Stopped 4 pm, and bivvied with John again, among vines.

Fri Jan 21 Up 4.30 am, had breakfast by lantern-light and left 5.30. Very cold and frosty. Passed through Cancellara, Caserta and Alife, a little town entirely surrounded with a wall. Crossed Volturno River and arrived 10 am at our new area, a pleasant spot on a steep hillside in an olive grove, with a wide view over Volturno valley. Had a small room in a house to work in, but pitched bivvies to live in, and I again set up house with John Harrison. Had good clean up, and first bath for 3 weeks, and spent afternoon sorting out gear and folding maps.

Sat Jan 22 Had a fair bit of I work to do. Heard of new Allied landings south of Rome, and our future job of exploiting a break in Jerry's line. In evening saw a mobile cinema show, 'The More the Merrier'. Sorted a lot of maps.

Sun Jan 23 Church service in morning, and talk by Major Blundell on Italian situation, and afterwards communion service. Spent afternoon writing letters. Light rain in evening and night.

Mon Jan 24 Parade in morning to hear talk on war situation by Brig Kippenberger. Did a bit more map work in afternoon. In evening Warwick and I played big bridge match against Ron Ritchie and Dick Feasey of the sigs. Scare toward midnight owing to reports of Jerries having been seen in neighbourhood, but probably these were scare rumours put about by civilians.

Tue Jan 25 Had crook stomach, so ate very little day. Wrote more letters, and got 7 parcels. Light rain set in in evening.

Wed Jan 26 Not much doing – messed round with maps and wrote letters. More rain in evening.

Thu Jan 27 In afternoon went up steep hill above camp, sat in sun and demonstrated resection exercises for Clarrie Boyd's benefit. Stomach pretty crook in evening, so went to bed early.

Fri Jan 28 Got job in charge of a lot of aerial photos we had received. Turned out truck to locate a good place to keep them. (Eventually got pioneers to make a box with shelves, which became an important part of our truck's equipment and was afterwards used to hold many things beside aerial photos). Plotted some of them on map in afternoon. Still feeling crook, and didn't eat. Had good evening's yarn over charcoal brazier in our room.

Sat Jan 29 All-day stunt to practice river crossings by assault boat. Marched several miles to Volturno River. Very successful stunt, and afterwards Garnet Blampied and I had most enjoyable bask in a sunny gully, and waited until the others were well on their way home before starting ourselves. On way called in to engineers' billet and had yarn with Verne Jones. Hitch-hiked home, but finished off with stiff walk uphill, and got home feeling done just in time for tea. Went to bed early, and slept clock round.

Sun Jan 30 Church parade and communion in morning. In afternoon went in jeep to American showers at Piedimonte d'Alife, a few miles away, had grand shower with all conveniences, and then did a bit of exploring round the town. Wrote letters in evening.

Mon Jan 31 Did a lot of work on aerial photos. Heard of impending move up to line near Cassino.

Tue Feb 1 Italians cleared out a heap of olives which had occupied room next to ours, which had a fireplace, so we moved in smartly and enjoyed a grand wood fire in evening. During day continued work on aerial photos.

Wed Feb 2 Went with a party to Pompeii. Bitter ride on truck, and I had posy up behind cab and regretted it somewhat, as I had to crouch down in shelter from the cold wind as best I could. Went past Naples and out along Autostrada, a beautiful straight road with no intersections. Struck by mob of begging kids and women at entrance to Old Pompeii, worst I had ever seen. Had good look round ruins, guided by a chap who had all the patter at his finger tips, and then went into modern town and saw through most beautiful church. Did not get posy behind cab on return trip. Unfortunately it was too foggy to get a good view of the Bay of Naples, but we passed through parts of town, including ruined railway yards. Back to camp 7 pm, and had party in our room in evening.

Thu Feb 3 Quiet day. In evening got instructions to go forward to Cassino area with an advance party next day, but instructions cancelled later.

Fri Feb 4 Unpleasant wet day, and in consequence had to shift bed from bivvy into room, as ground inside bivvy was saturated. In evening got details of move to front next day.

Sat Feb 5 Spent day packing truck in preparation for move. After a few false alarms moved to assembly area a few hundred yards downhill 3.30 pm, and left 6 pm, leaving Bruce Tuck behind LOB. Cold ride in back of I truck with Warwick. Went up main road, then at village of Mignano turned off on to a railway line which was in use as a road. Arrived 9 pm at our area under a steep rocky hill (Mt Porchio), and after a lot of messing round got more or less settled in. Dug an apology for a slit trench; could not dig more because of big rocks in ground. Restless night due to heavy artillery firing very near us, and Jerry putting a few back at them over our heads.

Sun Feb 6 Quiet day, spent digging better slit trenches and getting properly settled. A lot of air activity on both sides, and a lot of firing by the artillery, Jerry putting a few back in afternoon. We were living alongside a crowd of American anti-aircraft gunners, who had their cookhouse in a half ruined hut about ten yards from I truck.

Mon Feb 7 Bitterly cold day. Got a lot of maps in in afternoon. In evening played cards and yarned in I truck.

Tue Feb 8 Climbed to top of Mt Porchio, and had good view of country ahead, including Montecassino Abbey on the top of a prominent hill. Rained at night, but bivvy stood up nobly. Black-out after dark was in force, so I rigged up a patent cover for my candle from a mess tin. Conditions for reading in bed were not ideal, as every time the heavy artillery just behind us fired the candle flickered badly.

Wed Feb 9 Stayed in bed late. In afternoon went to Bde HQ, a mile or two further forward behind Mt Trocchio, with Blam in jeep and brought map boards up to date. Very hilarious card game in truck in evening, warmed by a small coke brazier made out of a margarine tin.

Thu Feb 10 Pansied up battle map board in morning, otherwise uneventful day. Heavy rain set in in afternoon, but again my bivvy did all required of it. Played cards in evening, and went to bed to be lulled to sleep by steady downpour and deafening noise of a big barrage by our guns.

Fri Feb 11 Woke 5 am to find that a peg had pulled out of my bivvy, and the bivvy had come down on top of me and water was pouring in. Fixed it as best I could, crawling out into the rain and mud in my underpants in the process, and made myself more or less comfortable by pulling the drier parts of blankets round me. One of them was so wet that I had to go to B Ech, a few hundred yards away, and have it changed. In afternoon I was drying rest of blankets with the aid of a coke brazier when I got sudden word to shift to a forward HQ that evening. Packed and was all ready when orders were cancelled – not too pleased. Played cards and yarned till fairly late.

Sat Feb 12 Completed airing and drying of blankets and gear. Marked up some maps.

Sun Feb 13 Church service and communion in morning. Did a lot of much-needed sewing in afternoon, and got some mail.

Mon Feb 14 Again uneventful, and our move forward again postponed. Wrote a letter or two, and yarned over brazier in evening.

Tue Feb 15 Unpleasant day, cold and windy. Artillery duels lasted all day, including a few shells at lunch time which landed close enough to make us duck smartly. In evening I made a little brazier for my bivvy, but it did not go as well as I had hoped.

Wed Feb 16 Went up forward with Tom Mackie in jeep, and recced site we would be taking up soon. Had good view of remains of Montecassino Abbey on way. Mounted some aerial photos in afternoon, and heard details of attack on Cassino, in which we were to take part.

Thu Feb 17 Went to 4 Bde HQ with Tom Mackie in morning, and got aerial photos of country we would be advancing over. Got back to find plan changed, and we were now to do an attack near Montecassino next night. Got details, but didn't feel happy about it, as Jerry had this part very strongly defended. In evening yarned with Warwick in his bivvy. Kept awake for some time by barrage, as Maoris put in an attack.

Fri Feb 18 Got news of ill success of Maoris, and as a result, after waiting for news all day, our show was postponed. Quiet day, except for some heavy Jerry shelling on a crossroads just behind us, when he hit an ammunition dump.

Sat Feb 19 Bitter wind, coldest ay yet. Waited all day for news and finally got orders to relieve 24 Bn in line. Packed up after tea and left in jeep for our new position, 2 miles ahead along the

railway line. A little road led down off the line by a blown bridge, and our posy was in a triangle of ground at the bottom, in the lee of a steep little hill. Got there in time to be nearly deafened by one of 24 Bn's 4.2" mortars firing. When the mortar crew moved out John Harrison and I erected our bivvy in the mortar pit. Disturbed night due to our artillery firing all round.

Sun Feb 20 Spent most of day making our bivvy good by smoothing out the pit and building it up with mortar bomb cases packed full of earth. Finally got it very cosy, protected all round with these cases, with only a narrow door. In the daytime we had to collapse our bivvies to avoid being seen from the air, and we did this by pulling the front pole out and propping an olive branch or two over the canvas. Great artillery activity all day, and Jerry put a few vey near.

Mon Feb 21 Quiet day. Played bridge in afternoon with Warwick, Jack Linklater and John Harrison in the bivvy belonging to Warwick and Jack.

Tue Feb 22 Jerry put over a few Nebelwerfer salvos in morning, not very close to us, but most artillery activity was ours. Quiet day.

Wed Feb 23 In morning went round forward area in jeep with Tom Mackie and Warwick to recce new area for battalion. Went across behind Mt Trocchio, and through lanes on the plain in front of Cassino, being just in front of an artillery position when they fired a salvo. Found no decent area, but had best view yet of ruined monastery, and got pretty wet, as rain came on. In afternoon rain set in properly and our bivvy got in the road of a stream of water coming downhill, which came pouring in. I got soaked trying to divert the stream by digging drains above the bivvy, and succeeded in diverting some of it, but its new course went through Garnet Blampied's bivvy, so I was unpopular. Took advantage of a lull to clear out wet gear, and John and I went to a house just across the railway and got some curved tiles with which we paved our floor. Some dry straw on top and we were OK again.

Thu Feb 24 Had a lot of work with aerial photos – spent half of the morning at Bde HQ stapling them together, and all afternoon back at I truck marking Jerry defences on them. Got back to Bn HQ to find that they had just been heavily shelled. In evening got word of an impending move, and had to guide a minesweeping party in a truck by a roundabout route behind Mt Porchio to C Coy HQ on the main road three kilometres from Cassino, and stay there myself to prepare a posy for Bn HQ. Found some cobbers there, and slept in a little room barely wide enough to sleep full length.

Fri Feb 25 In morning Tom Mackie arrived, took me over the road and pointed out our future posy in a farmhouse, but I looked round, found an empty one near by, and cleared out a room in it in afternoon. House was badly damaged and very filthy inside, but better than the other one, which was full of Italians. Expected boys to move in, but their move was postponed. Slight rain in evening, and I watched shelling of Montecassino, which we had a very good view of from C Coy HQ.

Sat Feb 26 Did shift minding company's telephone 12-2 am. Day just wet enough to be unpleasant. In morning took some aerial photos forward to A Coy, in a house a little way up the road, and in afternoon cleared out another disgustingly filthy room in the other house. Move again postponed through rain. Felt slight earthquake as I was going to bed 10 pm.

Sun Feb 27 Day uneventful, but in evening Bn HQ moved in, and I had big job guiding them to their new billets, as they came in in small bunches. Had to wait outside gate of C Coy HQ house and direct each group. Didn't get finished till 11.30 pm. While job was in progress one of the provost motor bikes caught fire and burnt outside C Coy HQ, and there was a scare that Jerry would see the flames and start shelling, but he didn't. When all Bn HQ were in I got a ride to the other house on the back of Mac Taylor's bike, through a narrow lane, including a slight spill on a corner, and was

very glad to get to bed, even though the room was far too crowded and the beds overlapping. During day Bn HQ had suffered several casualties through shelling, including Tom Mackie wounded.

Mon Feb 28 Helped to dish out breakfast in morning after it had come up on a jeep, and then the boys set to and made house more comfortable, including knocking a hole in a wall to enable us to use a room with a fireplace without using its door, which was facing Jerry. Rather annoyed to hear that Warwick and I had to go back to live at C Coy's old HQ, where a small party from Bn HQ was. Went 6 pm. Settled into same narrow room that I had slept in before.

Tue Feb 29 Did picquet shift 4-6 am, mostly beside charcoal fire in sigs office. Had a fair bit of work to do, as I was temporarily 2 i/c of I Sec.

Wed Mar 1 Quiet day, rained on and off. Not much work to do. Wrote some letters.

Thu Mar 2 Our new IO, Ewart Hay, arrived. Heard bad news that Maj Gen Kippenberger had been badly wounded by a mine, which were plentiful round the countryside.

Fri Mar 3 Did picquet shift 12-2 am, very eerie in moonlight. A few shells landed somewhere near about 1 am. In afternoon we cleaned out our room and put fresh straw in it. More rain in evening, everybody fed up with delays in operation due to bad weather.

Sat Mar 4 Not much doing. In late afternoon padre came round and held communion service in an upstairs room. Some of the boys came over to visit us in evening.

Sun Mar 5 Small amount of work to do, but nothing to hurt us. Got some parcels. More rain in evening.

Mon Mar 6 Fair bit of Jerry shelling, some too close for comfort. In evening Warwick and I had very enjoyable game of bridge with Pat Pope and Frank Edwards of the sigs.

Tue Mar 7 Uneventful day.

Wed Mar 8 Again uneventful, a lot of artillery activity. Wrote letters in afternoon.

Thu Mar 9 Had a bit of work putting overprints on map. Jerry shelled road near us in afternoon, scoring direct hit on road right outside our gate, and the jeep bringing up the tea cracked its axle in this hole. After dark I had to go out with a party and fill it up, as well as one or two smaller ones, and were on the jump all the time in case any more came over. Got finished OK.

Fri Mar 10 Had good wash in morning, and felt 100 per cent cleaner. Some Jerry planes flew overhead during lunch and there was a lot of anti-aircraft fire about. A few more shells (mostly duds) came round us in late afternoon.

Sat Mar 11 Operations still postponed, not much to do. Monotony varied in evening, when Garnet Blampied, John Harrison and I went out with Ewart Hay in jeep to recce routes round north of Cassino. Went through narrow lanes and across country, and got stuck once en route and had to manhandle jeep back on to firm ground.

Sun Mar 12 Spent afternoon playing bridge with Warwick against the sigs' team – not very successful. Padre came to house in late afternoon, held informal service and short communion.

Mon Mar 13 Lovely day, sat outside and enjoyed sunshine. Another session of bridge against sigs in evening, slightly in our favour.

Tue Mar 14 Another lovely day. Heard news that the big attack on Cassino was starting next day, weather permitting. Played more bridge in evening, getting well slogged.

Wed Mar 15 Attack on Cassino began. We had a grandstand view of heavy bombers coming over all morning, wave after wave. I went upstairs on to a balcony for part of the performance. A few of the bombers dropped their loads behind our lines, and we didn't feel too good and ducked for cover once. Heavy barrage in afternoon made things very noisy, especially when Jerry put some back round our house. Sat very tight in our room, getting occasional reports of progress made by 6 Bde in their attack. Terrific bombardment, house rocked and ground shook, and we all ended up with tender eardrums. Another continuous barrage all night to cover attack on Montecassino, sky lit up with flashes running one into another.

Thu Mar 16 Expected to move any time during day to carry out our part in attack, but owing to slow progress it didn't come off. Another day of heavy gunfire, especially on Montecassino, and heavy Jerry Nebelwerfer fire in our boys in Cassino. Got gear ready for move. Just before dusk we had a hit-and-run raid by about 20 Jerry planes, bombs uncomfortably close, making us scramble indoors and keep low. As the planes came over we had been looking up and speculating as to what they were, but we soon found out all right.

Fri Mar 17 Another day of anxious waiting for news of battle's progress, little scraps of news coming through, but nothing definite. Played more bridge in afternoon. Shelled at teatime, and didn't feel happy, as our room was on receiving side of house. Went to bed with expectation of going in next day in all probability.

Sat Mar 18 Disturbed night due to Jerry shelling, very close. Bombed in morning, and several more air attacks and intermittent shelling all day. News of attack very scarce. Played more bridge in afternoon.

Sun Mar 19 Another bombing raid in morning, and one or two a good way away in afternoon. Had a bath. Got news in afternoon that the battalion was going into Cassino that night, and was all ready to move when I was told only a few of Bn HQ were going, including Warwick and Clarrie Boyd of the I Sec. Had a couple of errands to A Coy, half a mile away down the main road, in evening. Saw the boys off 9 pm.

Mon Mar 20 Garnet Blampied went up to Cassino alone in morning and found out what he could about 23 Bn's position, but otherwise news from front scarce and confused. In a black fed-up mood all day. More shelling in afternoon and at night.

Tue Mar 21 Uneventful day, a little rain in afternoon. One or two jobs to do but not much.

Wed Mar 22 Same sort of day, a bit of shelling. Had small job loading ammunition on a jeep for Cassino in evening. Heard varying stories of battle's progress.

Thu Mar 23 Watched our dive-bombers going in on Jerry's positions. Sharp bout of shelling in afternoon, one landing two feet outside our window and giving me a half-pie blackout for a few seconds. Got some mail. Heard late at night that John Harrison and I were relieving Warwick and Clarrie at Tac HQ in Cassino next evening.

Fri Mar 24 A few shells round in small hours. Packed and got ready for move. In afternoon went with some of the boys across the fields to recce another house for Bn HQ to move to, but move was cancelled later. Instructions came that we were not to leave for Cassino until 10 pm, and consequently had long evening's wait. Left soon after 10 on 2-mile walk into Cassino, in the middle

of a barrage by our guns, and had uneventful if uncomfortable walk, with occasional shells landing on Montecassino above us, and a few Jerry mortars coming back on our left. Bn HQ was in cellar of a ruined church. On arrival I took over ciphers and codes from Warwick.

Sat Mar 25 Unable to move much in daylight, as Jerry mortared our church regularly, and a sniper had the entrance covered. Spent time playing cards and listening to shells bursting. Place a sort of catacomb, low, dusty, and crowded with our own and Maori Bn HQ. Looked over a few Jerry letters. In afternoon had a short look at what used to be Cassino from our entrance – flat part of town like a ploughed paddock, and hillsides covered with ruined houses, mainly held by Jerry – I didn't look at them long. After dark went down to a rendezvous at a destroyed bridging tank with John to pick up rations, and did not linger on road.

Sun Mar 26 Sat in cellar listening to shelling, and made preparations for being relieved in evening. Got job of superintending the loading of some gear on jeep at rendezvous. Got there OK, but while there a shell burst beside us, wounding several of a section who were going into the town to relieve us. Took one of them back on jeep to RAP. Got back to Bn HQ, had a feed, and then had to go with the boys to a new HQ half a mile away. Got a good posy in a farmhouse, away from the main road thank goodness.

Mon Mar 27 Lovely day, and it felt grand to walk round in sunshine again. Bit of work on maps. Heard we were to move again shortly, but didn't hear whether forward or back. Played bridge in evening with no luck.

Tue Mar 28 Got up and helped Clarrie Boyd to make breakfast for the gang. A few jobs during day, including a long overdue haircut. Got news that we were to be replaced next night, so in afternoon I went back to I truck at B Ech to be in advance party at new area. Spent evening listening to radio in command truck, and made bivvy on a hillside among some rocks.

Wed Mar 29 Packed truck, and left 11 am for new area, a few miles back, in a bare field near Mignano. Got place cleared up and settled in. The other boys arrived in afternoon and evening, and John and I made our posy in a shallow hole already dug, built up with sandbags. Had visit from Jack Bickley in afternoon, and had a good yarn. Spent evening in I truck, roomy surroundings as we had put up a canvas lean-to at the back.

Thu Mar 30 Revelled in luxury of being out of shell range for the first time since 5 Feb. Went with boys in jeep to mobile showers in a gully near by, and had most welcome and overdue shower. Bruce Tuck arrived back from LOB camp. Played bridge in evening.

Fri Mar 31 Unpleasant day, squally and foggy. In afternoon went with the boys in jeep to little village of Pignataro, 30 miles away, on a successful search for wine. Enjoyable outing in spite of driving rain. Went in evening to mobile cinema show, but in middle of picture an announcement came over that I was wanted at I truck. Went up and found I had to interpret for a Free French soldier who wanted Div HQ. Hard to direct him, so finished up by going with him myself in his jeep and searching Div HQ until we located Div IO.

Sat Apr 1 Blew a gale all day, and we had fun keeping bivvy and lean-to down. Had two trips to Maori Bn I Sec, a little distance away, in afternoon to collect a trace for our next stay in line. Ewart Hay took ill and went to hospital.

Sun Apr 2 Put clocks on one hour. Church parade in morning, followed by a well-attended communion. Heard details of move into line next night, and was quite pleased to learn that Warwick,

Clarrie Boyd and I were to stay back. In evening went for a stroll to Mignano – a ruin of a town – and then played bridge.

Mon Apr 3 Beautiful day, not much doing. Saw the boys away to their forward position in evening, and the rest of us had an evening's bridge with the padre in his tent, including a supper of oyster patties made over a primus. Shifted house to Warwick's bivvy in a deep hole in the ground.

Tue Apr 4 Spent most of day getting war diary up-to-date. In afternoon Warwick and I went to mobile showers, and after tea played deck tennis – first game for a long time, and we enjoyed it. Jerry put a few shells over on main road below us in evening.

Wed Apr 5 Spent day writing my diary out decently, and did a little spring-cleaning in truck, with promise of more to follow. Did sketches of route the battalion was to follow on its way out to a rest area.

Thu Apr 6 Some of the boys got back from the line in morning, and we started jacking up truck for move out next day.

Fri Apr 7 Finished loading truck, and moved off 9.30 am. Route at first ran forward toward Cassino, but we turned off main road on to a hill road going back over the hills, past San Pietro, a little village on a steep face. Road ran steeply over a pass and down the other side, through Venafro and beside Volturno River, then up a valley to Isernia. We turned off just before Isernia on to a narrow road, and finished up at an area in hills, a lovely spot with a view over the Volturno and Vandra rivers. Spent afternoon jacking up bivvy, again with John, and lean-to on truck. Good Friday service in evening, great service and well attended.

Sat Apr 8 Lone Jerry plane had a good fly over our lines in morning, cruising unconcernedly among thick anti-aircraft fire. General opinion was that he deserved to get away. In afternoon continued with spring cleaning of truck, including getting rid of out-of-date aerial photos. After tea went with the boys for a stroll to some Roman ruins on a hilltop nearby, where we had a magnificent view over the Vandra. Played bridge in evening. Ernie Taylor arrived as temporary IO.

Sun Apr 9 Easter Day. Communion in YMCA tent at 7.30 am, and church service 10.30. In afternoon went for a joy-ride in jeep to Piedimonte D'Alife with the intention of going up into hills to Lake Matese behind town, but learnt that road was blocked. Strolled up a wild gorge behind the town, one of the grandest bits of scenery I have seen, stream coming out from under a cliff and roaring down between vertical rock walls. On way home took a wrong turning in village of Capriati, and had to go a roundabout way through Venafro. It came on to rain on the way, soaking us thoroughly. Rain continued during night.

Mon Apr 10 Rain finished. Very sorry to lose Padre Holland, who was being transferred. In afternoon Warwick, John and I went for a ramble up Vandra, and I had short plunge in water, very cold but invigorating. Waded river and explored other bank, then back again and had steep climb uphill to Roman ruins. Home teatime. In evening Bruce and I did a lot of work, mounting and marking maps.

Tue Apr 11 Up early, left 5.30 am on leave truck for Pompeii, but got off truck near Naples and hitch-hiked into city, where I had arranged to meet Warwick and John, who had gone to Naples on another leave truck. Met them and had a wander round main part of town – main street cleaner than I had been led to believe, but a maze of narrow filthy lanes leading off it. In afternoon walked round foreshore, and hitch-hiked out of town. Got a lift with an American driver round Bay of Naples past Cape Posilippo, from where we had a lovely view of town and bay. Got off truck and walked out

over causeway to island of Nisida where we saw some landing craft being loaded, and climbed steep path to top of island – pleasant spot to lie in sun, with lots of grass, scrub and olive trees. Hitch-hiked back to Naples and picked up leave truck. Trying three-hour trip home, truck half full of drunks sprawling everywhere. Heard that Scotty Gibson, I truck driver, had dislocated his shoulder and gone to hospital.

Wed Apr 12 Cleared out Scotty's gear in morning, and carried on to clear a lot of junk from truck. In afternoon went on a route march, led by the adjutant (Fred Marett), over Vandra and up hill to village of Fornelli and back. Warwick, John and I broke off on way back and had a bathe in Vandra, cold but lovely and invigorating. Felt great after it. Slight rain at teatime.

Thu Apr 13 Another march in afternoon down Vandra, including a swim in a narrow pool where willow branches hung right over and touched the water, so that we were swimming in a sort of arch. Passed a Cypriot mule company's camp on way, and killed a snake in the vicinity with the co-operation of some of the Cypriots. In evening a race meeting was held at HQ Coy, races being run on the draw of cards. I clubbed in with some of the lads and bought a horse, which romped home a winner with me as the jockey (my job being to shift the peg as the numbers were called). Afterwards had a party on the strength of our victory.

Fri Apr 14 Got a bad shock to hear that Hughie Coombe (pay sergeant) had died suddenly in the night. Fair bit of work to do, including the making out and typing of a sheet of general interest news items for the companies. Had another most enjoyable swim in Vandra with Warwick. In evening went in jeep to Maori Bn, a short distance away along road, and saw mobile picture show 'Dear Octopus', but was not impressed with it.

Sat Apr 15 A good deal of work to do mounting and marking up maps. Gave a bit of map-reading instruction to Stan Wilson of the sigs. Jack Linklater went out sick in evening.

Sun Apr 16 Church parade and communion in morning, first services taken by Padre Talbot. Got some mail, and wrote a few letters. Heard grim details of rough country we were going into on our next stay in line.

Mon Apr 17 In morning went on a recce with transport officer to next area battalion would be occupying. Interesting ride through Colli al Volturmo and Volturmo river gorge to Montaquila, near where the new area was. Mapped lay-out of Bn HQ. Spent evening helping with preparations for battalion race meeting to be held next day, making out totalisator tickets etc.

Tue Apr 18 Had the fun of our lives at the mule race meeting, which was a real success, all the battalion in its most hilarious mood. Went with a swing in spite of two sharp showers during the afternoon. Every race provided uproarious excitement, especially when half the mules would only move in fits and starts, or turned and went the wrong way. Had a flutter on every race, and finished up a little to the good. Altogether a most enjoyable show, more so as I saw several cobbles I had not seen for some time.

Wed Apr 19 A good deal of work to do, jacking up aerial photos and map board in preparation for move into line.

