

FOREWORD

You might wonder why we waited so long to make Dad's diary public. I think we assumed it was just our family's story. But when Pat became involved with the Hong Kong Veterans' Commemorative Association, we came to realize that the history of the Prisoners of War in Hong Kong was still not well known and as one of his fellow prisoners told us "You have to tell what he wrote!" Meeting the veterans and listening to what happened to them, understanding that they didn't give up under the horrendous circumstances of their capture, compels us to share the diary. And we felt we also had to include what happened to us at home during those years.

There were odd things that spurred us on. Driving in Calgary in 2002, my friend Sheila spotted the HK insignia on the license plate of the car ahead of us and insisted we follow it. When the driver reached his home, I got out of the car and tapped on his window to ask if he'd been in Hong Kong. "Yes", he replied, and when I identified myself as Leonard Corrigan's daughter, an emotional moment for both of us, Ed Shayler replied that he had been Dad's Sergeant.

At the 2003 HKVCA meeting in Victoria, we began to get snippets of stories about Dad. We learned that he was one of the few officers who visited the men in hospital. He took part in work gangs, taking off his officer's pips, often taking the place of someone who was ill. He was called the "Fighting Irishman". And another added memory was Dad practicing his saxophone in the hut late at night. More interesting when you realize that the saxophone case was one of the hiding places for his diary.

As I began typing the story, putting the diary and the family sequences together, I was also reading the biography of Emperor Hirohito – "Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan" by Herbert

Bix. Reading the book one night, I realized it was the same day I was reading about as I had just typed into the diary. Dad wrote about the rumours circulating in camp about the Japanese campaign, and Hirohito was receiving reports from his Generals fighting in that campaign.

At lunch one day, I described my efforts on the diary and one of my companions said her uncle had been a British doctor in the Pacific, she wasn't sure where. It was the same name as one of the doctors Dad mentioned working in the hospital in Hong Kong. Another friend told me she had gone to High School in Winnipeg with many of the young men sent to Hong Kong – and another described the look of the men who arrived back in Canada after their incarceration. From starting the diary, all these connections propelled us forward.

My typing ended up having to be entered into a computer – a task my daughter, Megan, took on and for which all of us are grateful. Going through the diary, all of us could hear Dad's voice in his writing. At one point, Megan found herself saying, "Hang on Grandpa, you're going to make it!"

Our Dad's diary in its original form, and the Japanese sword that he brought home, are now housed in the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg. A special thank you to Sharon Reilly, the Curator of Social History at the Manitoba Museum, and to Pat who made the arrangements for this to take place.

Pat is the former Regional Director of the Ontario HKVCA and the current chair of the Education Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelagh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and a long, sweeping tail.

CHAPTER ONE

My Personal Activity in the Siege of Hong Kong

L.B. Corrigan, Lieutenant, Winnipeg Grenadiers – December,
1941

The introduction to our little war found me stationed at Won Nei Chong Gap, in charge of Mr. McCarthy's platoon, he being away on a P.T. Course as part of the skeleton manning scheme being practised at the time. In the early hours of December 8, we received a message from Brigade stating that hostilities had commenced at 6:30 and a state of war existed between Britain and the United States and Japan. This rather disturbing bit of news we received with a certain amount of skepticism, since we had been led to believe that Japan would not benefit sufficiently to warrant offensive action, particularly in view of our evident (?) strength, both here and at Singapore. It was with considerable surprise, then, that we were able to hear, about 8:30, the drone of planes and accompanying this, the dull explosions of bursting bombs. The war, for us, had commenced.

The first raid, in which 27 planes took part, lasted approximately an hour and a half and was evidently directed at Kai Tak Airdrome on the Mainland and just about opposite our position. In this first raid, one of the "Facts Concerning The Enemy" which had been fed us was quickly dispelled. We had been informed that the Japs were quite unfamiliar with the finer points of dive bombing. With amazing accuracy, they not only dive-bombed our negligible Air Force, consisting of five antiquated planes, out of existence, but, with the aid of a few well placed "eggs" and some m.g. strafing, succeeded in lending considerable speed and confusion to the evacuation of our barracks at Sham Shui Po by the remainder of the Canadians stationed there. This first touch of war brought with it the initial casualties in the Canadian ranks when two Royal Rifle men were killed in the raid on the barracks. Further raids were experienced during the remainder of the day but since none were directed at the island, we paid them scant attention.