Thu Apr 20 Packed and got ready for move. In morning went with Clarrie Boyd (who was staying back LOB) to new battalion area and showed him its lay-out. Moved off in trucks 5 pm, travelling by the road we had followed when we first came to the area. Stopped and had meal on the side of a steep hill past Venafro. Passed through San Pietro, San Vittore and Cervaro, where we waited until dark, as movement past there was allowed only in the dark. Went at a snail's pace along steep

winding track in pitch dark, and after a hectic ride debussed in a sandy basin at the foot of the hills where they levelled out to the Rapido plain. Marched 4 miles across plain to a lying-up area on the opposite hillside, in a steep rugged spot covered with trees and rocks. Had to hunt for a level bed, and dossed down with John on a little level space among trees. Restless night, plenty of shells coming in (none close) and mosquitoes bad. For first time heard nightingales singing; they kept up a beautiful concert all night.

Fri Apr 21 Lay up in trees all day, enjoyed bask in sunshine, played bridge with the boys and chess with Bruce Tuck. Unwise to move about much, as lying-up area was in view of Montecassino Abbey, so stayed put most of day. Moved at dusk on our climb to forward positions, and had most gruelling clamber up rocky faces along a track built only for mountain goats. Covered 1½ miles in 3 hours, walking in single file with frequent rests. A few mortars falling on hilltops above us as we climbed. We were pretty done when we reached Bn HQ, in a group of houses under the lee of a hill. Relieved a Somersetshire battalion. After some messing round the section got settled into a room midnight.

Sat Apr 22 Warwick and I set out 12.30 am with a Tommy guide to an OP we were to man – Warwick to man it, and I to learn the way. Had ungodly scramble over terribly rough and steep country past C Coy, who were on the lee side of a razorback ridge covered with rocks. As we came near their house we heard movement ahead, so lay low for a few minutes to make sure who it was, but it turned out to be the Tommies C Coy was relieving. OP situated in a rock sangar on top of ridge, and to get into it we had to crawl on hands and knees the last few yards to the entrance between two boulders. Went back to Bn HQ and got to bed 3 am. Spent day organizing room and giving it a very necessary clean. Fleas bad. After dark guided the rest of the section part of the way to the OP. Got to sleep late.

Sun Apr 23 Up 3 am and guided colonel (Dick Connolly) and Ernie Taylor to C Coy HQ, finding a much easier route than the one the Tommy guide had shown us, and then went on with one of the Bn snipers, Laurie Max, to OP, where we spent the day. OP uncomfortable and cramped, and we had to keep our heads well out of sight and peer out through cracks between rocks, but it commanded a grand view over Jerry's ground near Belmonte. Jerry's nearest post was in a house only 80 yards away from us in a horizontal line, but far below us down a vertical slope. OP protected in front by barbed wire, and equipped with plenty of grenades in case of attack. Located flash of a Jerry mortar firing from behind a house, and directed ranging mortar fire on to it. Much artillery activity all day, but Jerry kept very quiet and we could see no movement – we could hear somebody hammering below us off and on, but could not make out where it was coming from. Fleas biting well. Had to wait till well after dark before leaving sangar, and finally left 9 pm and went back to Bn HQ.

Mon Apr 24 Not much doing. Rations not too good, coming up by mule in boxes of ten men's rations each. We did our best with them, heating water on little stands by means of concentrated meths tablets. Had a petrol cooker for bigger cooking jobs. A few mortars came round occasionally. In evening helped to write out war news for companies.

Tue Apr 25 Slept late, and had very little work to do. Used imagination on our rations and made some pretty good concoctions on our cooker, grating biscuits to make porridge, and making stew by mixing up everything in sight. After dark Warwick and I went and drew water from well several hundred yards down hill from Bn HQ – well was notorious as a hot spot, but nothing came over while we were there. Afterwards played chess with Bruce.

Wed Apr 26 Rained on and off all day, and we got a few drips in our room. A few jobs to do, and some more weird and wonderful cookery. A few shells close in afternoon. In evening warmed a meal up for Blam, who came in wet and cold from the OP.

Thu Apr 27 Heavy mortar stonk came over 3 am, and we had to stand to for an hour because of reports of Jerry movement up front. Had to decode long cipher message in morning. Otherwise quiet day, read and played bridge. In evening helped to unload a mule train. Slept badly, as it was hot and some of the lads were making a fair bit of noise.

Fri Apr 28 Up 3.45 am, and spent day out in OP. Observation mainly limited to reporting mortar shoots. Lovely day, and enjoyed sunshine, but had a shock about 6 pm, when someone exploded a grenade nearby.

Sat Apr 29 Uneventful. Read in afternoon, and at dark went to well with Blam and got water.

Sun Apr 30 Still not much doing. Got details of our relief next night. Spent some time listening in to a Jerry who could be overheard through our telephone wires, but he was too faint to distinguish anything.

Mon May 1 Spent day getting ready for move out, packing gear and showing our relief (24 Bn) the ropes.

Tue May 2 Left HQ 12.30 am, and after uneventful but arduous scramble arrived back at lying-up area at foot of hills 3 am, done out. Slept in same spot as we had occupied on our way into line. Heard that 26 Bn was lying up in same area, so Warwick and I went over and saw a lot of old friends, Arthur Chetwin, Tom Lindsay, Archie Austin, Arnold Milburn etc. Spent rest of day playing cards and chess. After a trying wait left 11 pm on walk across Rapido Valley to foot of hills on far side, where we were to embus for our rest area.

Wed May 3 We had just passed St Elia on our walk when we saw a glow in sky ahead, and heard that our trucks were held up by an ammo truck having been set on fire in a narrow track they were using to come in. Waited on roadside till 1.30 am, then finally moved up a narrow lane and embussed 2 am. Moved off along winding zigzag road going steeply uphill through precipitous country. Cold trying ride. Went through Acquafondata, and arrived at rest area near Montaquila (the area I had helped recce previously) 5 am, to find Clarrie Boyd with our bivvies up and a hot drink ready for which we were very grateful. Slept till midday, and got more or less reorganized in afternoon. After tea walked to engineers' area near by, on hillside just below Montaquila, located Verne Jones and spent evening with him.

Thu May 4 In morning went to showers beside Volturno River and washed off a fortnight's accumulated grime. Got issued with summer gear in afternoon and John and I improved the layout of our bivvy. Verne came over in evening, and a party of us went to mobile pictures to see 'The Man in Grey' – good show.

Fri May 5 Went with a truckload of the boys, officially on a provost job but actually to have a look round, to Campobasso where we spent a most enjoyable day poking round town. Cleanest and nicest town I had seen in Italy, in lovely surroundings, built in a dip between hills and on the lower slopes of one hill. Clarrie Boyd and I went up this hill to a castle on top and had a wonderful view over rolling country with all the colour of spring in it. Had a lot of fun in YMCA restaurant when one of the boys, Mac Taylor, put on a spectacular alcoholic exhibition of acrobatics, accompanied by the orchestra. Had wild drive home through Isernia, which we found to be much more battered than it had appeared from outside.

Sat May 6 Spent morning rehearsing ceremonial parade we were to hold for Gen Freyberg, and finished up feeling very fed up. After lunch went to showers and felt much fresher afterwards. Heard bad news that our colonel, Dick Connolly, had had a car smash and was severely injured. Got some mail.

Sun May 7 Went out in morning to recce track over hills behind our camp for the battalion to go route marching, and ensure it free from mines. Took a party from minesweeping platoon along, but didn't find any. In afternoon went with Blam and Bruce Tuck and had a swim in Volturmo – swift current, hard to keep our feet, but cold and invigorating. Got news that Bruce and I were going on a short leave to Campobasso, so jacked up gear after tea, and wrote some letters.

Mon May 8 Left 11 am for Campobasso, and got there 2 pm after trying ride in crowded truck. Went to Tommy rest camp in a big building, fairly good quarters in a basement equipped with double-decker bunks, and a lot of unaccustomed amenities. Strolled round town, in afternoon, listened to orchestra in YMCA restaurant, and spent evening playing darts and billiards with Frank Edwards in club recreation room.

Tue May 9 Had another wander round with boys (Bruce, Frank, Dick Cordes and Percy Kimble), and were taken by a small boy to a private house in a back street, where we had some lovely muscatel wine. In afternoon went for a ride in a horse cab round town, and did a bit more exploring. Went with Frank Edwards to a symphony recital in evening, expecting it to be an orchestral show, but were disappointed as it was only a gramophone recital. Felt cheated.

Wed May 10 Did a bit of shopping, and had another wander round with Frank just outside town, where a family mistook us for spies because I took a photo of town. Had game of billiards with Frank in evening.

Thu May 11 Left Campobasso 9.30 am with many regrets, and got back to the battalion midday after a good trip. Found 12 letters waiting for me. Fair bit of work in afternoon, including repairs to writing shelf in back of I truck, the hinges of which had given way. Wrote letters in evening, and heard a big barrage in distance 11 pm, as a big-scale attack went in.

Fri May 12 Blam and I had a job setting up some maps in morning for a lecture given by our new colonel, Lt Col Blundell, who gave us a good talk, including some straight criticism of mistakes made in Cassino attack. Had a big day writing letters. Heard of our next move up into line in a few days' time. Got occasional progress reports of big attack, news not so good in evening. Ewart Hay came back from hospital.

Sat May 13 Got a fit of energy and did a bit of cleaning out in truck before breakfast. In afternoon went to improvised open-air theatre near by and saw Kiwi Concert Party's show, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Found two scorpions among clothes in bivvy in afternoon. Wrote more letters.

Sun May 14 Church service and communion in morning. In afternoon took a map board round companies to give them the latest news of the battle front, and got a good hearing, everybody eager for news.

Mon May 15 More good news of progress of big attack from time to time during day. Fair bit of work to do in preparation for move into line next day. In afternoon played a most vigorous game of basketball, I Sec v drivers, and got well beaten, but enthusiastic to work up a good I team. In evening started to teach Warwick to play chess. Saw a Jerry air raid up front 10 pm, and had to put out our own lights.

Tue May 16 A lot of work to do marking up map boards ready for move. Packed up after lunch, and were just finishing when a storm that had been threatening broke, and rained like fury for two hours, with vivid lightning – one flash hit a truck nearby and gave Clarrie Boyd a severe shock. I Sec was on a terrace just under a stone dyke, and cascades of water came downhill on to us, taking Warwick's bivvy and I truck in their stride, and lean-to behind truck was converted into a shambles, with 4 inches of water rushing through it, and everybody falling over each other trying to rescue gear and piling it in a sodden heap in truck. Rain over by teatime, and we had to finish packing in a desperate hurry. Left in trucks 6 pm, and travelled by a road our engineers had made through hills, through Filignano, and Acquafondata, where we waited till dark. Went along hill road through our artillery positions, guns firing all the time. Finally debussed at foot of hills 11 pm, and walked the same way as we had come out, through St Elia across plain to lying-up area. Dossed down immediately.

Wed May 17 Big barrage started at dawn and went on all day. One dud shell landed short in our vicinity. Lounged round in sun till 2 pm, when rain came on suddenly, just like it had the day before. Violent rain, thunder and lightning for over three hours, and we had no shelter and could do nothing but stand there and take it, wearing our anti-gas capes as raincoats. I stuffed my blanket under my cape, and looked a most intriguing shape, but it kept the blanket reasonably dry even though the rest of me got well soaked. Some of the boys sheltered in an old Jerry dugout in the side of a little gully, but found themselves marooned, as the gully was transformed into a raging torrent. Left area 8 pm, minus Clarrie Boyd, who went out crook. Climbed mountain side by a new track, fair going but very steep, and for the last part floundered through greasy mud a few steps at a time, with long halts while the people in front got going again. Had a particularly long stop just at the spot where supplies were always transferred from jeep to mule, and didn't feel happy about it, as Jerry was always shelling this place, but he laid off while we were there. Climb took four hours altogether – arrived Bn HQ, in a house on the crest of a hill to which we had to crawl up a stony slope, at midnight. Relieved 26 Bn.

Thu May 18 Bedded down as soon as might be, and I was deep in slumber when I was awakened 3.30 am by Dick Harrison (the IO) to interrogate a Jerry prisoner. Escorted him downhill to Bde HQ, halfway down the way we had come up, and interpreted further there. On way back passed Arthur Chetwin and Tom Lindsay going out with 26 Bn. Got back 5.30 am well done out, and dossed down with Mac Taylor in two blankets (his and mine) on a three-ply board 4 feet by 2 feet, propped up on two boxes to avoid the water on the floor, as the room leaked. In afternoon cleaned out room and dried it somewhat. Big job in evening, marking up aerial photos, and then played chess with Bruce.

Fri May 19 A few Jerry mortar bombs falling round. Light rain lasted all afternoon. Had to do a fair bit of work on traces. In evening had a yarn with Ken Paterson, who was up with us on OP work. Went out in evening with mule train to D Coy out front, to spend a day there and have a look at the ground Jerry was occupying. Got out there in quiet interval between two Jerry mortar stonks, over rough stony track ending in a steep pinch to D Coy HQ.

Sat May 20 Before dawn went out to a platoon with D Coy commander (Don Grant) who showed me as much as could be seen of the country, not much in the pitch dark. We had to get back to Coy HQ before dawn, because it wasn't wise to move round in daylight. Spent part of day in artillery OP in ruined top storey of D Coy HQ's house, having a good look through a periscope at Jerry's country round hill town of Terelle and Mount Cairo. In afternoon deciphered some very rough sketches showing booby trap positions on our front. After dark went to another platoon with Don Grant, another scramble further up hill, and again peered out to Jerry's positions but could not see anything. Went back to Bn HQ 11 pm, wasting no time on way. As I was passing our mortar positions

they unexpectedly opened up almost in my face, and I got such a shock I nearly fell downhill the rest of the way home. Bruce left in evening for a tour of duty at Maadi, and John Harrison (who had been on leave) arrived up midnight, very disgruntled at having to come up.

Sun May 21 Bit of work to do, and did some cipher practice. Jerry put over a lot of mortars in evening.

Mon May 22 A few jobs, but spent most of day playing cards; rain on and off in afternoon and evening.

Tue May 23 Noisy day, Jerry landing a lot of stuff round. Went with John Harrison and got a can of water out of a big shell-hole some way downhill. A few routine jobs, including a cipher message to decode.

Wed May 24 Most sustained day's shelling I had experienced, Jerry plastering all round our house, some heavy mortars very close. Hard at work all day with cipher messages, traces and aerial photos. A lot of talk about an attack on Terelle in which we were to take part, which might come off any time.

Thu May 25 Very quiet, in contrast to preceding day. Lot of work in preparation for advance on Terelle, and much speculation as to whether it was taking place or not. Advance began in evening, and I had busy time in HQ room, writing up in I log progress of action, which met no opposition.

Fri May 26 Went to bed 2.30 am expecting to move forward any time after daylight. Disappointed in this. Wrote up some of war diary in afternoon, and had a lot of work in evening, because Ewart Hay and Blam went up front to a Tac HQ, and I had to hold the fort.

Sat May 27 John Harrison and I packed up and left with Ewart Hay for forward HQ in morning. Went in jeep along Terelle road and along rough track through hills towards Belmonte. Arrived midday at a house, but soon shifted on from there round a steep hillside and found Lt Col McPhail and Tac HQ on the hillside overlooking Belmonte. Saw Ken Paterson again and had a yarn. Heard that we were moving on to next town of Atina that afternoon, and from where we were we had a good position to watch progress of advance, companies again meeting no opposition. Bn HQ went forward 4 pm, along a rough hill track where no transport except jeeps could go, and these had a tough time in one place where Jerry had blown the track. With a bit of ingenuity in bridging the gap they got past. Went downhill through tiny hamlet of Vaccareccia to the main road running up the valley we had previously been able to overlook from our OP a month before. Did not reach Atina, but searched for a good spot to doss down for the night, and found one in an old Jerry regimental HQ in a group of three houses and dugouts, where we got a bit of loot. Dugouts well constructed under the houses, and also in a rock cliff on the other side of the road, where Jerry had had a telephone exchange, judging by the gear lying around. After a lot of rushing round and a general mix-up we got settled in houses. Had to guard two prisoners who said they were Russians – certainly they knew even less German than I did. John and I spent our picquet shift (11-1) playing cards. Lay in luxury on a spring bed, but fleas kept me awake.

Sun May 28 Yarned to best of my ability with Russians, in morning, and questioned some more Jerries who came in. Rest of Bn HQ arrived later in day, and Blam and Warwick rejoined us. Moved off in early afternoon and went to Atina, a mile or two further on round the shoulder of a hill. Here we got good quarters in basement of a once palatial mansion, now well smashed. Lot of work to do sorting maps and questioning Italian refugees and Jerry prisoners. Got further news of successful advance past River Melfa (which ran just below Atina) towards next village of Alvito.

Mon May 29 Busy day on telephone and yarning to all sorts and conditions of people – Jerry prisoners, Italian refugees (some speaking weird and wonderful English), escaped English prisoners etc. Had to listen to voluble tales of woe and conflicting items of information, including a long story by Chief of Liberation Committee of Alvito, who wanted to place his force at our disposal. No time to see much of Atina, which seemed to be a nice town in ruins. Heard in evening that we were moving forward again next morning.

Tue May 30 Left 9 am. Went down winding road from Atina, travelling in a close convoy. Crossed Melfa River, went through fields and vineyards along pretty country road, and halted a few miles on in staging area in a paddock a little way in from the road. Had lovely bath in a little creek. 11am we were just making a cup of cocoa when our peace was rudely shattered by the worst bout of shelling I had been in – worst because it came like a bolt from the blue when we were not expecting any such thing, but were taking it easy in the sun. Shells came from a slow gun, and we could hear them coming for seconds before they landed, which made it more terrifying still. I dived under the bank of the creek among some brambles, and got thoroughly scratched on chest and arms. Battalion took advantage of a lull (after we had been pinned down for an hour) to clear out a few at a time to another area a few miles back, and we were just about to leave when we had to dive for cover again. Most of the section were already on a truck, so sat tight and got out, but Warwick, Friday Jones and I missed truck and scattered. We ran to shelter of a house up a little lane, one shell bursting between us on the way – I thought Warwick had been hit, and he thought I had. Stayed in house, crouching in a hole in the floor until shelling stopped, then walked across country to new area, partly guessing the way, though we had been told more or less where it was to be. Rested from time to time at farmhouses on way. Found Bn HQ 2 pm as they were about to send a search party out for us. Area this time was in yard of a disused factory. Had sunbathe by Melba River, and tried to have a swim, but water was so cold that I only stayed in a few seconds. Began to feel crook in afternoon, and got so bad that I went and saw the doctor 9 pm, when the battalion was getting ready to go forward again. He sent me back to MDS at Atina by jeep, feeling very cheap, and from there I was packed straight back to another MDS near Cassino.

Wed May 31 Arrived MDS 1 am, done out after a trying two-hour ambulance ride, and was thankful to crawl into bed. Had bad diarrhoea. Inspected by doctor in morning, and put on fluid diet. In afternoon Peter Fraser visited MDS, and had a few words with us. Lounged round all day and slept for some time.

Thu Jun 1 Still on fluid diet, but feeling better, and got very hungry towards evening.

Fri Jun 2 Put on light diet, and very glad to eat something again. In afternoon strolled over to Cassino, two miles away, and had good look at remains. Whole town completely shattered. On way had grand dip in a swimming hole by roadside.

Sat Jun 3 Feeling OK again, but still on light diet. In afternoon wandered around countryside and had another dip. Got sudden call in evening for us all to pack up and go back to CCS as MDS was to shift. Very wild about this, as I had hoped to get straight back to the battalion. Arrived CCS near Presenzano 10 pm in no very pleasant frame of mind.

Sun Jun 4 In morning had a look at war cemetery near CCS, and saw graves of several cobbers. Very pleased when doctor said he would send me back to unit without going through hospital – which I felt was absolutely unnecessary anyway. Left CCS 2 pm in a truck and went to reinforcement camp several miles further back down Route 6, in a spare paddock near Riardo, where we settled in

with prospect of waiting a few days for transport. In evening went over to a Canadian camp near by and saw Kiwi Concert Party's show.

Mon Jun 5 A few of us asked the CO of the camp for leave to go to Naples, and he said that although chaps waiting for transport were not usually granted leave, he would let us go with the camp staff leave party if we promised to be good boys. Went to both Naples and Pompeii and had a poke round ruins and saw a lot I had missed first time, as this time I didn't need a guide. Visited new Welfare Club in part of Royal Palace in Naples – luxurious place with all comforts. On way went through a lot of the city in truck, and had a good look round. In evening went to pictures over at Canadian camp, and saw 'The Hard Way'.

Tue Jun 6 Had a walk round in morning, and a knock round at cricket in afternoon. Went to pictures in evening, saw 'Road to Morocco' and got a good laugh. Heard King George's speech on occasion of invasion of France.

Wed Jun 7 In morning went for a long walk through lanes and cornfields beside railway line passing the camp. Got back to hear that I was moving out after lunch to go back to the battalion. Left with some more of the lads 1 pm on a truck; I sat up behind the cab as usual. Travelled through Cassino, Belmonte, Atina, and got to 23 Bn, a little way off main road at Posta, 4 pm. Found I Sec cosily installed in a house, and two new members, Rex Stoneman and Jack Mettrick. Told I was to be promoted to Cpl. and act as I Sgt, as Blam was going on a course. He left 8 pm. Later we saw a screening of a medical film in the open air near our billet, sitting on a little rise overlooking a flat piece of ground alive with fireflies – a lovely sight.

Thu Jun 8 Brig Stewart gave us a talk on war situation. Had a lot of work with maps in morning, and checked up war diary. Got more into stride of new job.

Fri Jun 9 In morning went to Bde HQ, and had an interesting 3-hour lecture on aerial photos. Spent afternoon clearing a lot of junk out of I truck. In evening Warwick and I went for a walk past a small lake near by; lovely evening, a lot of bats flying round, and fireflies very lively.

Sat Jun 10 Went up hill to village of Posta, and spent morning giving Rex and Jack a run over some of the I jobs. Handed over aerial photos to Rex. Jack Bickley came over and spent afternoon yarning with us.

Sun Jun 11 Church service and communion in morning. Got 7 parcels. Rained on and off all day.

Mon Jun 12 Gave the section a talk on aerial photos in morning, and did a bit of revision of codes. In afternoon went with Ewart Hay in jeep through Sora and down Liri gorge to recce a new area near Arce we were to move to next day. Enjoyable drive through lovely country, but a lot of messing round when we got to the area, Major McPhail (2 i/c) trying to make up his mind where the companies were to go. In evening Warwick, John Harrison and I went for a stroll round lake, and saw a flour mill working.

Tue Jun 13 Packed up ready for move, and left 4 pm on I jeep, travelling through Sora and the Liri Gorge to new area. Helped to guide Bn HQ trucks into position. Got installed and set up bivvy with John in a pleasant spot under trees beside a country track. Heard we were to marshal another convoy which was bringing the rest of the battalion in, and got everything prepared and a turning place for the trucks arranged.

Wed Jun 14 Convoy came in 1.30 am, and everything went off without a hitch. A few jobs during day, including making a sketch map of the area. Saw some abandoned Jerry guns, one blown up, at various points round the battalion's area. Jack Bickley paid us a visit in afternoon.

Thu Jun 15 Busy morning giving the section a refresher on scales. In evening went with some of the boys in jeep to a South African concert party's show a short distance away along the lanes; thoroughly enjoyed it. Saw Jack Bickley and Gordon Conway there. They came back and had supper and a yarn with us.

Fri Jun 16 Spent morning on cipher practice, and in afternoon had a bath and felt grand after it. Had a talk from Lt Col Thomas on the war situation. Some old friends from 26 Bn wandered over and saw us.

Sat Jun 17 Did a bit of message writing practice. In afternoon Jack Linklater and Monty McClymont came back to the section, and got a mild house-warming. Went to Div HQ in evening and marked up map boards, and went round to main road in jeep and saw two knocked-out Panther tanks. Had small party in evening.

Sun Jun 18 Woke 1 am to hear rain pelting down, and John busy digging a trench outside. Heavy rain continued on and off all day, and we had to evacuate our beds in a hurry, because a stream was coming through bivvy. Church parade in morning. Kept busy improving system of drains round bivvy, and played chess with Monty McClymont. Vivid lightning and thunder in evening.

Mon Jun 19 Went for route march along country roads in morning. After lunch played more chess with Monty, and had a visit from Arthur Chetwin, Sid Gaudin and Tom Lindsay, and a good chin-wag. Rain on and off in afternoon.

Tue Jun 20 Went with some of the boys in jeep on a practice road recce up Liri valley through Fontana Liri, then off main road and up hills to Arpino, and from there along hill road to little town of Santo Padre, up among the hills miles from nowhere. Went up to a hilltop above the town and examined an abandoned Jerry anti-aircraft gun. Carried on along a rough track with some hair-raising slopes, half the time going across fields, and reached main road by Arce. Home late for lunch. Busy in afternoon writing out messages for a battalion wireless exercise to be held next day. Jack Linklater went out crook again. In evening Warwick and I visited Arthur Chetwin and the boys at 26 Bn, and found a party in progress, so sat in on it, and had a great evening.

Wed Jun 21 Spent morning out on wireless exercise, an imaginary attack with all sorts of situations cropping up. Kept busy writing up log, as messages kept coming in thick and fast. In afternoon played chess with Monty. Went in evening to mobile picture show, 'Let's Face It'.

Thu Jun 22 Went over to 26 Bn and spent afternoon with their I Sec. In evening went a stroll with Warwick and John and called at MDS to see Jack Linklater, who said he was coming back to section next day.

Fri Jun 23 Went out in jeep on a resection exercise, and had interesting drive along Route 6 for a short distance, and then along hill road through Strangolagalli. Saw some abandoned Jerry guns on way. Went down and had shower by River Liri. In evening played chess with Monty, and went to see a very poor picture programme.

Sat Jun 24 Big day roaring round in jeep – in morning went to Roccasecca and watched a tank exercise, and in afternoon went for a jaunt with the boys. Climbed winding road to Rocca d'Arce, and had wonderful view over Liri valley. Went down Route 6 to Cassino and had a good look over the

ruins, running into a rain shower on the way and getting home just on teatime. Sharp thunder shower in evening.

Sun Jun 25 Had to go out with an expedition a company strong sent to look for some Jerries who had been reported to be hiding in the hills. Went through Sora and Balsorano along a road through a narrow valley to village of Civitellaroveto, and established HQ there. I kept I log and occasionally took over the wireless set. Had good position on a bank, where we could see the company climbing a steep hill, but rain set in in afternoon, and we moved into local police station. Patrol returned 7 pm with no success. On way home we had an unsuccessful attempt to pull a truck out of a demolition where it had stuck. Got home 10 pm.