With the arrival on the island of the remainder of the Battalion, it was decided to reform "E" Company as a reserve – which meant that Black, Blackwood, and myself joined Major Baird in a position at Stanley Gap, from where, much to our disgust, we could see none of the bombing of the Mainland. We remained in this position only a day or so – which was quite sufficient – as things were in such a state of turmoil we were unable to secure even guns and ammunition until the second day, not to mention food and blankets. The morning of, I think, the third day, we were moved to Wong Nei Chong to take over from "D" Company, who were to be used in a supporting role to the Limeys on the Mainland. Since Brigade Headquarters was situated at the Gap, our job, for the next day or so, consisted chiefly of manning road blocks and the three road blocks were situated on Jardine's Peak and afforded a wonderful view of subsequent air raids. After a day or so in this position, we heard the Limeys were to withdraw to the Island for a last stand here. In fact, apparently their whole scheme of action was to have been to hold the enemy for 36 hours to give us a chance to consolidate things. The whole thing was a rather good show in as much as Rajputs, Royal Scots, and Middlesex held a force estimated at 22,000 at bay for three days. The arrival of "D" Company to take up their old position meant a move for us and we presently found ourselves bound for Wan Chai Gap, where our Brigade Headquarters was situated and from where I was destined to operate for the remainder of the war. From this step on, I was caught in such a maze of organization and re-organization and general shifting about that I find it difficult to separate days, platoons, or men: even the men themselves were jockeyed about to such an extent that some of the time they didn't know what platoon they belonged to. I had, in one day, three separate, newly-formed platoons, so it's not surprising.

The next, or rather the first active phase of the struggle, for us, came with the landing of the enemy at Lui Mun, on the northeast side of the island, on the evening of December 19th. Due to heavy artillery fire during the day, my platoon had been employed filling sandbags until midnight. We had just settled down to sleep when I was called (at 1:30) and instructed to take up

a position at the cross roads below Wong Nei Chong. We had no idea from what direction we might expect the enemy and accordingly we set up our posts to cover all roads and lay quiet to await developments. At approximately 3:30, we received our baptism of fire when the enemy opened up on us with m.g. and mortar and, what we later discovered to be, a light field piece – a weapon whose high bursting power and amazing accuracy earned our deep respect throughout the campaign. This light barrage was repeated at intervals until dawn, evidently intended to be more of nuisance value than anything else, and, aside from keeping us awake, did us no harm. As my orders were to hold fire until actual contact was made, we sat quiet to await the dawn.

Just prior to dawn, intense firing up the valley toward the Gap was heard. I had previously dispatched a runner to try and contact any platoons that might be operating between my position and the Gap, but had received no answer, so we were quite in the dark as to the situation above. A short time later, a company of Rajputs passed through the post, taking the road across the valley, their intention being to encircle the enemy – whom they believed to be occupying Jardine's Peak. This last bit of news was anything but cheerful, since with proper armament, which they evidently had, the road through the Gap as well as our own position could be controlled from our two P.B.'s located on the peak. Our position at the cross roads continued static and, although we could, after daylight, make out groups of the enemy across the valley, they were beyond our range so we held fire. Around 8:30, a platoon of Limeys passed through, enroute to the Gap, with the news that Brigade Headquarters had fallen and their task was its recapture. This bit of news was something of a shock, but we could do nothing but remain in our position and await developments. Still we saw no action, but from the wounded that commenced to pass through, we learned things were not at all well above. So we were not surprised when about two o'clock we received the order to return at once to Wan Chai to strengthen the line being formed there.

On arrival at Brigade Headquarters (Wan Chai), I found I was included in a party under Major Hodgkinson, leaving at once

with the object of recapturing the Wong Nei Chong position. The party had been awaiting our arrival so we set out immediately, my platoon in front, with our only carrier supporting us, along Black's Link, our first objective being the police station at the Gap and P.B. #3. Black's Link, incidentally, is a narrow road connecting Wan Chai Gap with Wong Nei Chong Gap, and it winds its way roughly in a figure eight or "s" shape around the left flank of Mount Cameron, then the right flank of Mount Nicholson, crossing from one mountain to the other at Middle Gap at a height of approximately half that of the mountains.