Mon Jun 26 Had to go back to Civitellaroveto to take some food to Italians who had helped us previous day. Had an interview with the local chief of police (a Fascist), and our interpreter browbeat him somewhat about his duty to hand over Germans or Fascists. Jeep followed through town by a horde of small boys. Back 5.30 pm, having passed some Russians escaped from German hands, who were going to English HQ. Played chess with Monty in evening.

Tue Jun 27 Remounted situation maps we had on display in YMCA marquee, otherwise not much doing. Wrote letters in evening.

Wed Jun 28 Went out with the boys in jeep and checked our compasses – we were going to make an outing of it while we were out, but were stopped by a blown causeway over a lake on the road we took. Warwick came back from leave. Had a day out visiting; saw Watson Rosevear in afternoon and Verne Jones in evening, after a long trek through a factory grounds at Fontana Liri looking for him.

Thu Jun 29 Spent morning on Codex practice, and in afternoon ran off a pile of rifle targets on a duplicating machine. Yarned with Warwick and Ewart Hay in I truck in evening, including a lot of hilarious reminiscences.

Fri Jun 30 Had a good morning's shoot at range by Monte Grande, including a lot of tommy-gun practice. Felt a bit off colour in afternoon, and decidedly crook in evening.

Sat Jul 1 Still feeling a bit off, so laid off the tucker. Typed out BBC news for the companies, and had a day out typing the month's war diary. Felt better in evening.

Sun Jul 2 Up 4.30 am, and went on leave to Rome with John Harrison. Had grand day's sightseeing, and was much impressed by city in every respect. In morning went with guided tour to Pantheon and St Peter's, and after lunch on another trip to Colosseum, Capitol and Forum Romanum, Janiculum (where we had a magnificent view of Rome). Castle of St Angelo, Mussolini's Stadium, and Mt Pincius with its lovely gardens. Went for stroll with John in late afternoon past Quirinal Palace and round the Victor Emanuel monument, Piazza Venezia and to other interesting spots, many of them with ancient associations. Fed in NZ Club in Hotel Quirinale. Left 10 pm on truck, and had tiring trip home. Altogether a memorable day.

Mon Jul 3 Clarrie Boyd came to see us, and told us he had a job in the NZ Club, so would not be coming back to the section. Went with the boys to Fontana Liri and had most enjoyable swim in baths in a ruined factory grounds.

Tue Jul 4 Got monthly war diary all fixed up and sent away, and very glad to get rid of it. Sharp shower in afternoon. Played chess with Monty.

Wed Jul 5 Cleaned out truck in morning. Very tender boil on my leg, which made me limp badly.

Thu Jul 6 Still very lame, and kept walking down to a minimum. Played more chess. Small party in evening.

Fri Jul 7 Had to go out sick with boil on my leg, which was very painful. Went to MDS nearby, and from there by ambulance to CCS some miles past Frosinone. Had shower in afternoon, and with rest and hot packs my leg felt much easier.

Sat Jul 8 Not much doing – read and had a game of cards. Heard in evening that the Div was moving again, and the CCS was to get rid of all patients. In spite of my protests, the doctor said I was to go to hospital.

Sun Jul 9 Met Ian Buckley and had a yarn with him. Left CCS 8 am, and went by ambulance through teeming rain to 2 NZGH at Caserta, changing to a Tommy ambulance near Cassino. Arrived 2 GH midday. Luxury to get on a bed and between sheets again, but counterbalanced by irritation at being away from unit.

Mon Jul 10 Got a lot of stuff out of my leg, and relieved it a lot. Read, loafed and played patience all day.

Tue Jul 11 Leg much better, but still rested it as much as possible. Monotonous day.

Wed Jul 12 Same sort of day, reading and playing patience. Heavy rain in afternoon.

Thu Jul 13 Told I was going back to 3 GH at Bari. Very disgusted to find I was going as a lying case, although perfectly able to walk. Left hospital 5 pm. Put on ambulance train at Caserta station, and after long wait left 9 pm. Glad I was a lying case after all, because stretcher was comfortable, and I slept well, though cold.

Fri Jul 14 Had long wait in train at Barletta, and got to Bari 11 am, arriving 3 GH midday by ambulance. Had shower, and got settled in a pleasant ward on the top floor, which was a sort of convalescent ward. Had leg dressed.

Sat Jul 15 Allowed to get dressed and wander round. In evening found that hospital chapel contained a harmonium, so went in (it was very near our ward) and had a good play, spoilt by the arrival of three ‘heartily’ religious South Africans, who insisted on kneeling down for a long pray there and then. I left quietly in the middle of it.

Sun Jul 16 Went to early communion in chapel. Spent day wandering round and recceing, and went to evensong at hospital area church.

Mon Jul 17 Started going to mess room downstairs for meals instead of having them brought up to ward. Still a bit of trouble with leg.

Tue Jul 18 Saw one or two cobbers round the place. Went to see Kiwi Concert Party show in hospital grounds in evening.

Wed Jul 19 Not much doing. Got some mail.

Thu Jul 20 Went with up patients of our ward with the sister and nurses for a day at the sea near Polignano, south of Bari. Had grand day swimming and sunbathing in a little cove – a welcome break. Back 4.30. Leg well mended by now, feeling very fit.

Fri Jul 21 Heard I was going out to Advance Base next day. Gave a hand with getting meals for bed patients.

Sat Jul 22 Got ready to move out in morning, and after a lot of messing round left by truck 2.30 pm for Advance Base. Went to Base Reception on arrival there. In evening met a lot of friends, including some who had come down to go home on furlough.

Sun Jul 23 Had very brief medical inspection, and typhus inoculation. After lunch went a stroll along Taranto road. Went to song service in Lowry Hut in evening, and had a good sing.

Mon Jul 24 Dental examination in morning. Met more old friends, including Geoff Phelan, John Conway and Reg Howe. Geoff invited me into official Archives office, where I had a look round and got an idea how the show worked. Heard Monty McClymont was coming down to take up a job there.

Tue Jul 25 Marched out of Base Reception to Infantry Reinforcement Depot, where I met more coppers. Landed job as corporal of Field Punishment Centre guard first go. Went on guard 6 pm, and had to stay awake most of the night to change shifts.

Wed Jul 26 Came off picquet 6.30 am, and spent day reading, writing letters and loafing.

Thu Jul 27 Went to dentist and had several teeth filled. Spent rest of day doing nothing.

Fri Jul 28 Had job of Depot Orderly Cpl, and had to stay in orderly room all day. Some excitement in afternoon, when ammunition dump near by caught fire and started exploding all over the place. Things got a bit hectic, with shrapnel falling pretty thickly – not at all what is expected at a base camp – and caused quite a scare in camp. Slept in orderly room.

Sat Jul 29 Went on leave to Bari and had quiet day. In morning wandered round shops and market area with Dave Selby, and in afternoon loafed round NZ Club and went a walk along waterfront. Home 5.30 pm, and went to listen to a quiz evening in Lowry Hut. Heard very bad news about 23 Bn's latest casualties.

Sun Jul 30 Went to service to Lowry Hut in morning, and after lunch went out with a truckload of chaps past Mottola to Chiatona beach, some miles from Taranto, and enjoyed a swim in lovely warm water. Pleasure marred by oil floating on water, which had to be dodged continually. On way back walked from beach to a tomato garden by the roadside, got a pocketful, and then got a lift back to camp in a pick-up, which took a roundabout way through Castellaneta. Went to song service in evening, then had a play on piano in Lowry Hut.

Mon Jul 31 Went on parade 6 am, and had to take over a platoon temporarily. Supposed to do training, but got sick of it and wandered away. In afternoon went unofficially into Bari and ate ice cream at NZ Club. Played chess in evening with a chap I met in Lowry Hut.

Tue Aug 1 Supposed to go on route march, but didn't. Very pleased to hear I was going up on a draft in a few days. Played chess in Lowry Hut, and listened to concert by an Italian orchestra. A lot of excitement about 10 pm, when a new crowd arrived from Egypt, among them Jim Whitlow. Had a touching reunion with him.

Wed Aug 2 Went to Bari, and had a good day strolling round with Ewen Wilson and eating ice cream. Town full of chaps I knew, including Neville Colvin. Back 8 pm, and went to see impromptu show by Kiwi Concert Party.

Thu Aug 3 Not much doing – messed round with Jim Whitlow most of day. Went to hear camp concert party in evening; fair enough show.

Fri Aug 4 Did nothing industriously all morning, then hitch-hiked to Bari and had final go at ice cream. Listened to quiz and lecture by a Polish officer on 'Central European Federation'. Went to late evening communion in padre's tent.

Sat Aug 5 Got ready to move out with draft, and got away midday. Went to Bari in crowded trucks, and packed into a train of luggage vans, all crammed to the doors. Got well messed round and had to shift twice; finally got away 4.30 pm. Slow trip, long stops at San Spirito, Bisceglie and Berletta (8.30 pm). Lot of fun with boys boiling billy beside train and making things as comfortable as possible, which wasn't much. Slept with 7 others in a compartment 6 feet square which was normally the guard's compartment; I occupied a small desk in a corner with my feet away up high, which was necessary to get them in. Gear piled in pigeon holes round walls. Rain on and off in evening, and roof leaked a bit. Slept fitfully.

Sun Aug 6 Up very early. Arrived Benevento 7 am, boiled up beside train and had breakfast. Had a lot of fun on trip, augmenting rations with tomatoes and blackberries from beside line, and boiling up hurriedly at stops every now and again. Had very awkward job helping to distribute rations at Caserta, where we stayed from midday to 4 pm. While there saw a full-dress religious procession passing along road – we lined wall of railway yard to have a look. Seized opportunity to have a shower under engine hose, and was in the middle of it when the train suddenly moved off. Had to grab my clothes and rush to rejoin train in the nude. After slow trip arrived Cassino 8 pm, and I felt very important telling the boys (mostly newcomers) about the fighting there. Had supper at Roccasecca, where we stopped in pitch dark. Again slept on and off.

Mon Aug 7 Woke to find we were in railway yards on outskirts of Rome. Shifted to another yard, and stayed there till 2 pm, when we set off again in a thunderstorm. Van leaked considerably. Line and main road north of Rome pock-marked with bomb craters, evidence of our air strength. Detrained at Stimigliano siding 6 pm, and went in trucks to NZ Reinforcement Camp near Highway 3. Saw 'Winter Time' screened by mobile cinema. Slept in tents where we could find room.

Tue Aug 8 Up early and left in 3-ton trucks 7 am. Crowded truck, and I sat on top of canopy all day and got smothered in dust. Went along Highway 2 through lively wooded country past Sutri, through Viterbo, skirted Lake Bolsena and Tuscan plain. Got into bare hills round Radicofani, and stopped for lunch in a field infested with locusts. Went a detour over horribly dusty roads to Siena, and from there on Highway 2 again through Poggibonsi, catching a distant glimpse of Lake Trasimera. Went through San Casciano, and on to winding roads, and spent some time searching for 23 Bn. Got lost and finished up after dark at 5 Bde HQ, and from there found our way to 23 Bn B Ech at 11 pm, tired out. Heard that the boys were in the line. Found I truck, and slept in a little tent beside it with Gordon Howat and Monty McClymont.

Wed 9 Aug Spent morning sorting out my gear. Heard I would go up to Bn HQ that day, and got word to move 2 pm, interrupting a game of chess with Monty. Went in jeep to Bn HQ in a house on a hilltop, and had boisterous reunion with the boys. Had to interrogate a Jerry prisoner and an Italian who brought some information. Prepared to shift to new HQ in readiness for an attack. Mortars landed round house 7 pm, as we were about to get ready to leave. Went off in jeep 8.30 to house in little village of Bastia, on a hillock overlooking Arno River.

Thu Aug 10 Did shift on I log beside telephone 12.30-1.30 am. Had to shift quarters to a room upstairs, and went crook because we had just got nicely settled into a downstairs room. A lot of

work with traces and preparations for attack at night, and another phone shift in afternoon. House full of nice furniture and two pianos, both out of tune.

Fri Aug 11 Shift on log 5-7 am, and learnt that attack had gone off well, right to Arno with only 2 or 3 casualties. Busy morning interviewing Italians coming in with various tales of woe, and a few prisoners. Did a bit of letter-writing. Another shift 3-5 pm.

Sat Aug 12 Wakened by heavy shells landing somewhere round in small hours. Not much doing all day, except a shift on log in afternoon. Heard that Jim Whitlow had come up with a draft, and was coming back to the section.

Sun Aug 13 Up 6 am and went on shift till 8. Jim came up to see us with breakfast jeep. Not much doing all day, except arguments going on in our room. Another shift 6-8 pm. A lot of shelling in evening, but nothing near us.

Mon Aug 14 Another quiet day with a two-hour shift on log. Pleased to hear we were to be relieved next night. Place full of American officers of the crowd who were taking over from us. Monty came up to see us, and I had a game of chess with him.

Tue Aug 15 Same sort of day. Got packed and ready for relief, and left with the boys in jeep 4 pm for B Ech. Went a stroll round lanes with the boys in evening. Packed most of gear on truck for a move back to a rest area.

Wed Aug 16 Snatched a few hours' sleep, got up 2 am, finished packing truck and left 3 am on convoy back. Travelled on top of truck with John Harrison. Good trip, somewhat dusty, through Castelfiorentino and over lovely hill country through vineyards and oak woods. Arrived in new area near village of Ligliano, with a lovely view south towards Siena, and got jacked up for our stay there – erected bivvy with John, and put up lean-to behind truck. A new member, Tom Hay, joined us. In evening had a small send-off for Monty, who was leaving next morning for Advance Base on a new job. Very sorry to be losing him.

Thu Aug 17 Had thorough clean-out of truck, and got rid of a lot of junk. Spent afternoon on a hunt round the district for wine for the battalion, with the messing officer (George Lawrence) and Tom Hay as interpreter. Went to villages of Poggibonsi and Barberino, where we got on the track of a wine merchant and got casks filled at a farm. Lot of fun with Tom's vigorous interpreting and bargaining. Came home via Castellina, back 3 pm.

Fri Aug 18 Battalion parade 9 am to hear a very poor address from Major McPhail, acting commander. Rain on and off for most of day, and I had a crook stomach, so spent most of time in bivvy. Was supposed to act as Clerk of the Course at a company race meeting, but was feeling so crook that I didn't go. Went to bed very early.

Sat Aug 19 Feeling a new man. Helped to dictate war diary for typing, otherwise very little doing. In evening had a very pleasant walk with Fred Ward, Bn clerk, through lanes and hills round about the camp.

Sun Aug 20 Went to church service in morning, and to memorial service for those who had been killed in evening. Played bridge with the boys in lean-to behind truck till 11 pm.

Mon Aug 21 Had another spring-clean of truck and weapons. Saw an accident in morning just below us, a truck going over a bank; several people hurt but not seriously. In evening went a short stroll in the trees with Warwick and John.

Tue Aug 22 Left 7.30 am for a two-day rest at the beach on the west coast, where all the battalion was going in turn. Dusty trip through Colle d'Elsa and Volterra, and arrived at our area near Cecina 11.30 am. Lovely spot in thick pine plantations; spent most of day swimming with the boys at the beach (only a few hundred yards from where we were camped) and playing the fool in all sorts of ways in the water, which was beautifully calm, warm and buoyant. In evening went to a picture show (open-air) at a Yank ambulance station close by, and saw 'The Iron Major'.

Wed Aug 23 Went for a swim before breakfast. Afterwards we all piled on I jeep (nine of us) and went to village of Vada a few miles away, where we hired a couple of boats and had a most wonderful morning rowing and swimming, and diving off an old hulk a little distance out to sea into lovely clear deep water. Ate a lot of grapes and plums. Left there 12.30, and took a trip up coast road through Castiglioncello, past a lot of very nice seaside villas and some beautiful coastal scenery, to the top of a hill overlooking Leghorn. City looked very nice stretched out below us on a big plain, which had a smoke screen over it, as it was still in the fighting area. Went back to a Yank Red Cross Club at Castiglioncello and had lunch, then back to our own area, had another swim and left for Ligiano 5 pm. Got back 8 pm after another dusty trip.

Thu Aug 24 Had to dress up and go on dusty three-tonners to a place a few miles away, where we lined the road to see Winston Churchill pass. Nearly had a serious accident on the way, when an overhead telephone wire caught Archie Beaton, one of the chaps on our truck, across the throat. Luckily the wire broke. Back 2 pm. Hot enervating afternoon.

Fri Aug 25 Busy morning jacking up a new unit code and getting out route traces for a forthcoming move across Italy to the east coast. In afternoon saw and thoroughly enjoyed a Kiwi Concert Party show not far from our camp. Had a job getting together a Bn HQ team for an inter-company quiz in evening, and I took the subject of religion. We came a close second. Good bridge session in lean-to until 11 pm.

Sat Aug 26 Another very hot day. In afternoon a crowd of us piled into jeep and went for a trip to Siena. Had a tour round the town, and climbed the Town Hall tower, from where we had a wonderful view over the town and country round about. Bought a big water-melon and had a lot of fun with it in the jeep going home.

Sun Aug 27 Went to church service and communion. Packed truck ready for move across Italy to Adriatic side, and had a bit of sleep. Left 4.30 pm, travelling in front of I truck. Passed Siena and travelled on main road to San Quirico, then on winding dusty roads eastwards. Skirted north edge of Lake Trasimene about midnight, and had lovely glimpse of the lake in the moonlight from a rise on its north shore, with the convoy lights visible for miles along the road running along the water's edge. Near Perugia had to stop and refill petrol tank, as one tank was not feeding. Awkward job in dark without a proper filler – took a long time, and then spilt half of it. Had to go flat out in pitch dark to catch convoy.

Mon Aug 28 Arrived staging area near Foligno 4 am, and wasted no time crawling into bed. Very hot day and not much shade where we were, in an open field. In afternoon some of us piled into jeep and went on an unofficial trip through Foligno and back the way we had come to Assisi, a very picturesque town on a hillside a little way off our road. Saw through Church of St Clare. Had to leave sooner than we wanted to, and had no chance to see the big Franciscan monastery there. Before tea strolled over to engineers' camp near by and had a yarn with Verne Jones. Had a stroll with the boys round village of San Eraclio in evening, and left 10 pm on second stage of trip. Dozed on and off in front of truck.

Tue Aug 29 Went through mountainous country with steep gorges, but could not see any details of it, as it was pitch dark. Passed Macerata 3 am, then took a wrong turning and got left behind. Bad going in darkness, and we had to feel our way and make sure of every corner. Got to lesi 5 am, and found our area on a hill 3 miles from lesi just at daybreak. Nice area in fields overlooking Esino River valley. Spent day sleeping and loafing round, and John and I set up bivvy under a tree. Played bridge in afternoon and evening.

Wed Aug 30 Had a field day on maps, pretty hard to handle because there was a strong wind blowing.

Thu Aug 31 More work on maps, and I had to write out a narrative for a night manoeuvre. Jack Bickley paid us a visit. In afternoon went in jeep to Esino River and had a bathe, then went fruit-hunting and bought some peaches. In evening went to picture show in Maoris' area, downhill from us, and saw 'Thank Your Lucky Stars', a mad picture but very amusing.

Fri Sep 1 Had parade in morning, and heard a talk by Brig Burrows on the local situation. In afternoon went down in jeep to the beach by the mouth of the Esino River, 10 miles away, and had a bathe. On way home bought some tomatoes at a house on the road.

Sat Sep 2 Hitch-hiked with the boys to the beach in afternoon, and after a bathe went on to Ancona and had a look round. Came home in evening after another bathe at Palombina, just north of Ancona. The afternoon's outing took us 15 different rides.

Sun Sep 3 Rained heavily in morning, and I had to evacuate my gear to the I truck. Spent afternoon cleaning out truck. More rain in evening. John and I improved our bivvy and things were OK.

Mon Sep 4 News from the battle fronts still most excellent. Had a big morning issuing maps, typing news and marking up map boards. Played bridge with the boys. Gordon Howat and Jack Linklater went out sick.

Tue Sep 5 Warwick went out sick. Another strenuous morning on maps – in two days we handled over 3,000 of them. In afternoon went round in jeep to Div HQ, and then for a shower. Went with the boys to Kiwi Concert Party's show near by.

Wed Sep 6 Spent day leisurely packing truck for our next move. Played more bridge. Left area 7.30 pm, travelling on jeep. Went through lesi, out to coast through Chiaravalle, and up coast road through Senigallia, arriving at new area at Mondolfo Marotta, in vineyards in flat fields by the road, 10.30. John and I put bivvy up.

Thu Sep 7 Woke to find it raining heavily, so eventually got out and dug a ditch round bivvy. In afternoon went to the beach half a mile away with the boys for a swim, and were in the water when a sudden storm came up. Dashed to a nearby house for shelter, carrying our clothes, along with a crowd of other chaps who nearly filled the house. Got home to find all my gear wet through a bivvy peg collapsing. In evening John and I shifted bivvy to higher ground, and made a fly for it out of another old bivvy. Just got it rigged up at dark, and then had to heave our gear inside hurriedly to escape another sharp storm.

Fri Sep 8 Raining in morning, but it soon went off. A few jobs in morning, and after lunch read some of the war diary for typing. Went in jeep to 1 General Hospital on the roadside just south of Senigallia to see some of our invalids, and saw Jack Linklater, Fred Ward and several others. Got some parcels.

Sat Sep 9 Had painful cyst under left armpit and got it dressed. Nothing much doing – folded a few maps, and prepared map boards for a lecture. Did some writing. We were in the middle of a game of bridge when Monty McClymont popped in to visit us, and yarned till nearly 1 o'clock.

Sun Sep 10 Did usual job of getting news typed. After lunch we all went down to the beach and spent afternoon swimming and sunbathing. Had a yarn with Ian Buckley there. Went out with the boys on a fishing smack, and pulled alongside another to buy some fish off her. Tom Hay and I went across to the other boat and came back on her.

Mon Sep 11 Spent afternoon on beach swimming and lying in the sun. In evening went out on a night manoeuvre, at which I had to keep the log. Kept busy writing up the reports. Got home 11.30 pm.

Tue Sep 12 Jack Linklater came back from hospital. A few jobs to do and again spent afternoon on the beach. Surf was good, and we had fun riding the breakers and fooling. Played bridge in evening.

Wed Sep 13 Usual odd jobs. Had a lot of fun in evening, when a race meeting was held. I Sec syndicate bought a horse in every race, and I 'rode' the first one unsuccessfully. We won the last race, and so were up on the whole evening.

Thu Sep 14 Got a patriotic parcel and canteen issue, and truck got in an unholy mess, with tinned food strewn all round and nowhere to put it. Jack Linklater and Jack Mettrick went out sick. Went out on another night stunt, and again I had to keep log.

Fri Sep 15 Started out to learn driving in the jeep under Jim Whitlow's tuition. Had cautious run on side roads before lunch, and in afternoon went down in jeep for a swim, and had more practice driving on beach.

Sat Sep 16 Had warning order to move at 8 am, but it was changed to 1 pm. Left 1.30 travelling in front of I truck. Had good run along coast road through Fano and Pesaro, and arrived 3 pm at assembly area on hillside just off the road, below village of Gabicce. Expecting possibly to move into an attacking role next day. In evening went up steep hill to Gabicce, on a headland overlooking the Adriatic, and had a grand view over Rimini and the battle area, and neighbouring town of Cattolica.

Sun Sep 17 Church service in morning, and then went up to Gabicce in jeep with Jim Bevin (IO), and found out details of front line area from the map. Went to beach below Gabicce for a swim. Watched our bombers doing over Jerry's positions. Some work with aerial photos in afternoon, and after tea went round companies with a map and to alter their code sheets. Read in truck with an impromptu black-out.

Mon Sep 18 Busy morning with various jobs. Had battalion parade after lunch to hear court-martial sentences read out, and after that went up to Gabicce in jeep and inspected battle front through telescopes. Watched our planes bombing Rimini. Went down and had a swim and play round in surf. Surprised to get Warwick back in evening. Went for a stroll up a steep track to Gabicce after dark with Tom Forbes and Herb Longbottom.

Tue Sep 19 Fully expected to move into line by Rimini, and got warning order for 2 pm. Packed truck carefully and took down bivvies, and then got word that move was off. Pleased with news of good progress of battle up front, and lessening prospect of our immediate committal into the line. Went down to Cattolica harbour for a swim, and found a canal at entrance to boat harbour where we could do some high diving. After tea went in jeep to Gradara and had a look at its medieval

castle, perched on top of a hill. Got inside castle courtyard, but too late in the day to get into castle itself. Day marked the official end of summer, as we changed from shorts to slacks. Now expecting to move next day. Was just going to bed when definite news came through to move early next morning.

Wed Sep 20 Left area 7 am in convoy, went through Cattolica and Riccione, and arrived at new area a few miles from Rimini 9 am, in an open paddock. After some messing round got settled, and dug my first slit trench for some months, a two-man job with John Harrison. Guns all round us kept up a terrific racket all day. Varying news came through of battle for Rimini and the part we were to play in it. Rained heavily in evening, but bivvy was well jacked up, and everything was OK. Warwick went out crook again.

Thu Sep 21 Still raining in morning, and did so on and off all day. Ground muddy and greasy. A few jobs in morning, and after lunch I was lying on my bed when sudden word came to pack up and move smartly. Got some mail just as we were leaving. Ready to go 2 pm, but didn't get away till 3.30, and traffic congestion was so bad that it was 6 pm before we reached destination six miles away, near Fortunato ridge. Unpleasant job putting up bivvies in rain and half-dark, but luckily we had a good dry haystack nearby, so covered the wet ground with it. A few shells came handy 10 pm, so John and I dug a little hole to sleep in.

Fri Sep 22 Up 5 am, and left area in jeep 5.30 in advance party to our next area. Went through Rimini and got to area at S. Giuliano, a northern suburb of Rimini, at 7.30. Fixed up where everybody was to go, and showed trucks into places as they arrived. Quarters in a house, and we found some mattresses and got well installed. A bit of stuff landing somewhere about. Heard unwelcome news that we were likely to move in evening as support for an attack. Had to go ahead with John to a bridge over Marecchia River, a few hundred yards ahead, in late afternoon, to find out the suitability of a bridge there for traffic, and on the way a shell landed close, and I went down on my left arm and pulled a muscle very painfully. Didn't go to bridge then, but went with Herb Longbottom a little later. Had a game of bridge while waiting for move, and was in the middle of it when news came that move was off. Not a comfortable night, because my arm was sore and there was a racket as an artillery barrage went over.

Sat Sep 23 Had to have my arm put in a sling. Got a few prisoners to yarn to – two Turkomen, a French deserter and a paratrooper. Not much doing all day, and got news that we would probably be staying put for two days. Some of the boys found a hand-worked pianola arrangement, and spent a happy evening grinding out tunes.

Sun Sep 24 Went to early communion in morning. Mounted our European map on a big piece of plaster-board for general exhibition, and did a few jobs round the place. Played bridge in evening.

Mon Sep 25 Took trace of a map of Northern Europe for our situation board. Did some solid writing in afternoon and evening. Vivid thunderstorm in evening, very glad to be under a roof.

Tue Sep 26 Flat out for most of day mounting map boards. Heard we were moving in afternoon, so packed up, but then heard that move was postponed till next day, so had to unpack again. In evening played 'Smash the Nazi Navy' with Herb Longbottom.

Wed Sep 27 Heard we were moving up to the Rubicon River that day. Kept busy in morning, and left in l truck 2.30 pm to new area at Bordonchio, arriving 3.30. Not very satisfactory quarters in a house, but we cleaned out an upstairs room and moved in, although not expecting to stay the night there. Long boring wait for news, and eventually learnt that we were to occupy a new HQ at 2 am

next morning. Had a game of bridge, and didn't feel too happy when some shells landed close, as roof was very flimsy. Took over job on I log at midnight.

Thu Sep 28 Left in I truck with the other Bn HQ vehicles 2 am. Went in pitch dark through light rain, crossed River Uso by a Bailey bridge which we reached along a rough track made by the engineers, and were held up on the other side by a road demolition. Had to get to work with shovels and fill it in. While we were waiting there a few light shells came over somewhere handy. Got to new area and had to wait around while Bn HQ area was mapped out, and I had to go to another house a few hundred yards away to find the IO, who was forward on a recce. A sentry challenged me, and I had to talk fast because I had forgotten the password. Got more or less settled in a small upstairs room just at dawn, very fed up. Small flimsy house, with its lower storey consisting mainly of a stable occupied by Italians and cattle, and with a smell all its own. Had a spell on the log 8.30 am-midday. In afternoon went in jeep with John Harrison through pouring rain to recce a position for Bn HQ for an attack across the Fiumicino River, and after looking at several houses and a cemetery, and being shouted some very good wine by a peasant, we found a suitable house. Got back to find that attack was postponed on account of rain. Rained like fury in evening, and our companies out front had a miserable time.

Fri Sep 29 Rain had euchred several roads, and communication with forward companies difficult all day. Had a spell on log in morning, and had to question a few prisoners. On log again in afternoon. Jerry bounced some shells close occasionally during night.

Sat Sep 30 Jerry very active with shells and mortars, and made us duck once during day. Had two spells on log, and typed out news sheet for companies. Heard we were being relieved by 22 Bn, and I was on log in evening while relief was taking place, complicated by heavy Jerry fire and a counter-attack on our front, also a few Jerry planes which made a nuisance of themselves about 7 pm. More mortars came round in small hours.

Sun Oct 1 Got ready to move out to another HQ behind the Uso. After the usual delays got away 2 pm, and had to wait another 2 hours en route before house we were going to was available. Got into a fairly good upstairs room.

Mon Oct 2 Rained heavily all day, and we had a lot of trouble with our window, which kept blowing open and was sadly lacking in glass. Managed to cover it up, but at the cost of light, and had to have lamps going all day. Not much doing, read and played cards. Had a job in evening managing Jim Whitlow, who got dreadfully drunk, but fixed him OK. A few shells came round in night, and our guns made a lot of noise, as they were just behind house.

Tue Oct 3 Nothing much doing. Had to have a couple of boils dressed at RAP, which was in a chapel attached to our house, and heard that we were to be relieved in a couple of days. Solid session of bridge in evening.

Wed Oct 4 Beautiful day for a change, sat in sun and read. Quieter night than usual.

Thu Oct 5 Weather turned nasty again. Packed up and moved 10 am, but struck trouble with several trucks getting stuck on greasy road, just at a spot where Jerry was very fond of dropping shells. Got away after a long delay (2 miles in 2 hours), and got back to Rimini, where we got into the same house as we had previously had. Had a much overdue bath and change of clothes, and felt a new man. Had the usual evening's bridge. Had been obliged to go door-hunting in afternoon, as our house doors had been removed, and after a lot of searching Herb Longbottom and I found a suitable one in an empty house a couple of streets away and got it to fit with a few alterations.

Fri Oct 6 A few jobs to do during day. In evening went in jeep through Rimini along the coast to Riccione before we could find a place to have the section's washing done – although the coast road was lined with houses, there was no place that would take it in for some miles.

Sat Oct 7 Along with Blam, Herb Longbottom and Bill Dobson, I hitch-hiked to San Marino and spent the day wandering round it. The republic surrounds a massive rocky hill with an absolutely sheer side on the east, with the town of San Marino perched on the north-west shoulder. Theoretically the town was out of bounds, but we got in with no trouble. Had a rummage round streets and souvenir shops, and went along top of mountain by a narrow path – most impressive wild scenery, and a wonderful view over miles of country, including Rimini and the Adriatic. Unfortunately the day was very hazy, so the view was not at its best. Back to Rimini in afternoon, having no difficulty in hitch-hiking the whole way, and in evening had a party in the cellar of our house, and a great sing-song.

Sun Oct 8 Raining again, miserable day. Mounted big European map board, and got issued with battledress after lunch. Played chess with Pat Pope and Herb Longbottom.

Mon Oct 9 Had good clear out of truck, and got rid of a lot of junk. Got unwelcome news of another move into line on following night. Spent evening playing crib with Scotty Gibson.

Tue Oct 10 After breakfast went in jeep to Riccione to collect washing, and ran into a real picnic, civilians being evacuated from houses by Canadians and everybody in a stew. Half washing still wet. Rain came on heavily, making everything miserable. While waiting to move up to line ran into Jock McLachlan and had a yarn with him. Left in convoy 3 pm, turned off main road a few miles up at S. Giustina, and carried on over narrow road much mended with bricks etc. Arrived at new Bn HQ behind S. Mauro 4 pm, taking over from a Canadian unit. Got in a tiny but cosy room. Yard of house a sea of deep mud, and to walk across it we had to navigate round the edges.

Wed Oct 11 Our companies crossed Fiumicino River in morning, and we expected to move forward any time. Busy day with two spells on log, a lot of work with aerial photos and maps, and several prisoners to question, including a wounded man with whom I had to go back to Bde HQ. Heard good news that I was going on leave to Florence on following Sunday. Saw Ken Paterson and had a yarn to him.

Thu Oct 12 Went forward in morning through S. Mauro and recced a new HQ, and got the crowd successfully installed by lunch time – I was waiting when they arrived, and directed the trucks to their places I had mapped out in the yard of the house. Spell on log in afternoon, news coming through of steady advance towards Gampettola. Sandy Thomas suddenly walked in and took over the battalion. Sat down to play bridge in afternoon, and had just started when I had to go to Forward HQ to question 8 prisoners and take them to PW cage in S. Mauro. Only had I jeep to take them back on, so it was a somewhat crowded ride. Had short game after I got back, and went to bed expecting a good night's sleep.

Fri Oct 13 Good night's sleep did not eventuate. Called out at 12.30 am to go up in I jeep to Forward HQ, across the Fiumicino, to question a prisoner, and again at 2.30 and 4.30. By the last time I was feeling somewhat fed up, and this time I took my bed and gear and dossed down for the rest of the night at Forward HQ. Moved 9.30 am to another HQ further forward through village of Gatteo, which was smashed to pieces. Busy with maps and log. A few shells came round in afternoon.

Sat Oct 14 Steady job on log, maps and traces. Jerry shelled Gatteo very heavily in afternoon, stuff going just over our heads and making us duck. Our guns kept up a continual racket.

Sun Oct 15 Up early and went on my week's leave. Went back in jeep to where I truck was, in the courtyard of a church seminary on the outskirts of Gatteo a few hundred yards behind HQ, and was just getting some things out of the truck when I was called back to question some prisoners, who said Jerry had pulled back in front of us. Went back in breakfast jeep to B Echelon at Rimini, and spent morning looking up Arthur Chetwin, Sid Gaudin, Jock Holmes and other coppers in 26 Bn, who were just next door. Left in truck 12.45 pm, and went down coast through Cattolica, Pesaro and Fano to Senigallia. Slept at transit camp there, in a big building with enormous rooms. On arrival we had to scramble for palliasses and places to sleep, but got jacked up all right. Had good stroll round town, and saw a stranded midget submarine on beach. By a stroke of luck met Bruce Tuck, who was at transit camp on his way back to 23 Bn. After tea we went down the road, found out where NZEF Archives lived, and spent evening with Monty McClymont.

Mon Oct 16 Up and away by 3.30 am. Went past lesi and through wild gorges through the Apennines, and had breakfast on roadside at Nocera. Long, not very comfortable but very interesting trip through Foligno, Perugia, past Lake Trasimene. Had a cup of tea at Naafi in Arezzo, then went on through beautiful Arno valley, arriving Florence 2 pm. Amazed at luxury of NZ Club, in one of Florence's swellest hotels, with even a bathroom attached to our room. Got in a 2-man room with another 23 Bn chap, Jack McDowell. Had a stroll round streets before tea, and spent evening sprawling luxuriously in club lounge, listening to its orchestra and enjoying it thoroughly.

Tue Oct 17 Went with a guided party round Church of S. Maria Novella, just a short distance from Club, with lovely cloisters and chapel. Then to Church of S. Lorenzo, the Cathedral and its old Baptistry. Climbed Giotto's Campanile – strenuous climb – and enjoyed a lovely view of Florence and the surrounding hills. Strolled through streets past old Medici Palace. Rain came on at lunch time, so I went to a performance of 'The Barretts of Wimpole Street' and enjoyed it fully. Went another walk along the Arno before tea, and again sat and listened to orchestra in evening.

Wed Oct 18 Did more walking round city, over the Ponte Vecchio (the only one of Florence's old bridges still standing) and up to the old city wall beyond. In afternoon had a look inside Palazzo Vecchio (the old town hall) and admired its statues and murals, and later Jack McDowell, Archie Beaton and I went shopping with an English lady we met in the Club, whose job it was to do that sort of thing and see the boys did not get cheated. Bought some things to send home. Usual evening programme.

Thurs Oct 19 Jack, Archie and I hired bikes in a little shop in a narrow street down by the Arno and had a morning's wander, along the Pisa road and then up the hills to the south of Florence, where we explored the scenic avenues and had another picturesque view of the city. Got up to the top of a high hill and went into a large mansion known as the 'Torre del Gallo' which was in process of renovation. Learnt afterwards that Galileo used to live there. On way down hill got caught in a sharp shower, but took shelter under a roadside monument. Had another walk round town and along Mugnone Canal in afternoon, and did some pretty solid shopping.

Fri Oct 20 Hitch-hiked with Jack and Archie to Pisa, about 50 miles each way and an interesting trip down Arno valley. Rides included some breath-taking ones in Yankee trucks; traffic was plentiful and hitch-hiking easy. Thick fog near Florence, but we ran out of it into lovely sunshine later. Pisa built across Arno, part of town on south side badly smashed but that on north side hardly touched. Went straight to Cathedral, climbed Leaning Tower and had a perfect view over coastal plain, and

went round inside Cathedral, which I thought was the handsomest I had seen. Had lunch sitting on grass in a corner of an old town wall beside Cathedral. Had a tour round rest of Pisa per gharry, but rest of town was not interesting. Hitch-hiked back to Florence with no trouble – home 5.30 pm, and spent evening in usual lazy way.

Sat Oct 21 Drifted round avenues on hills south of city in morning, and had a long yarn with three boys, good practice for my Italian, which was very amateur but getting a bit more fluent as time went on. In late afternoon went with the lads to the pictures, and saw 'It Started with Eve'. A bit of rain on and off during day.

Sun Oct 22 In morning went to church and communion at the English Holy Trinity Church – nice walk there and back, to a part of the town I had not visited before. In afternoon went over the Arno again and had a walk round the lovely Boboli Gardens, which had a notice on the gate saying 'Out of Bounds to Troops'. However, I walked in and nobody stopped me. Came back and went with Jack and Archie to a concert by the Florence Symphony Orchestra and City Choir, which I enjoyed as much as any concert I had ever heard. Sat in lounge all evening as usual and listened to orchestra.

Mon Oct 23 Up 5.30, packed and got away 7 am on trip back. Struck a good deal of rain on and off. Had a cup of tea at Passignano, on Lake Trasimene, and stopped for lunch at Nocera. Struck a real Apennine mist at highest part of road, and got held up by a big convoy. Went through precipitous Esino gorge, and got to transit camp at Senigallia 6 pm. Heard that the Div was moving back out of the line. Went round to see Monty McClymont at Archives, spent evening there and had a game of chess with him.

Tue Oct 24 Very cold with only two blankets, so when some chaps left camp 3 am I got up and grabbed a palliasse, which I had not been able to get before then. Some doubt as to whether we would be moving that day, but got away 9.30 am in the same direction from which we had come the day before. Jack McDowell and I sat up behind cab of truck. Had lunch at Serra S. Quirico, went back through Esino gorge and got well and truly at sea round Fabriano, getting different stories from everybody as to what the division was doing and where we were to go. Ended up at Div Supply Point at Fabriano railway station 2.30 pm, to wait there for battalion ration truck to arrive. Dossed down for night in shed in station. Went over to get some straw from a nearby stack, and finished up by acting as interpreter for a chap selling gear. Had stroll up town in evening.

Wed Oct 25 Got away on 23 Bn ration truck 9 am, but were held up on outskirts of Fabriano from 9.30 am to 4 pm, as some heavy tanks were coming through and the road was closed for them. Had long trip round nearly to Foligno; I sat up behind cab at first, but it got cold and began to rain, so I was quite glad to get in back of truck later. Near Foligno doubled back on our tracks through hills to Camerino, arriving B Echelon area 8 pm in steady rain. Bedded down there for the night.

Thu Oct 26 After hanging round for some time in morning left in Bn HQ ration jeep, and rejoined the boys in village of Mecciano before lunch. Nice room with a fireplace, which I was very glad to see. More rain in afternoon. Played chess with Bruce Tuck in evening, and had a good sort over of gear. Got 24 letters.

Fri Oct 27 Steady rain, but in spite of that we had a parade in morning, when Sandy Thomas gave us a talk on future training and operations. Played chess in afternoon, and in evening went with Blam to a nearby farmhouse and bought some spuds – the farmer, named Domenico, afterwards became quite a pal of ours.

Sat Oct 28 Went in morning to pictures in Camerino – show was an hour late starting, but picture, 'Dangerous Blondes' was fair. Got home late for lunch, feeling very disgruntled, as Jack Bickley was there spending the day with us and we were holding a high banquet on a roast goose and the spuds we had bought. It went over very well in spite of lateness. Had a get-together in evening, and a vociferous community sing, and at 10 pm a jeepload of us went to Div HQ at Matelica, several miles away, to take Jack home.

Sun Oct 29 Had to march 1½ miles to church parade in morning, and went to communion after it. By no means pleased to hear the training set down for us, and also lots of petty rules re dress etc, for our period out of action. Spent afternoon and most of evening teaching John Harrison the rudiments of chess.

Mon Oct 30 Started training, and didn't take kindly to it. Had route march in morning, and spent rest of day playing chess.

Tue Oct 31 Spent morning having instruction on 38 wireless set. Played more chess in evening.

Wed Nov 1 My 24th birthday. Went away in morning with instructions to do map work, but we got out of sight round the corner by Domenico's house, played chess and yarned with Domenico. In afternoon John Harrison and I went to Camerino, and had a good look round town, seeing it at a good time, as everybody was in town dressed up for All Saints' festival. Got into conversation with an Italian and went to his house outside Camerino for a drink of wine. Went to a Canadian Ensa show in evening – good show.

Thu Nov 2 Kept busy in morning typing out news and taking big map boards round from one company to another – no easy job on a jeep with a high wind blowing, as the companies were spread over an area three miles long, and I had to keep the boards firmly held down on jeep. Rain on and off all day. Did a lot of writing in evening.

Fri Nov 3 Had to march 2½ miles for a battalion parade. In the middle of it heavy rain came on, and we got home midday well soaked and very disgusted with such futile foolery. In afternoon had to cart map boards round again to another company. Usual evening programme of chess and writing.

Sat Nov 4 All-day route march, which was quite enjoyable, passing through beautiful country, through village of Seppio, along a hillside road and up a steep rocky gorge to little town of Pioraco. Truck came out to meet us at midday with lunch on board. On way home called in at showers on river below Mecciano.

Sun Nov 5 Had to march the 2½ miles again for a memorial service and church parade. Otherwise nothing doing.

Mon Nov 6 After 8 am parade kept out of sight for rest of morning, and studied up a bit of Italian with the boys. In afternoon had a stroll in sunshine round the paddocks. Usual game of chess in evening.

Tue Nov 7 Went in jeep with some of the boys to Div HQ at Matelica in afternoon and heard a very good lecture by Div IO on the European situation. While there saw Jack Bickley and Monty McClymont.

Wed Nov 8 Made out notes from previous day's lecture for a talk I was to give the companies. Gave it to B Coy in afternoon, and managed fairly well. Had a session of bridge in evening with no luck.

Thu Nov 9 Got news in morning, with a lot of trouble with worn-out wireless batteries. Played bridge with John Harrison against the sigs, and in evening went to pictures in Camerino. Saw 'The Gentle Sex', and thoroughly enjoyed it. Violent storm on way home in truck.

Fri Nov 10 Woke up to a light coating of snow on ground, which partly disappeared during day. Gave lecture on I work to D and C Coys during morning. Quite a lot of old friends came back to Bn with a reinforcement draft, among them Fred Ward, Bn clerk. Spent evening giving Blam an initial lesson in chess.

Sat Nov 11 Got and typed out news, and held the fort in morning while the rest of the boys were away at a lecture. Jack Bickley came back with them and spent afternoon and evening with us, and we had a lively party in evening.

Sun Nov 12 Very uneventful day, unpleasantly cold. Played chess with Bruce Tuck.

Mon Nov 13 Also uneventful, with a few jobs to do. Made a start on typing month's war diary.

Tue Nov 14 Heavy morning, as I had to give two lectures on European situation to D Coy and one on the German Army to A Coy. Had the jeep to travel round in for this purpose. Visit from Monty McClymont and Jack Bickley in afternoon. In evening went with the boys in jeep to Kiwi Concert Party show in Camerino, most entertaining as always.

Wed Nov 15 Working on war diary, and got it finished in afternoon. Very unpleasant day, wet and blustery.

Thu Nov 16 Went on route march to Pioraco, where the padres of the various denominations gave addresses. Had shower on way back. In evening went to Camerino and saw 'Introducing Lily Mars' – punk show.

Fri Nov 17 Went with Blam to an NCO's school at village of Seppio, a real backblocks hamlet on the next hill to Mecciano, to give them a lecture in map reading, and had to give talk on German Army unexpectedly. In evening went with boys to a Brigade concert in Camerino, in which Jim Whitlow came out in a state of mild intoxication to do a comedy turn, and made it rather spectacular when he slipped badly in his language.

Sat Nov 18 Busy day cleaning junk out of truck and getting aerial photos up to date. In evening Herb Longbottom and I played bridge very successfully in sigs' room.

Sun Nov 19 Grand sunny day, very little to do. Took map boards from one company to another.

Mon Nov 20 Gave lecture on German Army to Support Coy. In afternoon acted as emergency in football match Bn HQ v Sigs, and played a wonderful game from the sideline. Had another successful evening's bridge against the sigs.

Tue Nov 21 Got news of our next move into line in a few days' time. A few jobs with maps and aerial photos, and spent evening yarning round fire.

Wed Nov 22 Uneventful day – had a haircut and began to think of getting ready for move on Friday. Handicapped through absence of I truck in Florence with a leave party. Played chess with Herb and Bruce.

Thu Nov 23 Got gear packed up, and in afternoon put it on an RMT truck ready for move. Went round the neighbourhood with Bill Dobson in afternoon and sold a few clothes. Had last sit round fire in evening, specially good as we burnt up all our stock of wood.

Fri Nov 24 Up early, finished packing and left 730 am. Travelled in fair comfort in a three-tonner, and had good trip with no hold-ups through lesi, Senigallia, Fano, Pesaro, Cattolica, Rimini and Cesena. Turned off main road at Cesena, along secondary road going south along Savio River, and arrived in new area in village of Borello 3 pm. Billeted in local police station. Got settled in with expectation of a 2 or 3 day stay.

Sat Nov 25 Cold foggy day, with rain showers occasionally. Kept busy with I work of various kinds, but managed to have a look round town. Had a game of chess with Herb.

Sun Nov 26 Church service and communion in morning. Had shower at mobile showers beside Borello River, and in evening Bruce and I went to sigs' room and had an evening's chess.

Mon Nov 27 On notice to move further forward, but not expecting an immediate shift. Rained steadily all day. Went to bed expecting likely move to Forli next morning.

Tue Nov 28 Still wet and misty. Packed up and left 10 am for Forli, where we got installed in palatial quarters in a block of flats, right in middle of town. Kept busy in afternoon, especially as the I truck came back from Florence and we had to jack up the gear on it. Had a short air raid at dusk. Spent evening playing chess with Herb.

Wed Nov 29 Fair bit of work with maps, and had several visitors – Jack Bickley in morning, Monty McClymont and Padre Holland in afternoon. Had party in evening.

Thu Nov 30 Kept busy fixing up map boards and going round companies with latest information. Unpleasant day, with thick drizzle on and off. In evening had short play on piano in another room in our house. Stuart McFarlane popped in to see me.

Fri Dec 1 Not much doing. Had shower at a Tommy bath unit. Played some chess with Herb, and did some writing in evening.

Sat Dec 2 Gave a lecture on war situation to C Coy in YMCA room. Jack Bickley popped in to see us in afternoon, and we had a contretemps with our primus, which leaked, and the petrol caught fire. The flames spread over the room with our efforts to put it out, including an unsuccessful attempt with my greatcoat. Finally the primus exploded and blew the windows out – glass flying all over the room, and it was a wonder someone did not get hit. Went to practice some carols to sing at Xmas time after tea. Jerry sent some long-range shells overhead in evening.

Sun Dec 3 Went to church service in morning, and played chess with Herb in afternoon. Practised carols again in evening, and got job as conductor of impromptu choir.

Mon Dec 4 Heard excellent news of battle up front, and of crossing of Lamone River. Another choir practice after lunch. Spent evening playing cards with the boys.

Tue Dec 5 On picquet on trucks outside our billet 5-6 am – bitterly cold. Rain in morning. Played chess with Herb. In afternoon Sid Gaudin popped in and had a yarn.

Wed Dec 6 More rain in afternoon. Had busy morning with map boards, and went with the boys for a shower in afternoon. On picquet 8-9 pm. Got half a dozen parcels.

Thu Dec 7 Spent morning duplicating copies of some songs I had typed out for use by the choir. Another choir practice after lunch. In evening played bridge with Herb versus the sigs.

Fri Dec 8 Heard of likelihood of move into line, so made preliminary preparations with gear. Another choir practice in afternoon. Heavy rain in evening.

Sat Dec 9 Got word of move into line by Faenza next day, so got jacked up for move. Another choir practice in afternoon.

Sun Dec 10 Left Forli 6 am with recce party, travelling in I jeep. Bitter frosty morning. Went along main road towards Faenza, then turned off and went long roundabout route over vile narrow roads, mended in places with bricks and rubble. Plenty of stops owing to traffic congestion – not too pleasant, as Jerry had a bad habit of shelling the road. Quiet trip, however. Went through marshy country and across Lamone River by a Bailey bridge, and after a long wait at Bde HQ on a lateral road beyond the river went on to new Bn HQ in a very flash house at the end of a nice drive, where we were relieving the Yorks and Lancs Regt. Had just arrived when we got a nasty bit of shelling round the house. A lot of uncertainty about where we were to sleep, but got fixed eventually in a good upstairs room. Spell on log in afternoon. The rest of the boys arrived up in late afternoon. I had a real find in the shape of an old pair of carpet slippers, which were about two sizes too big for me but were a great comfort as long as we were living in houses. (I eventually carried them round in my bedroll all winter). Had unpleasant job in evening, interrogating two Jerries who had come in under a Red Cross flag to bury dead, and had been held as prisoners. Had a fair view of our air force having a field day on Jerry's positions.

Mon Dec 11 Quiet day, but a lot of fun in evening, when Jerry did us over thoroughly and put in a counter attack. Kept busy logging its progress.

Tue Dec 12 Busy with log and maps. Cold wet day. Had great piece of luck, locating a lot of good music, and had a good long play on a piano belonging on the premises.

Wed Dec 13 Busy day questioning several prisoners. Went up to RAP in morning, up a steep track in front of HQ, to question a wounded Jerry. Two spells on log during day. A lot of mortar activity on both sides, especially from our mortars firing just under our windows and nearly shattering our eardrums.

Tue Dec 14 Got maps, aerial photos etc. ready for attack to take place that night. Pretty busy day. Left in I jeep 10 pm, huddled up among the gear, to form a Tac HQ on the start line. Way up was subject to constant shelling, and one place where the road turned under a railway overbridge to machine-gun fire, so didn't feel at all happy, but got up with no annoyance except a good jolting, as road was a sea of mud and full of holes. New HQ, in a house pretty badly knocked about, got stonked by mortars just as we got there. I sat in underground cellar while our barrage started off, shells falling all round house, and Jerry sent some fierce stuff back too, lasting some hours.

Fri Dec 15 At daybreak found out our house was on a hill looking straight into Faenza, which Jerry was still holding. During day 150 prisoners came through us, so we were kept busy on and off from 4 am to 9 pm and questioning them. Worst time was in early morning, when we had to search about 100 in two small rooms which would hardly accommodate them all; we could not show any light into the bargain, and as the window shutters were full of holes we had to do the job in semi-darkness. Two spells on log during day as well. Got mortared several times during day, and didn't place too much reliance on robustness of house, even though we were on ground floor. News coming through of heavy going by companies up front, and a lot of opposition by Jerry tanks.

Sat Dec 16 Comparatively pleasant day with no shells close. A lot of assorted I work. Show going well in advance towards Senio River, and good news that Jerry had pulled out of Faenza.