With the carrier preceding us, we pushed along unmolested until we reached Middle Gap, where we were spotted and subjected to the fire of their field piece as we crossed the open gap. Fortunately, we were able to reach the shelter of Nicholson with only two or three casualties. The attack plan, originally, was to have operated on a timed basis, in conjunction with a platoon from Repulse Bay side and a "C" Company platoon from Little Hong Kong. A delayed start, however, doomed the time element to failure before it commenced. It fell my lot to have to take my platoon over the summit of Nicholson and try and reach a point behind P.B. #3, situated at the base of the mountain – which meant a fast ascent and descent if I was to be of any value in harassing the rear of the enemy. We commenced our climb at once and for the first 300 yards had a rather hot time of it since we were again strafed by their infernal field piece. The going was pretty heavy as each man carried 250 rounds plus Brens and Bren ammunition and had had little rest and no food since the previous evening. The first stretch of dodging and crawling, coupled with the loads and the steepness of the hill, proved too much for the majority of the platoon so that I was forced to pick four of the hardier chaps and, taking one Bren, with as many ammunition carriers as we could manage, finally reached the summit, well nigh done in.

Upon reaching the summit, we now found ourselves forced with the hazardous part of the undertaking. In order to reach a position giving us proper coverage of our objective, we must descend the mountain, almost to the base, down a long gradual slope, which offered nothing in the way of concealment either

from fire or sight, in full view and range of the enemy. Fortunately, by a series of leaps, bounds, and dives, we were able to accomplish this and at once proceeded to set up our gun in a shallow depression, about 300 odd yards to the enemy's rear. Naturally, our descent had not been made without our having been seen and we came under considerable rifle but no m.g. fire. We held out here for about an hour, during which our gunner did some very fine work with the Bren and found our ammunition supply almost spent – so I decided on effecting a “strategic withdrawal”. While we lay there planning covering fire etc. for our getaway, along came their damned field piece, firing almost point blank, so we cast caution to the wind and made a run and a dive for the far downward slope and safety. Having achieved a quiet spot, we lay doggo for some twenty minutes, then, since darkness would soon be upon us, decided we had better commence our climb homeward.

Our scramble to safety had carried us still further down the mountain on the side away from home, so that we had the alternative of retracing our steps or skirting the hill to the north and climbing down from there. The first course seemed the least healthy of the two so we set out for a new avenue to ascend. Unfortunately, darkness settled down and, though we found the bank almost unclimbable, it was now too late to try our first route, so up we started. To make things even more cosy, a lovely cold rain began to fall rendering the footing very uncertain. The climb, in the condition in which it found us, almost proved too much, and it was only the continual spurring on by one another that enabled us to reach the top. The descent back to the gap was almost as bad and when we finally reached Wan Chai, we were almost done in, it having taken us nearly seven hours for the return journey. Reporting in at Brigade Headquarters at 2:30 a.m., I found our first attack had been successful but the gains were lost to a later counter attack by the enemy.

With the enemy firmly lodged at Wong Nei Chong, our next step was the strengthening of our position at Wan Chai. To this end, it was decided to form a line along the summit of Cameron as a precaution against the probable attacking of Brigade

and Base Headquarters to the rear in the gap. The next morning early, I was called in and instructed to set up my platoon in position between the Royal Scots and R.E.'s on the summit so as to be able to control Black's Link and Middle Gap by fire. After another strenuous climb, I set up my posts, then settled down, hoping arrangements had been made for breakfast. Instead of food, however, after an hour or so in position, a runner brought word that I was to report, at once, to Base Headquarters with my platoon.

Arriving at headquarters, I found I was to take my platoon to a position on the south flank of Cameron, along the aqueduct, to guard against possible enemy movement from that point against Wan Chai. We took our posts along the aqueduct, placing them in positions from where we could command the whole flank, our forward position enabling us, to a degree, to control Middle Gap and some of Black's Link. Incidentally, this forward post came in for considerable Howitzer fire, so we must have been observed going in. I was able to locate their O.P. and, after sending back a runner with its position, had the pleasure of seeing our artillery blast them from their vantage point. During the afternoon, we witnessed several small actions in the valley below, but as we were hopelessly out of range, could do nothing to help. Late in the afternoon, I sent a runner back for orders and food and at dusk he returned with a jam sandwich per man and orders to stay the night. To make things more interesting, it began to rain and, since we had no ground sheets, we spent a most uncomfortable night huddled together for warmth, there being no cover available. An attack had been planned at dawn and we received word stating that we were in the line of fire of "B" and "C" Companys, so we withdrew, arriving home a very tired, soaked crowd.

About 8:30, I was again called in to headquarters and again ordered to "set up" on Cameron, this time covering the left flank in the defense scheme previously mentioned. We remained in this position for a day and a half, during which time our only excitement was the dodging of mortar bombs – a weapon, by the way, which the enemy had down to a science. On the afternoon of the second day, a runner brought word that I was to report to Base Headquarters alone, so, turning over my platoon to Nugent, started

down. On reporting in, I found I was to take a patrol of fifteen men out on Black's Link and there set up a listening post as close to Middle Gap as I could manage, the Japs, by this time having full control of Nicholson and the gap area.

At dusk we set out and, though nicely silhouetted by burning oil tanks in the city behind us, managed to reach a point within two hundred yards or so from the gap unmolested. Here we set up our post and settled down to await developments. Things remained quiet until about ten o'clock when considerable rifle and m.g. fire broke out to our rear, on Cameron. Being in the field of fire and forced to seek the protection of the wall against the bullets, I sent back another runner to again inform our people of our position. No answer was received, but the firing gradually petered out and we were not bothered further from that quarter. About 2 a.m., heavy artillery fire, which we later learned to be that of our own 9.2's at Stanley, opened up on the left flank of Cameron about the level of the road over which we had come. This gave us a few bad moments as we felt the enemy must have discovered our presence on the road and intended to search, by fire, the length of the road until they reached us. Fortunately, such apparently was not the case as the fire ceased and we sat tight until dawn.

At sufficient time before daybreak to allow us to withdraw in safety, we started back and, much to our surprise, just before we reached the Gap, found ourselves fired on by a sniper. Failing to sight the sentry at the road junction, I sent the men to billets and started for Base Headquarters to report in and to mention the absence of the road block sentry. Another surprise awaited me there, for I found both Brigade and Base Headquarters shelters empty, lights still lit and evidence of a hasty departure by the inhabitants. Being somewhat non-plussed, I set out to rejoin the men, whom I met about half way from their billets. They were as completely bewildered as I. They had found the ammunition dump blown, and houses and garages that we had used for quarters, set afire – and not a soul in evidence anywhere. Having no idea what might have been happening, but assuming the enemy had broken through, I decided our best move would be a hasty evacuation of the area, the hastier the better.

We had, of course, no inkling as to where the remainder of the Battalion might be located, but the general direction of the “Peak” seemed the logical destination – so with that as our goal we set out. We arrived shortly at Magazine Gap, a point a little less than half-way to the “Peak”, and there contacted a small group of Limeys under a Colonel Field. Colonel Field could give us no news of our people beyond that a party, probably ours, had passed through his position sometime in the night, destination unknown. He knew nothing of the situation at Wan Chai and was quite surprised when I gave what meager details I possessed. This information he immediately phoned into “Command Headquarters”, and, since the enemy had obviously not followed up their advantage in force, asked if I would guide a party, under a Marine Major, back to the Gap to “re-take” the position, as it was vital in the defence scheme of the peak. We set out at once on the return journey and, finding no evidence of the enemy in the Gap, proceeded further to a point on Black’s Link, where we set up a section to deny that approach to the enemy. Returning to the Gap, we were met by a runner who informed us that a company of Royal Scots had taken up positions on the left flank summit of Cameron. Being of no further use to the Major, we again set out for the peak, taking with us a truck loaded with mortar bombs which our Battalion had forgotten or missed in its rush for safety. We arrived at McGough just prior to noon and found the Battalion lying around resting, “etc.”, and in the most horrible state of disorganization. There were actually no sentries or lookouts on duty, and when I mentioned protection to some, it was not even known where m.g.’s could be found for roadblocks, etc. After an hour’s futile search for the Colonel or some senior officer to report in to, I gave up in disgust, dispersed my platoon and had a nap.

To digress a bit, the evacuation of Cameron will probably never be properly explained or accounted for, which, judging by the garbled accounts of it received later, is perhaps for the better. It’s quite evident “Someone had blundered”. In the first place, the position was considered a “key” one in the Island’s defence and quite definite orders to hold it to the last man, last round, etc. had been given. It seems the Nips had first lobbed a few mortar bombs

over and in the resulting confusion managed to get in close to our lines in one sector. Evidently, this sector scattered and, for a few minutes, it was impossible to tell friend from foe. To add to the confusion, our artillery, endeavoring to shell Nicholson, dropped a couple of “half-fuses” at the base of Cameron, on our side, and this order came through, although from where, or with what justification, no one seems to know. The enemy must have been as confused as our boys, or suspected a trap, since they made no attempt to follow up their advantage – fortunately.