Sun Dec 17 John Harrison got back to section from course. Had to leave at short notice in morning with a party to organize a new HQ further forward. Country one mass of shell-holes, result

of our barrage, and roads no better than quagmires, with vehicles bogged in all directions. Went through ruined village of Celle, and a little further on turned off to the left on to another road, about half a mile along which was the house we were going to. At new HQ ran into Pat Morris for the first time in months. After the usual arguments and milling round got settled in a room with a fireplace, which in consequence became a sort of home from home for all Bn HQ. Got a stonk all round house soon after we got there. In afternoon had to go in jeep and recce a house for RAP, and got one some distance ahead of Celle with a big room suitable for an RAP. In evening had another trip with a prisoner back to Bde HQ away back by Lamone River – long and eventful trip in pitch dark over foul roads, in grave danger of being stuck more than once. In fact, at one corner we went half into the ditch, and the prisoner and I shoved the jeep out while Jim Whitlow gave her the gun. Got back 9.30 pm.

Mon Dec 18 Went with Jim Whitlow in jeep to guide doctor to new RAP we had found for him, and then on to D Coy, in a little house up another road. From there walked across paddocks to Support Coy with some aerial photos. Later in day Jim Whitlow was wounded driving over the same road. Had game of bridge in evening. Had to go out again 8.30 pm with Gordon Howat in sigs jeep to RAP and D Coy, and just missed stonks on D Coy's house both going and coming.

Tue Dec 19 Uneventful day – usual shift on log, and did some writing in afternoon. Jim Thomson came up to take over I jeep. Noisy night as a heavy barrage started 9 pm, when another attack went in north of us.

Wed Dec 20 Quiet day. Game of bridge in evening, and in the middle of it got severely stonked by Nebelwerfers. Heard we were to be relieved and go back to Faenza next morning. Heard that officers were planning to pinch some pigs belonging to the owner of HQ house, so tipped him the wink, and he got the pigs out of the road before we left.

Thu Dec 21 Left 8.30 am, and guided Bn HQ party which was walking back to Faenza, finding place with no difficulty. Arrived 10 am. Quarters in a block of flats in centre of town, just a few yards from main square. Spent afternoon exploring house, and evening playing bridge.

Fri Dec 22 Very uneventful. Got some parcels, and had a much-needed change of clothes.

Sat Dec 23 General festive atmosphere in preparation for Xmas celebrations. A few general jobs to do. In afternoon resumed our interrupted choir practices for carol service on following night. Jack Linklater and Jack Mettrick came back to section after being out crook for about 3 months.

Sun Dec 24 A skiff of snow on the roofs, and icy cold. Church service in morning in a big, ornate but very draughty hall at Bde HQ, and carol service there in evening, when the choir performed in front of a very poor attendance. Had Xmas party in our room afterwards.

Mon Dec 25 Day of merrymaking in all directions. Got up and went to communion early, and another service in morning, and helped to carry tables and place them in a room ready for Xmas dinner, which was a masterpiece. Festive atmosphere all round, in spite of our closeness to the war. Did some solid writing in afternoon, and played chess with Herb. Several times during night Jerry planes came over and bombed Faenza – about midnight I was visiting our convenience (on the roof) when one dived and dropped a bomb a few blocks away, scaring seven bells out of me.

Tue Dec 26 Suffering usual Boxing Day reaction. Had badly needed hair cut, and in afternoon had to go for a short route march, which caused a lot of grumbling. Heard our next move into line was expected in four days' time.

Wed Dec 27 Pretty full day's work jacking up some aerial photos. Heard bad news of some of my friends in 26 Bn – Tom Lindsay missing and Laurie Hayhurst killed – but was very pleased to see Warwick back with a reinforcement draft in afternoon. Spent evening playing bridge.

Thu Dec 28 Had to get up early and collect patrol report from A Coy, and spent a lot of time jacking up more aerial photos.

Fri Dec 29 Got fixed up for move up into line next day. In afternoon had to guide the Bn HQ boys on a 3-mile hike to witness a bridging demonstration, over country I had not been over before, but did my guiding from the map. Arrived just as demonstration was finished, so turned and came home again, getting a lift for part of the way.

Sat Dec 30 Left 10 am in jeep for Forward HQ, in a small house beside Route 9, only 2 miles forward of Faenza. Got in a small upstairs room with the RSM, Bill Tait. Not much doing except a spell on log. Spent evening playing bridge with Herb Longbottom, Jack Linklater and Jack Mettrick – we were the only 4 from the I Section at Forward HQ, the rest having stayed at Faenza.

Sun Dec 31 Very uneventful day, nice and sunny. A lot of noise from tanks firing right behind us. Another session of bridge in evening.

1945

Mon Jan 1 Quiet opening to New Year. Got unexpected news that Herb Longbottom and I were going to NZ rest camp at Riccione for three days. Left HQ 5 pm in I jeep and went back to billets in Faenza, Bruce Tuck and Warwick going up to relieve us.

Tue Jan 2 Left Faenza midday, and had extremely cold ride up behind cab of truck. Went via Forli, Forlimpopoli, Cesena, Savignano, Santarcangelo and Rimini to YMCA hostel at Riccione, arriving 3 pm. Spent rest of day sitting lazily in lounge, with a two-piece orchestra in afternoon, and a picture, 'Silver Skates' (third rate) in evening.

Wed Jan 3 Strolled round town of Riccione (once a fashionable seaside resort) in morning, and in afternoon Herb and I hitch-hiked through Cattolica, Pesaro, Fano and Senigallia to 1 NZ Gen Hospital, and had a yarn with Jim Whitlow. Saw another picture, 'Edge of Darkness', in hostel lounge in evening.

Thu Jan 4 Lazy day, mainly spent sitting with a book. In afternoon went to an orchestral concert in Garrison Theatre. Played chess with Herb, and in evening taught him to play bezique.

Fri Jan 5 Spent day reading, playing chess and cards with Herb.

Sat Jan 6 Left Riccione 10.30 am, after morning tea, on trip back to 23 Bn. Travelled in front of truck. Ran into rain at Cesena, and by Faenza it was teeming, and changed to snow in afternoon. Arrived Faenza 1 pm, and at 2.30 got a sudden call to pack up again and leave for B Echelon at Forli to go on a trip round the country hunting for ammunition, which was short. Went to Forli with Laurie Aitken (mortar sergeant) who was also going on trip, and slept at B Echelon. Snow still falling, and by evening everything was white.

Sun Jan 7 Left 10.30 am in three-tonner, with Laurie Aitken, Howard Freeth and Jack Russell (driver). Went to Rimini and had lunch there, then toured the neighbourhood looking for ammo, but with no success. Tried Rimini salvage dump, Riccione and Viserba. Came back to Rimini and

scrounged a room for the night in an Italian house. Made very welcome, and spent evening sitting in kitchen yarning with the family. Intermittent snow all day.

Mon Jan 8 Had good sleep in, very nice because it was bitterly cold. Left Rimini 11 am. Went through Gambettola and Gatteo, where we boiled up in a ruined school. Tried salvage dump at Cesena, but still no ammo except a few 2-inch mortar bombs we found in a corner of the seminary in Gatteo. Finally went to Borello, where we found about 200 tank shells in a farmyard. At first made heavy weather of carting them 200 yards to road, but afterwards the truck successfully backed down narrow track into farm and enabled us to load ammo straight on. Farmer was very pleased to be rid of it. Went from there to B Ech at Forli; although we were not officially due back there until next day, we all felt we had had the expedition. Arrived tea-time. Rooted round until we found sleeping space for the night.

Tue Jan 9 Left 9.30 am to take ammo up to Faenza. Held up by traffic jam, and truck went off without me, but I got lift on another truck bound for the same destination. Went up to Forward HQ, then back to 19 Regt HQ in Faenza and unloaded. Spent rest of day loafing in billet, and playing chess and cards.

Wed Jan 10 Very little to do – weather still bitter. Another chess session with Herb.

Thu Jan 11 Usual chess programme and not much else. In afternoon Herb and I went round to a house in the next block where there was a piano, but gave it up as a bad job because it was fearfully out of tune. Heard the boys were coming back out of line next day, and the battalion moving back to Forli.

Fri Jan 12 Rest of I Section came back from Forward HQ, and we spent rest of day getting gear together and loading truck. Had impromptu celebration in evening.

Sat Jan 13 Rained steadily all day. Finished packing and left Faenza 10 am for Forli, travelling in jeep. Got billets in a big municipal office building, and had a lot of work jacking up a stove in our room and making it comfortable. Very pleased to discover a piano in battalion YMCA, in same building. Spent evening yarning round stove.

Sun Jan 14 Had more fun with stove smoking and filling room up, but got it fixed eventually. Went to church in morning and jacked up maps in YMCA. Went to Kiwi Concert Party show at nearby theatre in evening, and as usual enjoyed it thoroughly.

Mon Jan 15 Sent the section's washing away to mobile laundry. Had visits from Jack Bickley and Monty McClymont in afternoon, and Herb and I spent evening playing bridge against Ron Kennedy and Frank Edwards of the sigs.

Tue Jan 16 Freezing cold day. Had parade in morning, and spent rest of day doing odd jobs. Choir practice in afternoon, when we started on a selection of songs with a view to giving a concert some time in the future. (This never came off). Played chess with Herb.

Wed Jan 17 Made a broadcast to NZ in morning, along with a swag of other chaps, and had a lot of trouble trying to think up what to say. Had another choir practice in afternoon, and then hitch-hiked up to Div HQ between Forli and Faenza, as I had arranged with Jack Bickley, to see cipher officer re the prospect of going on a cipher course. Not very optimistic about possibility. Went to 26 Bn with Warwick and had a yarn with Sid Gaudin. Heard from him that Tom Lindsay had been killed.

Thu Jan 18 In morning went to dentist at 6 MDS, and had a lost filling replaced. Otherwise not much doing except a chess session.

Fri Jan 19 Went a roam round town with the boys. Heavy rain in afternoon, so stayed firmly indoors. Played bridge in evening.

Sat Jan 20 Went to dentist again and had another filling done. Feeling in very bright mood in evening, and had a few vigorous scraps, including Herb and I taking off Blam's trousers – with a struggle. Held a section community sing.

Sun Jan 21 Church parade in morning – missed parade, but got along to church OK. Fixed up a European war map in afternoon, and Warwick and I took a stroll along and saw an exhibition of enemy equipment in a nearby square.

Mon Jan 22 Got daily news and typed it out. Had a vaccination in afternoon, and after tea went a stroll round Forli with the boys. Gave Warwick a lesson in chess in evening.

Tue Jan 23 In morning had a lecture on prisoners of war by Div Interrogation Officer, but couldn't hear a word he said. Had a shower in afternoon, and played more chess with Herb.

Wed Jan 24 Pretty uneventful. Went another stroll round Forli with the boys in afternoon. Jack Bickley paid us a visit in evening.

Thu Jan 25 Another snowfall during night, and the street round Bn HQ was a very dangerous place due to the lads having fun throwing snowballs down from the roof. Packed and got ready for move up into line next morning.

Fri Jan 26 Timed to leave Forli 8.15 am for our previous Bn HQ beyond Faenza, but jeep didn't turn up till nearly 9 am. Cold ride up through Faenza, and installed ourselves OK, taking over from 22 Bn. Only Blam, Herb and I at Bn HQ, sharing same room we had had before with Bill Tait and Phil Dorizac, who was attached to us from 27 Bn for experience in infantry I work. Had run back to A Echelon in Faenza in afternoon to pick up more gear. Several jobs to do, and a good bridge session in evening. Jack Linklater, Jack Mettrick and Bill Dobson went forward with the companies.

Sat Jan 27 Odd jobs with map boards etc, otherwise not much doing. Told I was to guide a breakdown van to C Coy in evening, but job cancelled later.

Sun Jan 28 Took on job of writing up war diary daily. Kept pretty busy with various jobs. Tom Hay came back to section and rejoined us at Forward HQ. had a bridge session with Bn runners in evening.

Mon Jan 29 Usual series of small jobs. In afternoon had to deal with three suspicious-looking chaps found hiding in one of our company areas. We afterwards got word that they were Poles intending to desert to Jerry. Big fire demonstration from 7 to 7.45 pm, making an unholy racket. Played bezique with Herb in evening, to the accompaniment of a Jerry plane prowling round over our lines.

Tue Jan 30 Kept fairly busy marking up map boards etc. Spent afternoon taking situation boards round B Coy platoons, a little distance away on the right of HQ, for the boys to have a look at.

Wed Jan 31 Uneventful. Had big session of cards in evening.

Thu Feb 1 Odd jobs kept me fairly busy, including a few maps to be issued. Heard in evening that Herb and Bruce Tuck were leaving next day on first stage of return journey to NZ on replacement scheme.

Fri Feb 2 Went back to Faenza with Tom Hay in jeep, and said goodbye to Herb, Bruce, Sid Dobier, Jim Leishman and a swag of others leaving on replacement scheme. Spent some time in afternoon writing up war diary, which I was doing from day to day.

Sat Feb 3 Unpleasant misty rain all day. Jack Linklater came back to HQ, replacing Tom Hay. Spent some time playing bezique with Jack, in the intervals of writing up war diary and marking up maps. Jerry threw a few mortars somewhere handy in evening.

Sun Feb 4 Had a run up in jeep to mortars' position in morning. Normal jobs otherwise. Snow starting to thaw, and farmyards and paddocks very wet and muddy.

Mon Feb 5 Thick mist hung round all day. Had a trip back to Faenza with Jack Linklater, who was going on leave, and Warwick came up to Bn HQ to replace him.

Tue Feb 6 Questioned a couple of prisoners brought in about 8 am, and got quite a lot of information from one. Kept busy all day with routine jobs. Wrote letters in evening, and heard Jerry shells going overhead and bursting in Faenza, which we had not heard for some time.

Wed Feb 7 Usual jobs. Feeling pretty bored with things.

Thu Feb 8 A lot of jobs cropped up, including a trace to do, and the usual work on arrears of war diary. Made preparations for Blam's departure for NZ on replacement scheme next day.

Fri Feb 9 Said goodbye to Blam, who left 10 am. In afternoon went in jeep through driving rain along horrible roads through Celle to a neighbouring Polish HQ in a house we had occupied just before Xmas, with a trace of our positions. Had a bit of a struggle with the language, as Polish interpreter was not too hot on the English. Back at Bn HQ finished catching up with arrears of war diary, and so felt very pleased with myself.

Sat Feb 10 Getting settled into job as I Sgt, and temporary boss of I department, as we had no IO. Kept busy with daily jobs such as situation reports. In afternoon walked over to C Coy with general situation maps. Jerry's artillery much more active than at any time since we came into line, but nothing came close to us.

Sun Feb 11 Very uneventful, with usual jobs. Hauled out of bed at 10.30 pm to question a very talkative prisoner.

Mon Feb 12 Feeling very fed up with so long a spell in line, and anxious to get out for a rest. Cheered by prospect of being relieved in two days' time. Busy day.

Tue Feb 13 Fixed things up with Maori IO, who came in morning to jack up our relief by Maori Bn next day.

Wed Feb 14 Handed over to Maori Bn in morning, and left Bn HQ 10 am for reserve billets in Faenza. Settled in quite good quarters, and went with the boys and had a most necessary and overdue shower. Had clean out of old papers in I truck in afternoon, and got rid of quite a lot. John Harrison came round from Bde HQ and spent evening with us.

Thu Feb 15 Full day on jacking up war diary for posting away. Jack Peters came to see me in afternoon.

Fri Feb 16 Again busy working on war diary, and doing trace for river crossing manoeuvre to take place shortly. Had an impromptu party and singsong in evening, during which Ted Ross (26 Bn I Section) came in to see us.

Sat Feb 17 Dental inspection in morning. In afternoon hiked out to Lamone River 3 miles from Faenza, and watched river crossing exercise.

Sun Feb 18 Church service and communion in YMCA in morning. Sid Gaudin dropped in to see us in afternoon.

Mon Feb 19 More work on war diary, this time arranging appendices. In evening went with the boys to listen to an Italian orchestra playing in the YMCA.

Tue Feb 20 Went up to 21 Bn HQ in morning, and learnt their lay-out in readiness for our move into line next day. Kept busy for rest of day and evening with war diary and jacking up gear to be taken into line with us.

Wed Feb 21 Loaded up jeep and went up to 21 Bn HQ, fairly near our previous HQ but a few hundred yards off the main road to the right over railway line. Got established in a small room. Jack Linklater and I were the only I blokes at Bn HQ, and we shared the room with Bill Tait. Very busy day getting maps, aerial photos etc. jacked up for our stay in line. Played bezique with Jack in evening.

Thu Feb 22 Again flat out getting ourselves organised and all our maps etc. jacked up, and beginning to see daylight through the mass of work. In afternoon had a trip round forward companies and saw I blokes (Tom Forbes, Bill Dobson and Tom Hay) with companies. Got to C and D Coys all right by jeep, but had to cross paddocks on foot to get to B Coy, as road was under Jerry's observation. First instalment of ex-Pacific officers arrived at Bn HQ, and I saw one or two old acquaintances among them.

Fri Feb 23 Wrote up more war diary, and very pleased to be getting into some more recent history now. Saw some more old acquaintances among new officers, including Fred Marett, whom we were very pleased to see back. Played cards with Jack in evening. Jerry was throwing a lot of stuff back in reply to an attack being done on our right, but nothing near us.

Sat Feb 24 Beautiful day, hard to realize war was so close, as front was very quiet. Kept pretty busy as usual. Had a good session of bridge with sigs in evening.

Sun Feb 25 A lot of Jerry propaganda leaflets fired at us in morning. I had to go up to mortar position to collect some, so on way had a good pamphlet hunt in paddocks and got quite a lot. Had a good laugh out of them. In afternoon had another trip up in jeep round mortars and Vickers guns. Kept going steadily with routine jobs at Bn HQ. Did some writing in evening, and another game of bezique with Jack.

Mon Feb 26 Took another trip round companies after lunch to see the boys and take up a few things they wanted. Another lovely sunny day, very pleasant touring round countryside in jeep under such quiet conditions. Spent evening yarning with the boys.

Tue Feb 27 A new IO, Pat Gresson, came to Bn HQ. Usual jobs during day, and in addition Jack and I cleaned a lot of old X-ray plates for use as extra talc on maps – a filthy job, involving soaking them in hot water and then scraping the emulsion off them with razor blades.

Wed Feb 28 Much like any other day – still fairly busy. Another session of bridge in evening.

Thu Mar 1 A recce party of Poles, who were to relieve us in a few days' time, came to Bn HQ in morning for a look round. Otherwise business as usual. In afternoon had a vigorous game of deck tennis with some of the lads on an improvised court outside house.

Fri Mar 2 Spent day busy jacking everything up for a big mock attack staged in evening to test Jerry's defensive fire. Very noisy during show – I was decoding messages, not much to do and not very interesting. Too much like 'Playing soldiers'.

Sat Mar 3 Made preliminary arrangements for move back to Camerino after our relief. In afternoon played more games of deck tennis with the boys; getting very enthusiastic over it. After tea Jack and I went in jeep to a house near by and collected more X-ray plates for use as talc. Bridge session in evening.

Sun Mar 4 Polish battalion relieving us arrived early, and after a long wait round we got clear and back to billets in Faenza 11 am. Went to same billet we had had before last stay in line. Packed truck in afternoon, and also had to search round Faenza to find the owner of a bedroll which had strayed into our quarters. Truck went down to Forli after tea, with half the gang on board, for convenience in forming up convoy next morning. Had a few hours' broken sleep with no blankets, as they were all on truck.

Mon Mar 5 Up 2.30 am, got our gear on I jeep, and after a wait in main square of Faenza left 3.30 am, leading Bn convoy. Picked up rest of trucks in Forli. Sat in back of jeep with Bill Dobson, and had bitterly cold ride. Kept ourselves from freezing to death by occasionally passing round a bottle of whisky Pat Gresson had thoughtfully brought along – Jack Linklater, who was riding his motor bike and was so much the colder, pulled alongside us every now and again and had a nip too. Went through Cesena, Rimini (just at daybreak), Cattolica, Pesaro, stopped for an hour for breakfast at Fano, then on in much warmer weather through Senigallia, Ancona, through lovely country past Loreto and along seashore. Turned inland at Porto Civitanova and went up Chienti River valley, through Tolentino and through some wild gorges to Camerino – very pleased to see our old haunts again. Went to old locality at Mecciano, arriving 2.30 pm, but found that Jim Bevin (who had come on in advance to arrange billets) had stuck us in a very poor room over a stable ¼ mile from village. Bill Dobson, Tom Hay, Jack Linklater and I went to visit an Italian family with whom Bill had made firm friends on our former visit, and were invited there for supper that evening. Heard that I truck had had an accident, so had to go in jeep to B Echelon, some miles away, to borrow blankets for the night. Got back to find I truck had been towed in to Bn HQ in our absence. Supper went off well, although Tom Hay did almost all the talking and put our halting Italian to shame. Home 10.30 pm, and slept like a log.

Tue Mar 6 Not satisfied with present billets, so tried to jack up a room in Mecciano itself, and messed round until 3 pm waiting for arrangements to be finalized. At last we got two good rooms vacated by the officers, who were going to a 'better 'ole' in a mansion some way away. Shifted in after tea. Had a few tunes on a piano in lobby of our house. Started to unload truck, which was booked for the workshops. In evening Bill Dobson, Tom Hay, Jack Linklater and I again teamed up with the owners of our house, and had a great yarn. They were more or less the big shots of Mecciano. Very pleased to be back with comforts such as electric light again, and looking forward to our stay in spite of having been considerably messed about during day.

Wed Mar 7 Had a lot of running round in jeep to do – Pat Gresson and I went to Bde HQ in Camerino in morning, and were stranded for some time by jeep being recalled to Bn by a telephone message. Held up so long that rest of jobs had to be held over until afternoon, when I took some maps to an NCO's school in a big house over the other side of Camerino, collected a map board from Bn YMCA, and several other jobs. Got all our gear off the truck and reorganized during day. Had to go with some of the boys to Camerino in provost truck after tea to bring home a couple of drunks. Spent evening yarning with owners of our house.

Thu Mar 8 Busy morning, continuing jacking-up process, typing news and putting together appendices for war diary. In afternoon went in jeep over to command truck, which was living at mansion where officers were, and made a start on getting February's war diary typed. Walked back across country.

Fri Mar 9 Went to Div HQ in Matelica in morning to get what dope we could for maps. Had a kick round with football in afternoon, and spent evening with our friends round the lane that we had had supper with the first night. Had a bit of a job to drag Tom Hay away from there, as he found the local brew a bit too much to his liking.

Sat Mar 10 Some jobs to do, and had a tough time trying to make out a chart of NZ Div organization. In afternoon took situation map round to D Coy in jeep. Had a big party in evening to celebrate Jack Linklater's birthday.

Sun Mar 11 After lunch went for a walk with Warwick, across the valley to the castle of Rocca d'Atello and over the hills past farmhouses. Got home 4 pm. Most pleasant ramble in sun, and on way watched a party of lads playing a novel game consisting of rolling small wooden circles along the road, a matter for much skill as the road was very winding, and the idea was to keep the circle on the road for as far as possible. Had a very pleasant hour before tea with the owners of our house, playing the piano. Also had a few games of deck tennis with the boys on a court behind village church. Treated myself to a bath in evening.

Mon Mar 12 Went with some of the I Sec to Bn NCOs' school in a big house near Camerino and mapped out a compass march exercise we were to give them. Made my march over pretty rough country, up thorny banks and along steep hillsides, and took a fiendish delight in it. Had several games of deck tennis in afternoon. In evening went by truck to pictures in Camerino, and saw 'Madame Curie'.

Tue Mar 13 Again went up to NCOs' school and checked work we had done previous day. In afternoon had a soccer practice at a ground about 3 miles from Bn HQ, collecting all necessary gear on the way, but only 6 turned up – most disappointing. Came back fairly played out.

Wed Mar 14 Spent most of day up at NCOs' school with all I Sec, giving instruction on map and compass work. Very pleasant in sunshine, and quite enjoyed it. Played a bit of deck tennis after tea, and a bit of bridge in evening.

Thu Mar 15 Another trip round battalion in jeep in morning, to do various jobs and jack up maps. A strenuous bout of deck tennis in afternoon. Jack Linklater, Tom Hay, Bill Dobson and I spent evening with the Pichetti family, our special friends round the lane.

Fri Mar 16 Battalion parade in morning, practice for a forthcoming brigade parade. Hot day, and felt like a limp rag when we had finished fooling round parade ground. Sharp thunderstorm in afternoon, and we had to postpone a projected soccer practice. Spent evening with Scagnetti family (owners of our house), yarning and playing piano.

Sat Mar 17 Got daily news and typed it, and several other jobs in morning. After lunch Warwick and I climbed Monte Primo, a 4000-foot mountain in the neighbourhood – steep and tiring climb up, during which we had a yarn with two little shepherd boys, and a furious gale blowing at the top, but a most glorious view over country in all directions. Made good time on climb. On way down got into conversation with a local hard shot at little hamlet of San Silvestro, and came down to Seppio with him, calling in at almost every house en route for a glass of wine. Got home 6.30 pm, and poached ourselves some eggs for tea. Altogether a great afternoon's trip.

Sun Mar 18 Had a memorial service and church parade in morning. Spent a very enjoyable afternoon with Jack Linklater and Bill Dobson at the Pichettis', and evening with the Scagnettis, playing piano and yarning with two Italian soldiers who were visiting. Evening turned into an impromptu dance about 10 pm.

Mon Mar 19 Again cleaned up and typed news, and held the fort while the rest of the boys were away at a lecture. Spent most of afternoon playing deck tennis. Heard in evening that Pat Gresson (IO) had gone to hospital.

Tue Mar 20 Lot of jobs to do all round battalion, and so spent morning going round in jeep getting jobs cleaned up. Drew up map of an imaginary area which we were to make a model of later in week. Played deck tennis after lunch, and then went round with boys to the Pichettis' for a yarn.

Wed Mar 21 Practice for big ceremonial parade to be held on Saturday – we managed to get there and back by jeep, being a very small party. Very displeased to get a job in afternoon, printing menus for an officers' dinner, but did it amid loud grumbles from all at such foolery. Had to go down with some of the boys in truck to pick up Jack Linklater, whose motorbike had had a puncture a couple of miles down the road, and then the truck itself broke down through a petrol blockage, luckily near one of our companies, so a mechanic was handy to fix it. In evening spent a short time with the Scagnetti family yarning.

Thu Mar 22 Went over to officers' house, and prepared a piece of ground for making a sand table, after a bit of argument with the owners of the ground, who objected to their land being dug up. Went to pioneers' workshop on way home and got a swag of wooden blocks to help with sand model – to portray houses etc. Good strenuous session of deck tennis in afternoon. Spent evening at Pichettis' house, including a supper of omelette, and had a lot of fun helping to make the omelette and wash up afterwards, to the amusement of the women of the household, who were totally unused to men doing chores. One of the best evenings to date.

Fri Mar 23 Spent morning modelling sand table over at officers' house, and just got finished by lunch time. Spent afternoon in dress rehearsal for big parade next day, parading with C Coy for the purpose. Got a lot of amusement out of the way C Coy's commander, Tuan Emery, conducted parade. Went down to ground in valley below Mecciano by truck. Rehearsal went off pretty well, and Maj-Gen Kippenberger took the salute. More games of deck tennis after tea.

Sat Mar 24 Big parade in morning, when we were inspected by Gen McCreary (8th Army commander) and Tiny Freyberg. Hot sunny day, and we were kept standing in the heat for far too long – parade finished 12.30. Walked home up short cut leading past Pichettis' house, and called in there on way. Played more deck tennis in afternoon, and in evening Warwick and I went to Camerino to hear an Italian orchestra. Horrible performance, and halfway through we got sick of it, and went out and yarned to some of the boys in YMCA until it was time to go home.

Sun Mar 25 Went to a short church service and communion at Mergnano San Savino, where Support Coy was situated – lovely day, and a very pleasant walk down. Got two inoculations after lunch, and then went round to Pichettis' for a yarn.

Mon Mar 26 Didn't sleep too comfortably, and had a very sore arm from inoculation. Went to Camerino in morning, to get dope for maps from Bde I Sec, and took primus stove in to be repaired – had quite a hunt round before finding a place to have it done. Went back in afternoon and collected primus, and also brought all our map boards back from A Coy to our own place to be furbished up.

Played deck tennis after tea, a one-handed game as each of us had one sore arm. Spent evening playing bezique with Jack Linklater.

Tue Mar 27 Fairly busy with odd jobs, including a grand sorting out and burning of old maps, but managed to find time for a few games of deck tennis. Spent evening at Pichettis' yarnning.

Wed Mar 28 Spent morning making another sand table on the loosest ground available at officers' house. Went to dentist in afternoon, and had 4 teeth filled, then spent rest of afternoon strolling round Camerino – dull afternoon with a splash of rain occasionally. Had a brief look at the museum of Camerino University, which was small but well put together. Again spent evening at Pichettis', and had an omelette supper which we cooked ourselves and washed up afterwards.

Thu Mar 29 Checked our compasses, and jacked up a few of the I Sec food and map boxes. Got news, which we had previously suspected, that we were to move up to line again on following Sunday. Had another solid deck tennis session, and the best and most hilarious evening to date at Pichettis', including a supper of home-made sausage and a sing-song.

Fri Mar 30 Very gloomy to hear news of our departure for an operational role on Sunday – most reluctant to leave all our friends and the good times we had had at Mecciano. Jacked up maps for Pat Gresson, who was leaving with advance party. Played more deck tennis after lunch, and again spent evening with the boys at Pichettis'. Had to carry Bill Dobson there and back, as he had had the bad luck to hurt his knee playing football, but Jack Linklater, Tom Hay and I took turns at carrying him on our backs, and did the job with no mishaps.

Sat Mar 31 Started to get things jacked up for next day's move, but didn't get very far. Bill Dobson had to go out with a crook knee. Played a few more games of deck tennis during day. Spent evening at Scagnettis', and had supper there, but was very glad to get away about 11 pm.

Sun Apr 1 Busy morning packing truck and getting everything jacked up for move up to line in afternoon. Had to go up in truck to B Echelon and the officers' house to jack up more gear, and in consequence had to go flat out to be ready in time for Easter dinner at Pichettis', to which Jack Linklater and I were invited. Had a wonderful dinner and a great time there, and felt like poisoned dogs after it. Another last-minute rush to get away in convoy 3.45 pm, and took an affectionate farewell of the Pichettis and Scagnettis. I had to lead convoy, travelling in adjutant's jeep. Had a good fast trip through Camerino, Tolentino (where we got mixed up with an Easter procession), and along the same route we had come down, via Ancona, Senigallia, Fano, Pesaro, Rimini, Cesena and Forli.

Mon Apr 2 Left main road and went along lanes without knowing where we were going to end up. Finally arrived at new area 3.30 am, a reserve area about 3 miles from the front in flat fields divided by rows of grape vines. Had a few hours' sleep. Found a swag of maps awaiting us in a room in a nearby farmhouse which was to be our workroom, and had a busy day getting map boards etc, all up-to-date. Dug myself a slit trench to sleep in, the first for some months, and stuck my bivvy up over it. Had to take a bit of slinging off while I was doing it, as most of the boys were not bothering to dig in.

Tue Apr 3 Very busy day, and succeeded in getting all new maps disposed of. Monty McClymont visited us in afternoon and had a yarn. One end of my slit trench was very wet due to broken vine roots dripping into it, so I dug another at right angles, using the part of the old trench that was dry. Spent evening in our room, which we carefully blacked out.

Wed Apr 4 Another busy day with all sorts of jobs, including appendicizing war diary. Had a trip round companies in jeep in morning, and to Bde HQ in afternoon to get maps up-to-date. Had some games of deck tennis after tea on a court we made in the middle of our bivvy area.

Thu Apr 5 Had another busy day going round companies in jeep, with maps and general information, and also routine jobs at Bn HQ. However, found time for more deck tennis in evening.

Fri Apr 6 Said goodbye to Bill Tait, the RSM, who was leaving for NZ. Again pretty busy keeping all the maps jacked up. After lunch gave a lecture to Bn HQ on the war situation. Had usual games of deck tennis after tea. Just after we had gone to bed Jerry shelled us solidly for two hours, and I was thankful for my slit trench, especially when I heard others evacuating hurriedly and seeking shelter.

Sat Apr 7 Gave a lecture to Support Coy on war situation. In afternoon went up with Pat Gresson and other Bn HQ officers and recced a spot some distance forward for the battalion when it moved up to follow through the crossing of the Senio River. Had a very necessary shower at 23 Bn's mobile showers, which came round to us. Another solid deck tennis session after tea.

Sun Apr 8 Went to communion 7.30 am. General air of anxious expectancy all round, as big attack was going in next day. Went up with Pat Gresson and the company commanders in afternoon to get an idea of the ground we would be travelling over. Went to 21 Bn HQ, well up behind Senio, and got to know the route up there. Quite a busy day, and got more or less ready to move up next morning.

Mon Apr 9 Left Bn HQ in jeep 9 am for forward reserve position. Monty McClymont dropped in to see us just before we left. Got established in a room in the house we had previously recced. Busy all day getting map boards fixed up with all details of big attack across Senio which was taking place that night. In early afternoon swarms of bombers came over and did over Jerry's positions thoroughly, and all afternoon a tremendous artillery barrage interspersed with air attacks went on, making things very noisy. Attack went in 7 pm, and news of its success came drifting in, as well as a lot of prisoners on their way back. Questioned a few of them without learning much. Got a few hours' sleep wrapped in a blanket.

Tue Apr 10 Called forward 4 am, as bridge across Senio was now firmly established, and 23 Bn was to move across to a handier position. My job was to guide companies to our area across river, a 3-mile walk. Easy to find route, as it was full of traffic, but had many hold-ups due to traffic congestion in front of us, several vehicles having been ditched in the dark. Crossed by a Bailey bridge made by blowing holes in stop bank of river to avoid having to build ramps to top. Evidence of effectiveness of our barrage everywhere across river – country covered in shell holes, houses knocked down, and an occasional dead Jerry. Arrived at temporary billet, a former Jerry HQ, soon after daybreak, and watched companies coming in past us one after the other. Saw a leather jerkin somebody had abandoned in ditch beside road, so fished it out, and it served me well for some weeks. Very glad to have a wash and brush up, and had to hang round for some time waiting for word to move forward again. Questioned another stray Jerry. Called forward in early afternoon, went forward in jeep, and had to find a place for Bn HQ. Examined several houses without finding a suitable one, and finally, feeling very fed up, had to go further ahead and dig in beside bank of dry Lugo Canal, with the fighting going on about 200 yards ahead. Stayed there all a long weary afternoon, while 23 Bn went through and did an attack. Held up by Jerry tanks, which had a nasty habit of firing fast shells low over our heads. Had a few spells on log during afternoon. Moved into a house just over canal at dusk – I went over and found room for I Sec, and then went back to canal

bank and took over log until the whole outfit moved into house just on dark. Looked forward to a good night's sleep but didn't get it. First I had to question some prisoners, and jack up transport and escorts back for them, not an easy job at that time of night – had to knock up provosts at neighbouring house to do it. Then at 11 pm got a sudden call to go up and establish a tactical HQ further up. Rough ride in jeep with a few of the section, across paddocks, ditches and deviations, and got to house where Sandy Thomas was already established – it was his custom to go on ahead and then call for a tactical HQ to come up after him. Sleepless night, flat out logging progress of advance to Santerno River.

Wed Apr 11 Very weary at daybreak, so was glad when the rest of the section came up, and those of us who had been there early managed to get some rest – I lay on the floor in the corner of a room with a blanket round me. Busy afternoon preparing for another advance across Santerno in evening. Same thing happened as on previous night – I had to go up again with a few of Bn HQ and make a tactical HQ just short of Santerno. Went up with Sandy Thomas in his jeep, with one or two more of the boys, including Stan Gilchrist. Were fired on by a Spandau from the Santerno bank on the way. Got settled in a house by the road leading straight up to the river, and had to make out traces of artillery tasks while Sandy issued orders to company commanders for immediate attack across Santerno.

Thu Apr 12 Logged progress of attack in small hours, and snatched a few hours' sleep, broken by frequent Jerry mortaring round about. Attack established good foothold over Santerno. At midday Bn HQ moved up over river into newly captured town of S. Agata, and Jack Linklater, Jack Mettrick and I had to go forward to companies with written orders for a new advance in afternoon. Waded Santerno near a blown bridge – it was only a few inches deep – went through S. Agata and located C Coy up forward, and Fred Marett (A Coy commander) on way back. Flat out again all afternoon as attack went in. Moved up again 6.30 pm to a new HQ ½ mile further forward, carrying a lot of gear, as jeep had gone on a recce. Heard that Stan Gilchrist, who was on recce as wireless operator, had been badly wounded. As show was not moving forward again that night, we all got a fair sleep, and I slept like the dead on a pile of loose wheat. Our HQ was in a big house with the top storey badly bashed by our artillery, and the ruins of a shed still smouldering in the yard.

Fri Apr 13 Sudden move forward in early morning, and we followed up advance party in jeep to a new HQ. Found them a mile or two ahead at a row of small houses on a very dusty road, and set up shop there. Our brigade went into reserve as advance passed through us, so we had a fairly lazy day and a clean up. Heavy Jerry mortaring just ahead of us all day, and a salvo of tank shells landed near us in evening. I truck caught up with us in afternoon.

Sat Apr 14 Big barrage in small hours, very noisy as guns were all round us. Sat in reserve all day. Got map boards and gear jacked up for next forward move. In afternoon went round companies in jeep with a map showing advance made since start of attack. Had a game of bridge with boys in evening.

Sun Apr 15 Spell from work, and had a full day writing – wrote IO letters. Got news that we were going in again next day. Another big barrage went over in evening, making the house shake.

Mon Apr 16 Got jacked up to move forward again, and left with the boys in jeep 2.30 pm to establish a tactical HQ. Drove through clouds of blinding dust along back roads, across Sillaro River and across paddocks by home-made tracks past the HQ of 25 Bn whom we were relieving. Called in

a flat open plain, with none of our troops out in front as far as we knew, and only a vague idea how far away Jerry was. He was mortaring a house a few hundred yards away to our right. I had to go back nearly to Sillaro and guide up rest of battalion, not a pleasant job as roads were congested with traffic and very dusty. Got a lift back up in Sandy Thomas's jeep, and had no sooner arrived than it was decided to shift further forward. Went on I jeep with advance party, and had most hectic ride across country, bumping over ditches and several times having to manhandle jeep through them. Got settled in new HQ across a canal, and did a spell on log while companies went forward and got established for the night.

Tue Apr 17 Wakened 6.15 am to leave in a hurry with Keith Burt (sigs officer) to contact the companies, who were again advancing. Cold ride in jeep through clammy morning mist, and across fields, passing one or two abandoned Jerry guns on the way, and some completely flattened houses. Found A Coy and D Coy just across another canal, whose bridges Jerry had blown, and some of the boys were trying to build a makeshift bridge out of bales of straw and anything available to get vehicles across. Stayed with A Coy for some time waiting for Bn HQ to come up, and had two breakfasts with them, the first a feed of bread and bacon provided by the Italians, and very tasty. Some of the boys arrived up and told me that Bn HQ had settled into a house further back, so I went back there and we got established in a small room. On road passed more Jerry guns and vehicles knocked out, and there was an abandoned gun in the field a few yards from our house. Spent rest of day forgetting war as much as possible, as we had gone into reserve again, and Warwick and I had a good but not very successful game of bridge with Ron Kennedy and Cam Wilson of the sigs.

Wed Apr 18 Expected to stay put for a day or two, and so loafed until middle of afternoon, when we got an enormous list of code points that we had to put on maps. Word came that we were to be prepared to move at 2 hours' notice to support an attack going in that evening, and so had to jack up map boards again and get everything ready for a quick shift. Big barrage went over, making things very rowdy and lighting up the night with flashes. Got work cleaned up 11 pm.

Thu Apr 19 Time for departure kept being put off, and finally we got away 5 pm to take over from Div Cav Bn. Another dusty trip up. Passed many gruesome signs of previous night's fighting in the shape of dead Jerries lying beside road. Got jacked up in new HQ in a house a little way off main road, our room being a tiny dark cubby-hole lined with bales of straw, so hot and stuffy that I slept with only shirt on and nothing over me. Wakened 11.30 pm to question some prisoners.

Fri Apr 20 Shift on log 3-5 am. Another early morning move to a new HQ further forward, as advance had progressed in night. Directed to a house on a back lane, but arrived to find that HQ had gone forward again, and there was nothing there but one or two of the boys with two more prisoners. Went further up along lane to another farmhouse, and set up shop there – lane became a high road for great convoys of vehicles later in day, and very dusty. Had to get our room cleaned out as it had been used for killing pigs, and after all that it was invaded by sigs' telephone exchange. Our forward companies crossed Idice River in early afternoon, and were heavily shelled for some hours, a few of the overs coming our way. I jeep was up forward on a recce, and it got spattered with shrapnel and two tyres punctured. Expecting to move up ourselves, and the rest of the I Sec went to a forward HQ early in evening, but I had to wait until Sandy Thomas went up 11 pm and go with him. Got a little sleep in intervals of logging a fresh attack.

Sat Apr 21 Moved up again with advance party over Idice in jeep, and established another HQ in a big, badly knocked about farmhouse. Pretty busy preparing maps for new push. Ted Dowland, our jeep driver, had a piece of luck finding a Jerry trailer in a shed. It proved most useful hitched on to back of jeep. A bit of mortaring round about in morning, making us vacate chairs and sit on floor

on one occasion, in order to be below window level. Moved forward again 8 pm with advance party along lanes to another house, a few mortars landing just beyond it as we arrived. Outhouse was on fire. Had a pathetic interview with the woman of the house, whose father had been killed that day, and she clung to me and begged me not to let the soldiers pinch her furniture. Had short sleep on a layer of loose wheat.

Sun Apr 22 Sleep was very short indeed, as I had to question several prisoners and then spend small hours marking reference points on a map. Left again to go forward with recce party 5.30 am. Advance continued during day with no Jerry opposition, and morning became one mad scramble to go forward and keep Bn HQ more or less organized. Went forward first on pillion of Jack Linklater's motor bike and got into a palatial villa that Jerry had systematically looted, and got a great reception from civilians on the way, but were no sooner there than we had to go forward again, first across Route 64 to small village of San Marino, where we found the road badly blown, and came across our companies on the advance, and then on a little way to another once splendid mansion, where we managed to stop long enough to have lunch. Everybody in high spirits because Jerry had broken, but all hot and bothered because we were running off our maps, and had to change boards hurriedly and frequently. On again after lunch to a farm house beside road, where we spent most of afternoon, and then forward again flat out, through village of Bentivoglio, where Jerry had tried to block road by blowing buildings across it, and pulled up at a big three storied institute of some kind just through village. Had tea there, then tore on again in jeep in early evening, and went to 4 more HQ before we stopped, including one where we were nearly smothered with the welcome we got from the civilians, who crowded into the courtyard as we came in. Snatched a bit of sleep at another house. Pulled in for night at a farm near village of San Vincenzo. Forward companies reached Reno River, still without opposition from Jerry.

Mon Apr 23 Working hard to keep situation logged as our companies prepared to cross Reno. At 2 am I had to go up front with Sandy Thomas in his jeep to contact our forward companies – road crammed with Maori Bn's traffic, also moving up to river. Got a little sleep between 4 and 6 am. At 9.30 am moved again to a house on outskirts of San Vincenzo, and things quietened down, as we were not advancing further in meantime. Peaceful day until we got orders to move over Reno and prepare for advance to Po River. Waited and waited for word to move, which came 5 pm, and then we got caught up in a gigantic traffic jam waiting to cross the only bridge over Reno. After moving 100 yards in half an hour I walked on, past a solid line of several hundred tanks, guns and vehicles of all sorts, and just at the bridge had the luck to strike 23 Bn sigs' jeep about to cross, and got a lift, riding on its trailer. Got to new HQ in another big farm before the rest of the I Sec, and by the aid of diplomacy got the owner to unlock a store room full of furniture for our use. I jeep did not arrive until 2 hours later. I had a stroll along side road on which HQ was situated, which was lined the whole way with cunningly camouflaged Jerry ammunition dumps, many of them still intact. Expected a full sleep, but new instructions came in to continue advance at dawn next day, necessitating another shift of map boards, which kept us busy until 11 pm.

Tue Apr 24 Wakened again 1 am, to go to a conference re the morning's move, and mark up routes on company map boards. Up again 5 am, and moved off 6.15 am in full battalion convoy through village of Mirabello to Bondeno, a few miles short of the Po. As we passed Bondeno, armoured cars were sitting on the road (which ran along the top of a flood bank) shelling the town, where Jerry snipers were still holding out. Set up HQ in a very flash house, and had a pleasant day waiting in the sun, including a good clean up. Went round road to where D Coy had discovered a Jerry sugar warehouse, and a milling crowd of soldiers and civilians were fighting to get at the sugar. Major Cox, D Coy commander, was controlling things, and at one time he had to relieve pressure on

the doorway by firing his pistol into the air. We got a bag of sugar out of it. Went on again 4 pm through little village of San Biagio to another HQ a few hundred yards short of the Po, finding it with some difficulty. Attack across Po scheduled for 6 pm, and we were all set to go when show was postponed. Our HQ was in a school, and we slept in cellar which had been ingeniously made into a machine gun nest by Jerry. Organized some straw from barn of next-door house to make a bed.

Wed Apr 25 After all the months of talking about the Po crossing, it went off very tamely – companies crossed 2 am without a shot being fired, although the atmosphere at Bn HQ was tense as they were going across. Delays came afterwards when bridging operations began, and we waited round all morning to be called forward over river. Borrowed a bicycle somebody had got from somewhere, and had a bit of a tour round the neighbourhood of HQ on it. Went back in jeep to Bondeno to deliver maps to companies, and on return found everybody preparing to move off. Had to wait for some time on bank of Po before crossing, as vehicles were being ferried across and there was only one landing stage available. Manhandled our trailer down steep incline to landing stage and on to ferry. Had an extra sail round on bosom of Po, as we had to wait for landing stage on north side to be clear, and watched heavy stuff being rafted across, and a pontoon bridge being built. Manhandled trailer up far bank again, then hitched it back on to jeep and went on to a house on outskirts of village of Ficarolo. Lot of work getting maps changed again. Went for a wander along stop bank of Po. Another advance north towards Adige River in afternoon, but everything seemed disorganized, as everyone appeared to be very tired and not worrying whether show went well or not. Found some marbles in a room, and the I Sec had a 'back-to-childhood' session with them in back yard. Shifted forward through Ficarolo 7 pm, and after wandering round country looking for a place to live got established in a farmhouse all by itself in the middle of a stretch of open country. More work with maps preparing to advance to Adige next day.

Thu Apr 26 Got a bit of sleep off and on, on some wheat in an attic. Away forward again in jeep in morning, and trip was in the nature of a triumphal procession; in every village and farm the Italians ran out, yelled and waved, and threw flowers on to jeep. I scored a white rose and stuck it in my hat. Had a lot of trouble finding our way over Tartaro and Maestra Canals, where most of the bridges were blown, and spent some time roaming round trying bridge after bridge until we finally found our way across. Pulled up in village of Crocetta, and got a warm welcome from the people, which showed itself in a practical way in the shape of some 3 dozen eggs. Slight shower of rain while there – first since start of our advance. Very pleased to see a big dump of Jerry guns, large and small, abandoned in Crocetta. Went on again in early afternoon to another HQ just short of Adige, near Radia Polesine, and got fixed up for crossing of river that night. Had time for a small game of bridge with the boys. Once more the crossing went off with very little trouble. Great news of success elsewhere on Italian front, as there had been for days past.

Fri Apr 27 Quiet day, as we were to stay put for a spell while 9 Bde carried on advance. Took a stroll down to Adige and watched engineers at work on pontoon bridge. Truck came up for a short while in afternoon, and we got what we wanted from it in the way of fresh gear.

Sat Apr 28 Did our best to forget the war for a bit. Had a trip to A Echelon on the back of Jack Linklater's motor bike to get some gear – not a very good ride, as road was greasy from rain the night before. Sudden warning order to move in afternoon, which startled us into a spate of activity with maps, but excitement died down when we learnt shift would not be until next day. News came over of Germany's having asked for an armistice, but we treated it with reserve. Jack Mettrick and I spent evening playing bridge with sigs at their house, and afterwards I dropped in and had a yarn with a civilian family next door to us, where a lot of our boys were.

Sun Apr 29 Left in full Bn convoy 9.30 am, crossed Adige by pontoon bridge, and away with a dash. Got a great reception as we passed villages and farms, more waving and flower throwing. Being the first jeep in the convoy, we came in for most of the flowers. Went through Este and Monselice, through lovely country thick with trees and vineyards, and past Jerry's 'Venetian Line' defences which he had made but never manned. Stopped on roadside a little past Monselice for lunch, and hung round all afternoon waiting for word to go. Took shelter from a heavy shower by throwing a bivvy tent over jeep and huddling inside. Went for a stroll round nearby lanes after tea, and got back just in time to pack up and move 7.30 pm. Went on main road to Padua, which we reached just as dusk was falling, and drove straight through, with cheering civilians on every corner. Continued along Padua-Venice highway, and were held up for some time by bomb holes in road, which slowed up convoy and made us feel very browned off. Sat in jeep getting colder and colder. Road skirted a big canal, beautiful in moonlight but bitterly cold, and passed turn-off to Venice, but it was too dark to see out to Venice itself. Went through Mestre with some difficulty in following NZ signs, and about 12 miles further on found our staging area, in a farmhouse just beside main road.

Mon Apr 30 Got to bed 3.30 am, and had to get up again 6.45 to go with Jack Linklater to Bde HQ to find out what was doing. Heard there was no immediate move for us. Passed a field crammed with German prisoners, some of thousands who had come in the day before. Went back to bed and slept all morning, and after lunch took a quick decision and left with Jack Mettrick and Tom Hay to hitch-hike to Venice. Road lined with soldiers doing the same thing, but we were luckier than most, and got to Venice in fairly quick time. City made a lovely sight rising from lagoon as we went out across causeway. Everything in Venice pretty well intact, even the port, factories and power plant as partisans had prevented Jerry from carrying out demolitions. Italian flags flew on every house, and streets thronged with people all eager to welcome the Allies. Town full of partisans, who had taken control and were patrolling streets winking out Fascists and stray Jerries. Saw several big crowds of Jerries being marched along streets, and one mob of civilians eagerly waiting to see some Fascists brought out of a house. Had the good luck to meet Monty McClymont as we entered Venice, and he went with us over Grand Canal and showed us the way to St Mark's Square, along a maze of narrow streets and over numerous bridges over small canals. Much impressed by St Mark's Square, one of the handsomest city squares I had seen. Interested to see the famous pigeons of St Mark – hundreds of them walking round square, and passers-by feeding them. Some Italians pointed out places of interest – Doge's Palace, Bridge of Sighs and Piombi prison, Giudecca and Isola San Giorgio. The three of us hired a gondola and went for a good tour round – as we pulled out we could see partisans attacking a house not far away with rifle fire and hand grenades. Wonderful view of city from out in mid-stream. Went round Giudecca Island, the gondolier pointing out all the outer islands in the lagoon, where the city's hospitals were situated, and then through a small canal to reach centre of town again. As we went along this canal a civilian called out inviting us in for a glass of wine, and we accepted, pulling up to house steps in gondola, and stepping straight out into house. Went on again across Giudecca Canal and through another 'back street' into Grand Canal, thence along Rio Nuovo to land side of city. Finished trip in a sharp rain shower. Lost Tom Hay just before leaving, but Jack and I got a lift back with a NZ truck, arriving 7 pm. Altogether one of the most memorable days ever.

Tue May 1 Managed to get rest of I Sec away to Venice for a quick visit. Another period of waiting to move on, and I went along road to see some cobbles in D Coy 26 Bn, catching them just as they were moving off. Got away 3.30 pm, and had painfully slow trip – waited for hours on road, moving sometimes less than ½ mile in an hour, to cross bridge over Piave River. Bad approaches to bridge made traffic very hard to get over. Crossed bridge 10 pm in pitch dark and slight rain, and went on 10 miles before stopping 12.30 am for a roadside meal.

Wed May 2 Trip continued all night, still very slow due to diversions and pitch darkness – rained quite heavily, and we jacked ourselves up as well as possible by hanging a gas cape over windward side of jeep and huddling together. Decided that jeep was very cramped quarters for 5 men in rain and cold. Dropped off to sleep occasionally, but only for a few minutes at a time. Halted on road from 5 to 8 am, and thawed ourselves out with a cup of tea, then on to village of San Giorgio di Nogaro, where we breakfasted on roadside. Arrived in staging area at Malisana, a short way off main road, 10 am. Billeted in unoccupied factory workers' flats, with the luxury of wooden floors, electric light and a bath. Treated myself to a hot bath in afternoon. Later I had to go with a party in 2 jeeps 50 miles away to collect a bunch of Jerries who wished to surrender to the British, but not to Italian partisans. Went out towards coast by country road, and found 500 Jerries surrounded by partisans looking like a gang of cut-throats in all sorts of picturesque and nondescript uniforms, with Jerry grenades in their belts and brandishing guns of all descriptions. Danger of a nasty scene between us and the partisans over disposal of Jerry weapons, but things were settled OK through partisan leader, who we were amazed to find was a Dunedin man named Grainger, an escaped prisoner, whose brother I had known in 23 Bn. Jerries linked up while their commander addressed them, finishing up with a 'Heil Hitler', and then marched off to main road by Tagliamento River, about ¾ hour's march, to wait for transport. Transport consisted of half a dozen portees and 15-cwt trucks running a ferry service, and we had to wait round until nearly 10 pm, getting colder and colder, until last of Jerries were taken away. I had had to do some very concentrated talking in German, Italian and French, as there was a Frenchman among partisans. While there heard of Jerry's unconditional surrender in Italy. Got home in open jeep – bitter ride through cutting wind and rain, and got back 11.30 pm, frozen through and very ready for bed.

Thu May 3 Off again 10 am, crossed Isonzo River and passed into territory where Tito's Yugoslav partisans were operating. Passed a big column of them on road, including several women, and parties of them in villages. Passed through Monfalcone and saw its shipbuilding yards, and got into bleak hilly country. Stopped at village of Duino and got billets in a palatial castle on a headland overlooking Adriatic, the property of an Austrian prince and his American wife. Lovely view from windows of Gulf of Trieste, from Trieste and beyond on one side, past Monfalcone to lagoons on the other. In afternoon Warwick and I went for a ramble to the shore below, borrowed a small boat and went for half an hour's row.

Fri May 4 Took on job of keeping war diary up to date while Pat Gresson got arrears of April's diary jacked up. Fair bit of rain in morning. Did some letter-writing in evening.

Sat May 5 Disturbing stories of possible trouble between us and Tito's men, but situation eased during day. Did odd jobs connected with war diary and getting general war maps jacked up. Had a play on very nice piano in castle in afternoon. After tea Tom Forbes and I explored estate, going down a tunnel cut through rock to where some Jerry coastal guns were sited on side of cliff overlooking Trieste and the sea, and then exploring beautifully laid out park, built on a steep face sloping down to the sea, with statues and cypress walks and all sorts of secluded nooks. Altogether a most romantic joint.

Sun May 6 Went to communion before breakfast, and church service later in morning. Beautiful day, and in afternoon Warwick, Ted Dowland and I went down to shore below castle and had first swim of season. Water too fresh to stay in long, but we felt great after it.

Mon May 7 'Route march' in morning, which consisted of popping away among scrub and sitting there until it was time to go home. Another swim in afternoon, water much warmer. Heard of Germany's surrender in Europe, so staged a small celebration.

Tue May 8 Had to march to Bn parade ground some 2 miles away, to hear lecture by Div I.O. (Major Cox) on Yugoslav political situation. Another grand swimming session with the boys in afternoon. Went for a stroll in evening with Warwick and Fred Ward, and afterwards climbed castle tower and watched victory celebrations in shape of Verrey lights, tracer and flares going up all along coast.

Wed May 9 Heard that we were to move out of castle in afternoon, as Corps HQ wanted to move in. Took a very poor view of this high-handed action. Had good long swim in morning, and left in jeep after tea, leaving behind us a few rude messages about Corps HQ. Passed on road long columns of Yugoslav partisans who were moving into Monfalcone. New home on a peninsula of low-lying land beside sea out through Monfalcone, at mouth of river estuary near Monfalcone shipyard. Pitched bivvies in a belt of trees. Lovely area for mosquitoes, which made themselves very unpopular. Slung a hammock with blankets between two trees, and slept in that.

Thu May 10 Big programme of swimming and sunbathing, but beach a great come-down after the beautiful rocks and deep water at Duino. Did a very little work on war diary. Rumours of another move in afternoon, but nothing definite. In evening had a game of bridge with the boys outside truck.

Fri May 11 More swimming and lazing round. In afternoon packed up to shift again, and moved after tea further inland to Medeazza, a village in the hills a few miles above Monfalcone, which had been completely destroyed by Jerry as a reprisal for partisan activities. Every house totally gutted and unroofed, only outer walls standing. Pitched bivvy in a corner of a bushy field. Went a stroll in evening over rocky hills and gullies behind camp, and got a lovely view over Monfalcone and lagoons along coast.

Sat May 12 Spent morning touring country in jeep with Pat Gresson – over back roads from Jamiano through Brestovizza, Goriano and other pleasant little towns to Aurisina, where we popped in to see 21 Bn. All the peasants of Slavonic origin, and all signs written up in Slav, and green welcome arches for Tito's troops at entrance to every village. Several villages and farms had been unroofed by Jerry, and looked most desolate. In evening went back to Brestovizza with the boys, a pleasant half-hour's walk over a hill footpath, and had a yarn with some of the local partisans.

Sun May 13 Left 8 am on 2 days' unofficial leave near Venice, Jack Linklater, Scotty Gibson, Tom Hay and I going with B Coy. Got pretty dusty up behind cab of truck, but had good trip, and reached leave 'camp', in among rail yards and shipyards on mainland opposite Venice, 11 am. Went into Venice by truck after lunch. The four of us, plus Ben Rice, spent afternoon combining business with pleasure, by having a good look round per gondola and at the same time looking for a place to sleep – no easy job. Looked up an acquaintance of Tom's whom he had met on his previous trip to Venice, and he helped us on our room-hunt with no success. Finally got a room in the place where we had been invited in for a drink on our first trip there, over on Giudecca Island. They weren't too sure about taking us at first, but decided to after a bit of deliberation. In evening went over to main part of town in ferry and had a walk round, admiring St Mark's Square and the foreshore under full electric light. Place crammed with people taking their Sunday evening stroll, holding singing parties on gondolas in midstream, and generally having a good time. Very hot night, slept three in a double bed with only a sheet over us.

Mon May 14 Had good day's look round Venice. Climbed Campanile and enjoyed view of whole city and lagoons, and from this vantage point watched Galileo's clock striking 11 – bronze figures hitting gongs with clubs, and figures of saints or something coming out of a little door in one side of

clock and going across front to the other side. Ben Rice and I had a wander through St Mark's, where we saw a mass being sung, and through Doge's Palace, with its old senatorial and council chambers. Went across Bridge of Sighs and looked inside old Piombi Prison. In afternoon went in gondola to Public Gardens (which lived up to their name by being closed to visitors), and then Jack and I strolled through town streets, across Rialto Bridge, and almost got bushed in narrow streets on far side of canal. Found our way home 6 pm with the help of a map and a good fast boat. Another wander round in evening, and it was so hot that Jack and I took a long stroll along Giudecca waterfront 11 pm before turning in.

Tue May 15 Up early, and went to car park in Piazzale Roma and caught truck for leave camp 7.30 am. Good trip out, again sitting up behind cab of truck, and stopped halfway at Portogruaro to assuage our thirst, the day being hot and the road dusty. Passed another of our companies on its way to Venice on leave, Warwick and one or two of the boys with it. Back to Bn area 1 pm and spent rest of day very lazily.

Wed May 16 Enervatingly hot. Jacked up war diary appendices in morning. In afternoon went in RSM's truck to a beach not far away, and had delightful afternoon's swimming and loafing. Had the bad luck to gash my foot badly on an old hulk in the bay where we were swimming, and went to RAP with it when we got back.

Thu May 17 Went on sick parade with my foot, and got it dressed. Spent afternoon looking after command truck while its members went for a swim, and typed some war diary while there. Had a good bath after tea, getting hell from mosquitoes in the process.

Fri May 18 Jack Linklater and I went with B Coy on an all-day jaunt by truck through Gorizia to Caporetto, and back again via Udine and Gorizia. Beautiful drive up Isonzo River gorge, with steep wooded hills. Had half an hour in Gorizia, where we bought some fruit from the public market, and lunch at Caporetto, a pretty little town in Alpine foothills. Spent two hours in Udine, and had a good look at the town, but it was uncomfortably hot, and was better and fresher in moving trucks. Went with boys in evening to a Kiwi Concert Party show at the Maori Bn at Iamiano.

Sat May 19 Went with recce party to lay out a new area on coast near Trieste, where we were taking over a job guarding coast road from 27 Bn. Came back feeling we would be on a win, as new area was an excellent one. My foot was very sore, and I had a good limp on all day. Jacked up series of maps for war diary.

Sun May 20 Shifted to new area in morning, and I Sec had job guiding Bn HQ trucks into their places. Bivvied in scrub by roadside, just across main road from a little jetty enclosing a small harbour, which provided grand swimming both inside and outside enclosure. Good day's loafing, sun-bathing and swimming. Went a stroll in evening with the lads along road to Barcola, passing hundreds of bathers – this stretch of coast was obviously a favourite place for the people of Trieste to bathe. Barcola really was an outlying suburb of Trieste; trams ran out to there from the city.

Mon May 21 More disturbing news of possible trouble between us and Tito's men over possession of Trieste. Few jobs in the way of maps and war diary. Went another stroll with Warwick in evening, passing time of day with several cobblers en route.

Tue May 22 Not so much swimming, as there was a strong wind and choppy sea, and a sharp shower in afternoon. Odd jobs during day, and a game of bridge and the customary walk along waterfront in evening.

Wed May 23 in charge of a 24-hour picquet round the lines, starting at 9 am – shifts 9-11 am, 3-5 and 9-11 pm. Warwick and I went for customary stroll and to pass time of day with cobblers in evening. Steady rain set in 9 pm, and my third picquet shift was a fairly wet one. Evacuated mosquito net and slept in back of truck.

Thu May 24 On picquet again 3-5 am – rain had stopped, and I had a pleasant 2 hours' yarn with Tom Hay, who was on with me. More swimming during day, pleasant conditions as there was a slight swell which carried us soothingly up and down in the water. In evening went with a party of the boys to a small dance in a private house on outskirts of Trieste, and had great evening's fun – first real dance I had been to for two years. Left there midnight, and were halted in street by a Yugoslav sentry who called out the guard – about eight or ten men formed a firing position on road with a machine gun and gave us quite a scare. They explained they thought we were a party of Fascists. Walked all the way home.

Fri May 25 Water beautifully calm, another long swim. A bit of work in afternoon, as a big list of reference points had to go on maps. Again went to dance in evening at the same house, and enjoyed it thoroughly. Careful to get away this time before curfew hour (11 pm).

Sat May 26 Rained on and off in morning, some quite heavy showers. Our former jeep driver, Bob Young, happened along in morning driving a staff car, so he took Warwick and me in to Trieste, where he was stationed, and helped us to enjoy a luxurious afternoon. Bob entertained us in his room at the luxury hotel which was 9 Bde HQ, gave us lunch and tea, and after lunch took us for a drive round dock area of Trieste and through suburbs. After that Warwick and I had a good wander round city, up its hill suburbs where we got a great view of the port and coastline. Climbed tower of Church of San Giusto, on top of a hill near the centre of the town. Walked round part of docks, and were shown over a motor torpedo boat by some of the crew. In evening went to hear our first opera – 'Lucia di Lammermoor' in the Verdi Theatre, and enjoyed the music even more than I ever thought I would. Bob kindly brought us home in staff car, where we found that Bill Dobson had come back to the section.

Sun May 27 Beautiful day, did some more swimming and practicing flat dives. Went to Trieste with Warwick in late afternoon, and we went to hear 'Rigoletto' at the Verdi Theatre with Bob Young – very spectacular show, and we all enjoyed every minute of it, but thought the music slightly less interesting than in 'Lucia di Lammermoor'. Home 11 pm, after walking most of the way, with one lift in an already over-crowded jeep.

Mon May 28 More swimming, punctuated with one or two spots of work. After tea went up hill behind our area with Pat Gresson to look for and map any Jerry-dug defences, and then went in jeep along a road still further up cliff side on same job. Found very little, but got great view of Trieste from a new angle. Ted Dowland gave me a driving lesson on way downhill. Made a trace of Jerry positions we had found.

Tue May 29 Had to attend a court-martial in morning and give evidence as to the battalion being in the line on a certain date, and after that went along to C Coy and got some more of war diary typed. Carried on with typing during afternoon, punctuated with swimming and messing round in water with a football.

Wed May 30 Heavy thunder shower in morning, and light one in evening, so did our swimming and sun-bathing in afternoon. Entertained a chap from Public Archives, who dragged from us a few yarns out of the big April advance.

Thu May 31 On picquet with Tom Forbes 1-3 pm, and 7-9 pm, when we split up shift, taking an hour each. Had a fair bit of interpreting to do in afternoon, from Italians with various complaints.

Fri Jun 1 Picquet again 1-3 and 7-9 am. Spent nearly all day at jetty swimming and fooling, and had a long yarn in German with three Austrian girls in afternoon. Did the little daily dose of war diary typing after tea.

Sat Jun 2 Had inspection by CO (Don Grant) in morning, so got specially panned up. Usual day's swimming, and yarned with the crowd on jetty. Expected some sailors as guests in afternoon, and got a small party jacked up for them, but they did not turn up, so we had the party ourselves.

Sun Jun 3 Church parade and memorial service in morning, but weather was too hot to appreciate it fully. Spent rest of day down swimming and lying in sun as usual. John Harrison dropped in for a yarn and a cup of tea in evening.

Mon Jun 4 Did only a little swimming, as I had a bit of a cold. Put on committee of a Bn HQ dance to be held on Friday of same week, and so spent some time jacking up details, including printing a swag of tickets, some in English and some in Italian. Got the April war diary finished – the end of a fiendish job that had lasted a month.

Tue Jun 5 Arrangements for dance went on apace, in spite of its being cancelled about midday – cancellation notice was itself cancelled shortly afterwards. Spent most of day down at beach, swimming, lying in sun, and yarning with Anna Marie, one of the Austrian girls.

Wed Jun 6 Very little doing, except to draw up a highly ornamental notice advertising Friday night's dance.

Thu Jun 7 Same programme during day. In evening a party of us went to a performance of 'La Boheme' at Verdi Theatre in Trieste, and enjoyed it in spite of having to peer round a woman's head to see the stage.

Fri Jun 8 One thing after another went wrong with preparations for Bn HQ dance in evening, and I had to spend a lot of time frenziedly ringing people and jacking things up – a team of doorkeepers, a pianist (who caused a whole day's worry), and finally the horrible possibility of the whole thing being cancelled because Tito was holding a political demonstration in Trieste in evening. Also I had a picquet shift to do, so didn't manage to do much swimming. Dance was very late starting, owing to trams from Trieste not running during Tito's demonstration, but in the end it got cracking and went well – but not so well from my point of view, because Anna Marie, who was going with me, could not get there because of the tram stoppage. I officiated in a couple of competition dances as MC, and helped to clean up after dance finished about midnight.

Sat Jun 9 Went along in morning, cleaned out dance hall and saw to return of stuff we had borrowed for it. Unpleasant windy day, and in afternoon a sudden torrential shower that made streets run with water in two minutes. Fortunately most of our gear kept dry. I sat in front of truck for a start, and afterwards came out, went out in rain in my bathing togs and had a wash with soap. In evening went to a sergeants' party in a restaurant in Trieste, which degenerated into a hooley towards the end. I had to help load corpses on to trucks to go home.

Sun Jun 10 Very windy day, and water icy cold, making swimming unpleasant. In spite of this a battalion harbour swim was held at A Coy area in afternoon, and was a great success. Ron Kennedy and Ted Dowland of Bn HQ got good places. Met an old acquaintance there in Padre Boyd-Bell, who was coming to 23 Bn.

Mon Jun 11 A bit of work to do, as A and B Coys had to go out on a job following up Tito's troops as they evacuated Trieste according to an agreement just made. Jack Mettrick and Tom Hay went with them. Had to clean out a filthy, stinking drain in our area, and went for a swim to clean myself, but didn't stay in long, as water was still cold. In evening Jack Linklater, Bill Dobson and I went to the house of a chap we had met bathing, in the centre of Trieste, and had a very enjoyable little dance and party with a few of his friends. Got home just after midnight.

Tue Jun 12 Supposed to go out with watercart to A and B Coys after breakfast, but trip was postponed until 11 am because of road being closed by Tito's forces. Even as it was we could not reach A Coy – tried two roads, but were turned back by the Slavs each time. Lovely drive out, right through Trieste, round the inner harbour containing seven or eight scuttled ships (including the Stocolma, Duilio and Giulio Cesare), through village of Muggia and round coast road through fishing villages and shipyards. No sooner had we got back (2 pm) than Bill Dobson and I had to go back to Trieste post haste on an SOS from our last night's host, as the house of a friend of his was closed by a Slav picquet, and he thought we could help. Found picquet gone from house, but were unwilling onlookers at an affecting family scene, and were glad to get away. Spent rest of afternoon swimming and sun-bathing. In evening went with some of the boys to Trieste, had a feed of ice cream at YMCA, and looked in for a minute to see some 26 Bn coppers. One of them, Hughie Holmes, gave us a lift back home.

Wed Jun 13 Weather looked threatening in early morning, and broke and teemed in afternoon and early evening. Spent a lot of time in bivvy reading. In afternoon had a trip into Trieste, spoiled by rain. Heard bad (as we thought) news that we were moving down beyond Trieste next day.

Thu Jun 14 Went with adjutant (Herb Staton) to map out a new Bn HQ area on peninsula beyond Trieste, and after a whole morning's nosing round got one jacked up in village of Muggia, across the harbour from Trieste. Got back 2 pm and moved in Bn HQ convoy soon afterwards. Got settled in fairly good quarters in a big building, possibly a barracks, in Muggia. Kept busy jacking up maps of new area, and in evening went in jeep to Bde HQ with a situation report, and on way back stopped in Trieste, saw a few coppers and messed round YMCA for a bit. Hilarious ride home with two cheerfully intoxicated blokes whom we gave a lift to. Played bridge until quite late with Jack Mettrick, Jack Linklater and Murray Reston (our new IO, who had joined us a few days before).

Fri Jun 15 Spent morning going over battalion area with Murray Reston in jeep, mapping all Jerry coastal defences, which included two big gun areas, one with enormous concrete emplacements and elaborate apparatus. In afternoon went over to our old area at Cedas for a swim and a yarn with Anna Marie and her friends. Scrounged tea at Bde HQ, and spent evening in Trieste. Came home in a C Coy leave truck 10.30 pm.

Sat Jun 16 Parade and drill in main square of Muggia 9 am – which to our disgust we heard was to be a daily programme. Again went to Cedas and carried out same programme as on day before. Got tea at 23 Bn B Echelon near Cedas, and got a lift home in sigs' jeep. Arrived in time to act as MC at a dance held by Bn YMCA, which went with a bang, and in fact almost degenerated into a riot at supertime, and at the end. All Muggia was there on the bash, and show was an immense success, in

spite of the fact that a lot of people got in who were not supposed to. Finished midnight, and I had a cold shower, as I was soaked with sweat.

Sun Jun 17 Went to communion in YMCA 7.15 am. Had to go out to one of our road blocks with Murray Reston, as there was a dispute with Slavs over the exact boundary, but after nosing round the country looking for a disused road line finally got settled to our satisfaction. I had to act as interpreter in Italian, with some difficulty. Went over in ferry to Trieste in afternoon, and out Cedas way, but in a fruitless quest, so came back to Trieste and got home for tea. Got May war diary finished and away in evening.

Mon Jun 18 Parade and a short march in morning, then the usual day's programme – into Trieste on the ferry, out to Cedas and spent the rest of the day there. Got a lift back in I jeep. Picquet shift on trucks, in yard of a school near our quarters, 11 pm-1 am.

Tue Jun 19 Had a trip round coast to D Coy with some maps, then again went to Trieste by ferry and out to Cedas. Pleasant afternoon swimming and yarning, and came home again by ferry 7.30 pm. Went to pictures in YMCA, but only stayed to see a NZ Film Review, and then came back to our room, read and wrote letters.

Wed Jun 20 Spent day at Cedas again, and had a lot of fun and a lot of vigorous scrapping both in the water and out of it. Got back home by D Coy's leave truck in time for tea. Had some games of teniquoit with the boys after tea which left me limp, and finished up playing bridge until 11 pm.

Thu Jun 21 Went to swimming baths on a hill above Trieste bay, and did some practice for sports next day, in which I was to swim in the breast stroke. After lunch went over to Cedas again, and had a good afternoon's fun with the crowd. Got tea at Rear Bde HQ.

Fri Jun 22 Good day for swimming sports, in which I came well down the list in my races – breast stroke and a novelty relay where we had to dress up in shirt, trousers, hat etc, struggle across the baths and then hand the togs on to the next chap. Bn HQ team won on points in spite of a lot of squabbling over rules of meeting.

Sat Jun 23 In morning had to go and count the ammunition in the Jerry gun site round the coast from us – several thousand rounds. Went over to Cedas and had the usual afternoon's swimming, and got back just in time to MC a dance at the YMCA. Good dance, but very hot as usual, and I finished up bathed in sweat.

Sun Jun 24 Short church service and communion in YMCA. After lunch went with Murray Reston on a round-up of civil police in Muggia and at a barracks between Muggia and Trieste – they had to go to a big parade in Trieste and be disbanded. Watched parade from a vantage point above parade ground. Went to Cedas for the last time, had a good afternoon's fun including a most exhilarating fight in the water, and said cheerio to the gang I had been with there. Jack Linklater picked me up in Trieste on his bike and gave me a lift out, and met Murray Reston in I jeep and helped him to get a few camp stretchers out of old civil police barracks. Very close evening, went for a stroll along coast road with some of the lads.

Mon Jun 25 Went up in jeep in morning to a shed just out of Muggia and carted away some Jerry ammunition that was dumped there. Heavy job carrying boxes up a steep rocky track. Spent afternoon at home for the first time in over ten days. Had a picquet shift from 11.30 pm to 1 am.

Tue Jun 26 Quite a few jobs to do in morning, but nothing in afternoon, so went swimming with Jack Linklater and Tom Forbes at a jetty along the road from Muggia, where they had teamed up

with a party of local lads and girls. In evening watched a religious procession in main square of Muggia to honour the town's patron saint, then went for customary stroll along waterfront with the boys.

Wed Jun 27 In morning went up with the boys to the Verdi Hall and got floor ready for a big dance to be held that night – waxed it well and got it nicely jacked up. Unfortunately it was dulled by heavy rain later in day. Dance went off very well. I did half the MC's job with Tom Hay. Hall was not as jammed as at our previous dances, but in spite of this I had to go home halfway through and change my clothes, which were wet through with sweat.

Thu June 28 A bit of drill and a short march in morning, Warwick and I went to Trieste and had a day out visiting – saw the 26 Bn I Sec at the castle in centre of town and had lunch there, then looked up Sid Gaudin and Hughie Holmes, and finally Stuart McFarlane. Slight rain showers once or twice, but nothing much. We were lucky enough to run into Jim Galloway, D Coy 2 i/c, at 25 Bn, and got a lift right out to Muggia with him in D Coy's truck, getting home just after 5 pm.

Fri Jun 29 Usual run of lying on my bed, yarning and reading and occasional small jobs. In afternoon watched the rescue of three men from harbour after their yacht had capsized in a sudden squall. Weather cleared later, and we went down and had a swim. Spent evening playing bridge. Got a batch of parcels.

Sat Jun 30 On picquet 5-6 am. Warwick woke me 7 am, and we left 7.30 on a highly unofficial two-day trip we had been planning for some time. Hitch-hiked right up from Trieste through Palmanova, with curious old earthwork defences, to Udine, where we had a slight wait, then up Tagliamento River gorge, through wild steep country covered in pines, through Tarvisio to the Austrian border. Got a lovely impression of Austria as we went through most beautiful countryside with quaintly shaped houses and peasants in national dress. Passed through Villach and over Drava River, skirted lovely Worther See (stopping for a short time at lakeside resort of Velden). Got to Klagenfurt 5 pm. Not impressed with the town itself, though the surrounding country was grand. Went up a hill from where we got a fair view of the city, and strolled for some time in pine woods. Had a bit of difficulty finding a place to stay the night at in Klagenfurt, so went out to the Lido at the eastern end of the Worther See and got a bed with a Tommy unit. Had a good wander round the lake, and went up a rise where we got a wonderful view over it. In all we rode in 17 vehicles during day – 15 to reach Klagenfurt and 2 coming back to the lake.

Sun Jul 1 The Tommies gave us some breakfast, and we left 8.15 am on way back. Stopped off at Villach and spent an hour strolling round town and along Drava River, and also spent some time at Arnoldstein, a little village with an old castle perched on top of a precipitous hill. Scrambled up this hill, had a look round from the top and had just as hard a scramble down. Sat and had our lunch in fields there. Unfortunately, weather all day had been cloudy, and soon after crossing frontier it came on to rain hard. We were travelling in a jeep, and got somewhat wet, but not badly. Stopped and had a feed at Udine, and got from there to Trieste on a NZ truck, having made the whole trip in 6 lifts. Had tea in Trieste with Sid Gaudin, then had a walk round Trieste waterfront and took ferry across to Muggia. Home 8.30 pm, and got told off by Murray Reston for going so far without his permission.

Mon Jul 2 On picquet 7-9 am, and nothing much to do for the rest of the day, which was lucky, because heavy rain set in in afternoon. Had to MC a dance at D Coy, so went round in a heavy shower not expecting much of a show, but was surprised at the good turn-out. Enjoyed show quite well.

Tue Jul 3 Short route march in morning, then spent some time getting war diary up to date. Went round with boys and had a swim after lunch. Had a most enjoyable party in evening, which had to be interrupted early, as I was on picquet from 11 pm to 1 am.

Wed Jul 4 Did a bit of much-needed cleaning up to the gear in our room. Not much doing all day, and had a dance at night, a very good show too. I had a night off from MC'ing.

Thu Jul 5 Had to take Bn HQ for a short march, so went up round corner and sat down until time was up. Had an afternoon's bathing, not very pleasant conditions as it was cloudy.

Fri Jul 6 Another short march in morning. Heard I was to go on a 4-day sight-seeing trip next day in charge of one of the trucks, so had to do a bit of running round jacking up arrangements. Had another good swim in afternoon. In evening went with boys to see 'San Demetrio, London' in YMCA.

Sat Jul 7 Left 5.30 am on 4-day sight-seeing trip, in truck with 12 others, making a comfortable load. Grand day's trip through Treviso, Vicenza, Verona (where we had a short wander round centre of town), past Lake Garda, through Brescia, Bergamo and on to Lake Como. Boiled up and had scratch meals several times on road. Pulled in 7 pm at Como, in most lovely surroundings at end of Lake Como with steep peaks on both sides. Had swim in lake as soon as we arrived, swimming from a private house-boat near where we were camped, and found it unbelievably warm. During evening I had three bits of foul luck – we lost an hour taking an Italian boy to hospital after he had burnt his leg with petrol; my camera would not work as the winder was worn away; and I lost my fountain pen. Went with Warwick and Tom Forbes for a wander along waterfront, and up hill to Bruneta in funicular railway. Lovely view from top, embracing miles of hills stretching away into Switzerland, but it was getting too dark to appreciate view. Slept on grass under trees by the lake.

Sun Jul 8 Up early and had a swim before breakfast. Had a wander round with the boys, then took tram up to Ponte Chiasso and walked along road that marked Swiss border. Momentarily crossed a creek into Switzerland with a Swiss border guard watching us carefully. Dropped my camera into creek going over, so sat down on Swiss side and dried it out. Went up again by funicular railway to Bruneta, and walked along path round steep hillside to a place where I got a lovely view over lake. Left Como 1.30 pm and went straight by the 'Autostrada' to Milan, getting there 3 pm. Booked in at Yank car park. Tom, Warwick and I spent rest of day having a good look round city. Examined cathedral both inside and out, watched a big bicycle race in progress in Botanical Gardens, had tea at luxurious Naafi restaurant, and did a lot of walking round. Back to car park 10 pm, very pleased to have a cup of tea and turn in. Slept in back of truck.

Mon Jul 9 Got going early and did a bit of looking round the shops, but didn't do much buying. Went out with Warwick to Church of S. Maria della Grazia to see original of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper' but was disappointed in it, as it was badly faded. Part of the refectory in which it was had been destroyed by a bomb, but the wall on which it was painted was undamaged. Had a game of billiards with Warwick at Naafi, and were photographed by a South African war photographer while there. After lunch went to Kingfisher Club, not far from our car park, and had swim in a most luxurious Olympic swimming pool, then watched Fifth Army swimming teams practising there. Left Milan 5.30 pm, headed for Mantua, but got on to the wrong road and found ourselves going west towards Turin. Got back on right road again by taking back roads south to Pavia, then east through Cremona (which we did not reach until after dark) and Mantua. Slept quite a lot of the way, so was disappointed in not seeing anything of the country. Boiled up just outside Mantua, then headed for Verona and bedded down on outskirts 1 am.

Tue Jul 10 At daylight discovered that our sleeping place was more public than we had thought, and people were passing all the time. Had to get dressed on the spot just the same. Left 7.15 on homeward journey. Went through Vicenza, and stopped by a creek for breakfast and a wash. Got to Padua 10 am, and spent a couple of hours having a look round, then went on and arrived at Trieste 5 pm. Had a much-needed shower and change of clothes, and had an evening's stroll along Muggia sea-front and hobnobbed with a crowd of the local girls.

Wed Jul 11 Cleaned up a bit of the junk that had accumulated in our room. Went to Trieste with Jack Linklater on his bike, and took camera in to be repaired, coming back again by the same method. Got caught in heavy shower in Trieste. Spent afternoon writing letters and later went down and had a swim. In evening John Harrison came round to see us. Popped round and had a drink with him, and then went round water-front and had usual evening's chat.

Thu Jul 12 Nothing extraordinary happened – jacked up appendices to war diary in morning and had a swim in afternoon.

Fri Jul 13 Very crook and bilious in morning, so went on sick parade and spent most of day on my bed feeling cheap. But perked up a lot in late afternoon, and was fit enough to stagger along and MC a battalion dance at Verdi Hall, which I thoroughly enjoyed – the more the dance went on, the better my inside became.

Sat Jul 14 Went up to C Coy to have a yarn to an English officer who was living there manning a road block beside our own, and find out what his job was, because nobody seemed to know – a job needing all my tact. Usual afternoon and evening programme of swimming and walking along waterfront. Particularly hot close afternoon.

Sun Jul 15 Early communion service. Had a stroke of bad luck at breakfast time – had just finished washing dixies when I was knocked down by a jeep coming into yard. Got hit on left leg, and thought I was OK, but later in morning it seized up and got horribly sore. Went to see doctor, and was sent in afternoon to ADS on hill above Trieste. After rather painful ambulance ride there went straight on to MDS at Villa Opicina, on plateau above Trieste. Left knee turned out to be slightly sprained. Got it well wrapped up, and felt easier.

Mon Jul 16 Enforced rest all day, but leg felt better and I could hobble a few yards when necessary.

Tue Jul 17 Still flat out most of day, but leg feeling better.

Wed Jul 18 Improvement continued, and I was able to walk a little without much discomfort, although against doctor's orders.

Thu Jul 19 Doctor gave me permission to walk round as much as I liked, and hopes of getting out next day. Went a stroll after lunch through pine woods near MDS to the top of a hill overlooking Trieste, and enjoyed the feeling of being able to wander round, as I had got fed up with even a few days' inactivity. Strong rumours that we were moving away from Trieste within a week.

Fri Jul 20 Disappointed in hopes of getting out, but given a free hand to walk round. Went a stroll in morning, and in late afternoon set out for 26 Bn. Got a series of lifts through Villa Opicina and out on Fiume road, found 26 Bn a mile or two along road and saw quite a lot of cobbles, but heard that Sid Gaudin had had a bad accident. Got back 7 pm, also by hitch-hiking.

Sat Jul 21 At last got my discharge from MDS, left there 10 am and hitch-hiked to Trieste. Did one or two jobs round town, and got back to Muggia by ferry in time for lunch. Went swimming in afternoon, but couldn't do too much because knee was still a bit stiff.

Sun Jul 22 Hottest day yet, and I was eager to get down swimming again. Went out in jeep to see Warwick, who had temporary job as clerk of an NCO's school in D Coy's area. Found all Muggia swimming in afternoon, and so had a lot of fun fooling round in the water and out of it. Usual evening programme of yarning with the girls along the waterfront.

Mon Jul 23 Went out to NCO's school in morning, and gave them a lecture on compass work. Typed some of last month's war diary in afternoon, and then carried out usual round of swimming and strolling round waterfront in evening. Came home to find a party in progress, so joined in and finished up day well.

Tue Jul 24 Again went out to NCO's school and gave another lecture on compass and map work. Swim in afternoon – my knee still giving a bit of trouble when I tried to swim for too long – and in evening did MC's job at the battalion's farewell dance, the last to be held in Muggia. Big crowd there, and dance did not go with its usual swing for some reason or other. In bed 1 am.

Wed Jul 25 Had a trip in jeep in morning to Trieste, where I tried unsuccessfully to sell our Jerry trailer, then to Bde HQ and B Echelon on business. Had a lot of fun at our bathing place in afternoon, as quite a lot of the gang were there. Very unsatisfactory evening, as nobody seemed to know what to do, and civilian friends were all at an Italian dance. Mooched round Muggia.

Thu Jul 26 Went on parade and route march for the first time since I had been out crook. Got cracking after lunch, and finished typing and annotating war diary, then went for customary afternoon swim and evening stroll along waterfront.

Fri Jul 27 Uneventful day – route march in morning and swim in afternoon. In evening watched a demonstration celebrating the Labour victory in English elections – procession through streets of Muggia headed by British, American, Italian, Yugoslav and red flags, and band playing the 'Internationale', followed by a crowd singing it.

Sat Jul 28 3-hour route march in morning – started out 7 am, went round coast road to Lazzaretto (D Coy's hang-out) where we had breakfast and a swim and then carried on. Home 10.30 am. Spent afternoon swimming, and had a big singing session on jetty until about 11 pm. Had just got home when Tom Hay came in and said some of the local hooligans had tried to push him into the harbour, so Tom Forbes, Norm Reed (RSM) and I girded on pistols and went out again to try and locate them, but couldn't find them.

Sun Jul 29 Got going on preparations for leaving Muggia, and got truck as much packed as possible. Went to church in morning. Spent our last afternoon on the beach and a long evening round waterfront saying goodbye to all our friends.

Mon Jul 30 Up early, and away in convoy 7.15 am – even at that hour a lot of people were there to see us off, and a lot of wet eyes in evidence. I was feeling pretty crook, so travelled in back of I truck and slept a lot of the way. Hot dry day's trip, but fortunately fairly short – pulled in to staging area near Mestre 1.30 pm. Felt perfectly horrible, took a couple of aspirins and crawled between blankets in the shade of a truck. One of the boys got the doctor along, and he said he was going to send me to hospital, as my temperature was 101. But after a good sleep and a good sweat I felt a lot better, so got up and wandered round and felt better still. Temperature went down again, so the doctor changed his mind about sending me out, thank goodness. Saw Ian Buckley and Arnold

Milburn in evening, and had supper with Ian. Came back and watched part of a concert by Maoris before going to bed.

Tue Jul 31 Left 8.15 am, travelling in a 3-tonner with some of the boys. Good trip, including a stop to buy fruit at Padua. Went down main road through Padua and down the axis we had come up on the advance, across Adige and Po Rivers, past Ferrara, through Bologna, and stopped 1 pm in a paddock just past there. Feeling a lot better but not 100%, with a bad cold. Tom Hay and I pitched a bivvy together. A few spots of rain fell just after we were in bed, and we congratulated ourselves on having put up bivvy, but had a rude awakening 2 am, when the most sudden and torrential storm I have ever seen came on, with vivid continuous sheet lightning, and rain in solid sheets. A few minutes were enough to bring a river right through bivvy, so we hastily gathered up our things and dashed for the back of the truck, to find that we were not the first. Finally seven drowned rats crowded into back of truck with hardly a dry stitch among us. When rain went off we hunted round and got a few more or less dry things, and Tom and I spent rest of night in back of truck, with one half-dry blanket each.

Wed Aug 1 Felt and looked very washed-out in morning. Left 8 am, travelling in truck because I wanted to hang out my wet things to dry as we went. But things went wrong, because rain started again soon after we left and continued on and off all morning, so we had to snatch a few odd moments occasionally to hang something out on ropes holding canopy of truck in place. This involved riding standing up behind to see they did not blow away. During showers Tom Forbes and I were huddled in back of truck trying to dodge the splashes. Went down past old Senio River battle grounds, through Faenza, Forli, Cesena, Rimini, Pesaro. Stopped for an hour at Fano for lunch – it was teeming when we pulled in, but fortunately stopped soon. On again through Senigallia, where we found Jack Mettrick (who had been out crook) waiting with his gear all ready to rejoin us. Heaved his gear and himself on to truck with us and off we went, on through Jesi to Fabriano, where we pulled in 5 pm. Had hoped to be able to get from there to Mecciano, 30 miles away to see our old friends the Pichettis, but couldn't get a truck, as none were allowed to leave area. Had an evening's bridge with the boys, and got most of my stuff fairly dry before sunset. Again bivvied with Tom Hay.

Thu Aug 2 Off again 8 pm, over the winding Fosseto Pass through the Apennines. Travelled on 3-tonner again, and had a job keeping warm, as there was a biting wind. Went over familiar ground through Foligno, past Perugia and skirted Lake Trasimene, arriving at our final destination near Castiglione, just west of the lake, 2 pm. Area very dry but well shaded in an oak wood. Got settled in, and Tom Hay and I set up house beside truck. Heard news that 8th Reinforcements were being pulled out in a very few days. Went a stroll round the place in evening and got the lay-out of the country.

Fri Aug 3 Kept awake by toothache in night, so went with ambulance to MDS in morning and saw dentist. He located a loose filling, yanked it out and put in a dressing. Got definite news that we were leaving the battalion on Monday, so jacked up a grand farewell party in evening, with a considerable number of blokes from outside the section. Great success.

Sat Aug 4 Not much doing except to get the first stages of preparation for departure over. Big evening's session of bridge.

Sun Aug 5 Ended up our life in 23 Bn with a completely useless and unpopular ceremonial parade. Spent rest of day clearing up all sorts of jobs. John Harrison came round for a yarn in afternoon, and took us down in his jeep for a shower on shore of Lake Trasimene near Castiglione. On evening all 8th Reinforcements, including Warwick, Tom Forbes and I, shifted to B Echelon, where

our trucks were to leave from. Went round battalion and said cheerio to all our friends, and had a most touching farewell to I Sec.

Mon Aug 6 Got up 2.30 am, had breakfast, loaded on to trucks and away 4 am. Cold ride, until sun got up, and had a bit of sleep, though in very cramped conditions. Went out through Perugia and Tolentino to the east coast, and down main coast road. Beautiful day, and after stop for lunch 10.30 am I sat out on cab and enjoyed sunshine. Went down through Pescara, and stopped 2 pm at a transit camp near Chieti. Dossed down in a bombed-out factory. Went down to Pescara River for a swim and wash, and spent rest of afternoon eating water-melon and loafing round.

Tue Aug 7 Up 5 am, and left again 6 am. Travelled on top of cab in morning, and went out to coast at Pescara, and down through Ortona, past Sangro River (from where we could see occasional glimpses of our old stamping grounds round Castelfrentano and Orsogna), and over familiar territory down to Termoli. Stopped for lunch midday, and I spent afternoon in back of truck, as I had been dropping off to sleep on top of cab and was scared of falling off. Had a fair sleep on and off, only waking up occasionally as we passed through a town. Reached Bari in late afternoon, very browned off with truck travel, and got out to Advance Base 7.30 pm. Had a feed, then were sorted into married and single men, and all single were piled on to other trucks and went out to a transit camp near Taranto. Arrived 11 pm, and was only too pleased to find a corner in a tent and settle down, after a bit of hunting round in dark. Got in same tent as Warwick and Tom.

Wed Aug 8 Day of rest, except for standing in long mess queues – a foretaste of things to come. Met a lot of old coppers, including Sid Gaudin, and in late morning had to shift over to another lot of tents a little way away. Had big bridge sessions in afternoon and evening.

Thu Aug 9 Again carried out large-scale exercises in lying on the bed, in afternoon went out with a truck load of blokes to have a swim, but cruised around for some time without finding a decent beach, so didn't have one. Went into Taranto in evening with Warwick and John Harrison, and went to an open-air performance of 'Aida', which I enjoyed fairly well. Home 1 am.

Fri Aug 10 Waiting all day for names of those who were to go on early draft to Egypt, and list arrived in early afternoon. Tension among crowd as names were read out one by one. Warwick, Tom, John and I were all lucky enough to be on it. Packed up and left transit camp 4 pm for advance base, and were glad to see last of transit camp, which had been a fairly rough joint. Got to advance base and were shovelled into tents. Ran into Verne Jones in evening, also en route for NZ in the same draft, and had a long yarn.

Sat Aug 11 Messed round a lot with check parades and passing in our names for all sorts of rolls. Learned we were embarking for Egypt on Monday. Warwick, Tom, John and I spent most of day together, messing round. Met our old friend Norm Reed, ex-RSM of 23 Bn, in evening, and he came over to my tent and gave us all the dope on the battalion, which he had left only the day before.

Sun Aug 12 Spent day doing odd jobs and chores in preparation for embarking for Egypt next day. Several check parades and a lot of messing round. Again spent evening loafing round and drinking tea.

Mon Aug 13 Packed up, and after a bit of waiting round, much less than usual, left in trucks for Taranto 2 pm. Got there 3 pm and went out in lighters to troopship 'Georgio' in the stream. Very thankful to have our bedrolls taken out in bulk, as they would have made a terrible load to haul up the gangway. Berthed in a big block with some 400 chaps in it, in bunk opposite John Harrison and with a lot more 23 Bn chaps handy. Wandered round and found our way round ship, which had more

deck space and better food than other troopships I had struck. In evening, just after we sailed at 9 pm, Warwick went to ship's hospital – he had been feeling crook for a day or two, but had postponed seeing the doctor until we sailed in case he got left behind.

Tue Aug 14 Nothing to do all day but lie or walk round decks and stand in mess queues. Spent most of time with John Harrison, Tom Forbes and Cam Wilson (ex-23 Bn sigs). Lovely weather, but too hot to stay out in sun for long.

Wed Aug 15 Same sort of day. Saw Warwick in afternoon and got instructions about what to do with his gear. Spent rest of time loafing about, playing cards and reading. News of Japan's surrender came in afternoon and was received without much excitement except a sing-song on top deck in evening.

Thu Aug 16 In sight of land early, and after waiting round for a while docked at Port Said, right inside entrance to Suez Canal, 10 am. Got news we were not disembarking until next day, so spent rest of day industriously doing nothing. Felt pretty crook in evening, inside very much upset, and in consequence had lively but not very restful night.

Fri Aug 17 Still feeling cheap, so laid off the food and improved as day went on. Lugged gear up on deck 8 am, and disembarked 9 am, walking a few hundred yards to railway siding, where we got on a train of cattletrucks. Left 11 am and went down canal through Kantara and Ismailia, where we joined main line to Cairo. Lot of fun renewing acquaintance and exchanging abuse with Wog hawkers at stations. Had a cup of tea at Zagazig 6 pm, and from there on I slept most of the way until we arrived at Maadi about midnight. Detrained at Digla siding.

Sat Aug 18 Went in trucks to Maadi camp, and billeted temporarily in tents. After a feed and a lot of ferreting round to find bedrolls, got to sleep 3.30 am, sharing my blankets with some of the others who had not found theirs in the dark. Got drafted into companies in morning, but I was left unattached with a lot of NCOs and shifted camp to a hut, John Harrison and I occupying adjacent beds with Tom Forbes and Cam Wilson in another hut not far away. Went over to Church Army hut in afternoon and started on my course of becoming reacquainted with the fleshpots of Egypt. Went there again in evening and played for some time on piano in small room at end of hut.

Sun Aug 19 Put in 'F' Coy, which included the rest of our bunch, with some of the unattached NCOs. In afternoon John and I went to Cairo, had a session on the NZ Club's ice cream, saw several old pals including Arthur Chetwin, and went to evening service at Cathedral.

Mon Aug 20 Had a lecture from a staff colonel, who told us we would be leaving for NZ very shortly. Did several small jobs I had to do round camp, and had a very unsuccessful bridge session in afternoon with John against Cam Wilson and Frank Edwards.

Tue Aug 21 Another morning's messing round and rearranging – I went to 'E' Coy', along with Tom Forbes, and landed a job as joint platoon sergeant with another chap. Went into Cairo in afternoon with the boys, had a look round shops, and went to the pictures to see 'The Merry Widow', but slept through part of it.

Wed Aug 22 Went out to Helwan with Tom on the chance that Warwick might have been moved to hospital there, but out of luck. Came back to Maadi Tent, where we had tea and saw part of a concert, and walked home.

Thu Aug 23 Not much doing. Spent afternoon with Tom swimming at Maadi baths, then came back and spent evening at Lowry Hut.

Fri Aug 24 One or two jobs round platoon in morning. Had an afternoon's bridge in Lowry Hut, and a session on piano in Church Army hut in evening.

Sat Aug 25 Intended to go on leave in morning, but got a job shoved on to me at last moment, and so was late meeting the lads (John, Tom and Bill Reid) at NZ Club. Had a lot of fun arguing and haggling with hawkers in evening, and Tom and I had a short look round shops.

Sun Aug 26 Again very hot and uneventful. Another afternoon's bridge, John and I versus Cam Wilson and Frank Edwards, at Lowry Hut. Went to church in Church Army hut in evening, and then had another play on piano.

Mon Aug 27 Big afternoon's bridge session in Lowry Hut – otherwise a lot of spine drill. Too hot to do anything else. Went down late to Maadi baths with boys for a swim, stayed at Maadi Tent for tea and had two games of chess there.

Tue Aug 28 Went to Cairo with Cam Wilson and Frank Edwards. Spent afternoon playing billiards at Empire Club, and in evening went to an orchestral concert at Alamein Club. Home about midnight.

Wed Aug 29 Spent day strenuously doing nothing. Warwick came back from hospital in afternoon, and I helped to jack up a bed for him in our hut.

Thu Aug 30 Went to Cairo with the boys – was to have gone early, but had some jobs pushed on to me at last moment, and so was late again. Messed round town, and in evening went to see 'Mrs Parkington' at Metro Cinema.

Fri Aug 31 Preparations beginning to be made for our departure for NZ at the weekend. Handed in heavy kits for loading into ship's hold.

Sat Sep 1 Had final day in Cairo with Warwick and John. Went out to Alamein Club and spent some time swimming in club baths, then went back to town and spent evening in our usual haunt, the Kursaal Restaurant. Went to see 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' at Royal Cinema. Money was running short at end of day, but we pooled our resources and just made it.

Sun Sep 2 Up early and washed clothes, which were the only set I still had with me, so had to go round in bathing trunks until they dried. Finished packing and got everything ready for early start next day.

Mon Sep 3 Up 2 am, paraded 3 am and got away to Digla Siding in trucks, where we entrained for Tewfik. Slow trip, I sat on platform of carriage most of way and had a bit of sleep. After short wait on wharf at Tewfik went out in a lighter to HMT 'Strathmore' in the stream. Billeted in mess rooms, very crowded but not uncomfortably so, with all the boys fairly near at hand. Spent rest of day finding our way round and playing bridge. Slept on deck with Warwick, John and Arthur Chetwin.

Tue Sep 4 Plenty of card-playing and lounging round decks. Very hot. Again slept on deck.

Wed Sep 5 Had job as mess deck sergeant – that is, seeing that mess deck was cleaned up, and staying there for daily inspection. Got pay in NZ currency for first time in nearly three years.

Thu Sep 6 In charge of fatigue collecting rations for our mess deck and washing containers afterward. Spent a lot of time playing cards and reading on deck.

Fri Sep 7 Loafed round, with one or two small jobs. Read a fair bit and played more bridge. Fair gale in evening, and ship jumped round a bit.

Sat Sep 8 Much cooler, and strong wind all day kept ship rolling quite a bit. Played some very solid bridge, and read as usual.

Sun Sep 9 Still cooler, and still going through stiff monsoon wind. Slight shower in evening, but not enough to prevent us sleeping on deck.

Mon Sep 10 Usual day's loaf, except for one or two routine jobs with platoon. Saw a submarine passing in afternoon. Sea much calmer all day, but still a fair roll on.

Tue Sep 11 Usual day's routine.

Wed Sep 12 Wakened as usual 6 am by lascars coming to hose down decks, and found that we were approaching Colombo. Entered harbour through narrow gap in breakwater, and anchored among a crowd of ships all shapes and sizes. Could see a small part of town among a mass of dark trees, which grew to the water's edge as far as we could see. Played bridge with our usual four – Warwick, John, Frank Edwards and I.

Thu Sep 13 Left Colombo midday, and ran into a sharp rainstorm just outside. Went down coast of Ceylon for a little way, but soon left it behind. Wakened in night by two rain squalls, which made most of the boys evacuate top deck, but we got off with only a few splashes, as we were under a canvas awning.

Fri Sep 14 A bit of work distributing Red Cross stuff, and boat drill in morning and medical inspection in afternoon. Spent most of day on second top deck to avoid possible rain, and slept there for same reason. Crossed Equator in late afternoon, and started downhill run.

Sat Sep 15 Spent day loafing round, again on second top deck, as top deck was too exposed to wind and rain.

Sun Sep 16 Strong wind and ship pitching well. Entered for a chess tournament, and won my match in the first round.

Mon Sep 17 Much cooler, wind still strong. Got hunted off B Deck in afternoon, as a race meeting was to be held there. Waited some time for the chap I was to play in second round of chess tournament, but he did not turn up, so I had a game with another chap. Played bridge with the usual four in evening.

Tue Sep 18 Getting cooler still. Did nothing except read and snooze.

Wed Sep 19 Solid afternoon's chess – won my second round game, but was outed in third round. Went back into longs for first time on trip.

Thu Sep 20 A bit of rain during day. Was to have spoken in a debate in afternoon, but it was cancelled, much to my relief. Slept on deck in a shrieking wind, and wished I hadn't, as I was shivering with cold most of night.

Fri Sep 21 In sight of Cape Leeuwin 11 am, and went along in sight of Australia until evening. Warmer most of day, but came on cold and wet in evening. Deserted deck and slept below for first time on trip.

Sat Sep 22 Getting well into colder waters, but not so rough as we expected Australian Bight to be. Definitely abandoned sleeping on deck for good, as hammock below decks had several advantages in cool weather.

Sun Sep 23 Church service in morning. For rest of day lounged round, read and played cards.

Mon Sep 24 Bitterly cold on deck, but got warm by chucking a lifebelt round among a group of us. Had several games of crib in mess room. Went to quite a good concert in evening. Preparations being made for arrival at Melbourne next day, and a glimpse of land in late afternoon.

Tue Sep 25 Woke to find ourselves inside Port Phillip, an enormous harbour where land only appeared every now and again. Docked at Port Melbourne 9 am, got paid and dressed up, and went ashore 10.30 am. Went into town by electric train. Got together with boys and we had a good look round town, the first English-speaking town for nearly 3 years. Details like left-hand traffic got us mixed at first, but we soon got used to it. People most friendly and helpful, coming up to us if we looked lost – which happened several times. In afternoon Warwick and I got away from the mob, went by tram out to St Kilda and walked along promenade, and on way back visited Shrine of Remembrance, but view from top somewhat spoilt by a rain shower. In evening went to see Gladys Moncrieff in 'Rio Rita'. Got back to 'Strathmore' midnight, quite glad to.

Wed Sep 26 Unpleasant cold day with rain off and on. Sailing from Melbourne postponed for a few hours, but we got away in early afternoon, left Melbourne Heads 3 pm and travelled SE along coast. Worst roll the ship had turned on, and for the first time the porthole on our mess deck had to be shut.

Thu Sep 27 Good roll all day. Began to get the first of the many instructions for disembarking at Wellington. Rain on and off all day.

Fri Sep 28 Warmer day, lay on deck and enjoyed life. Solid evening at cards with the boys.

Sat Sep 29 Got paid and final instructions for disembarking next day. Best day for some time, lovely and sunny. Spent it loafing as usual. Had good wash to wind up trip reasonably clean.

Sun Sep 30 Beautiful day. Arrived Wellington early, had a sort of triumphal march up the harbour with people waving from the hills, and berthed 9 am. Disembarked pretty smartly, going straight across wharf to 'Rangatira' on far side. Uncle Jack and Ruth on wharf, and I yarned to them, first from top deck and then from a porthole, which was opened by the good offices of some of the boys, who got a member of the crew to do it. Sailed for the South Island 10.30 am.