Having gathered a bit of rest and a bite to eat at McGoughs, things began to look a bit brighter. Around two o’clock, a new re-organization order came through and the next while was spent locating and re-allocating the men to their new platoons. I was given a platoon in a company under Major Baird and told we would form part of a defensive line making a “last stand” before the peak. This, as far as I was concerned, was soon changed by my being made Second in Command of the company, which exalted position I held for almost two hours. Taking the platoon commanders, I placed them in our defensive area then returned to McGough to find that, once again, our plans had been altered and I was now in charge of a platoon under Major Hook - who was to return to Wan Chai with a company and, for the second time, hold that place to the last man, round, etc.

We set out for the Gap at six o’clock that evening, arriving just as darkness began to settle. We found a company of Royal Scots gathered at the Gap, they having been commissioned to hold the left flank summit of Cameron as their part of the scheme. My personal allotment was a small trench system, situated on a spot on the southwest side of the mountain, which afforded a means of denying approach to Wan Chai on the right flank. We settled down here for the night – which proved quite uneventful except for a flurry of sniper’s bullets round midnight, from the top of Cameron – behind us. The powers that be had neglected to mention that the Nips still held the right peak of the mountain. We, rather foolishly I suppose, hoped that since the following day had remained quiet and since it was Christmas Eve, we might experience one of those

“mutual” armistices we had heard about. Events were to prove quite the contrary however.

Our Christmas Eve started out in the traditional “not even a mouse” fashion, and we sat around discussing the folks at home and wondering about preparations being made there for Christmas. About 10:30, I was called in to Company Headquarters by phone and instructed to take out a patrol to ascertain if there was any enemy activity in the area, and to report back as soon as possible. Returning to the trench, I detailed six men to follow and set out. There was no moon but it was one of those clear, starry nights when visibility is fairly good.

Since our position crowned the spur, the descent was made along a path that topped a long ridge to the base. At a distance of fifty or sixty yards from the trench I stopped, thinking I could detect movements in the grass. We listened for a few moments and, hearing nothing further but satisfied that I had not been mistaken, I sent a runner back to warn the boys to be on the alert. We had proceeded only another thirty yards or so when I was positive there were movements in the grass on both sides of us. Listening carefully we found this to be so and, since we were quite vulnerable due to the ridge we were on, I decided the wisest thing to do would be a return to the trench, before we were cut off. Ordering the men about we started back, with myself in rear. We had progressed only a few feet when I saw movements to our right and, dropping to one knee, I sighted about twelve of the enemy proceeding toward the trench, in single file and almost parallel to us, at a distance of approximately thirty-some feet. Shouting their position to the boys, I brought up my rifle (which I had picked up in the trench sans bayonet and sling) and taking aim, squeezed the trigger, only to find I had neglected to leave a round in the chamber. Our opponents, having been seen, elected to charge with bayonets, so I let loose a grenade, holding it as long as I dared due to the close quarters, then tossed it underhand into their midst. Fortunately for us, the grenade apparently just lobbed over their heads and exploded waist high directly behind one poor chap whom, I learned from our boys later, it literally blew into the lap of

one of our chaps. That's probably all that saved us the task of picking mills fragments from our persons.

The events of the succeeding minutes remain somewhat disjointed, due to the rapidity with which things happened and the loss of my own sense of time. However, having checked with other members of the patrol, I believe the continuity as laid down is correct. On releasing the grenade, I charged my rifle and shot one chap through the chest, then, with the enemy upon us and having no bayonet, I proceeded to lay about me with clubbed rifle in the most approved story book manner. In the general melee, I succeeded in knocking the rifle and bayonet from one chap's grasp and picking it up ran another through the side or middle. Unfortunately, I found I couldn't withdraw and, in an effort to extricate my weapon, tossed my small friend, in the manner of handling hay, over my shoulder and to the rear. Whether the bayonet stayed with him or not I couldn't say, but I seemed quite suddenly to be without a weapon. At this unhappy moment, one of them came at me with a sword, and, having nothing with which to fend the blow, I had no choice but to rush in and grab the blade as it descended. Gripping the blade with my right hand, with my left I encircled his head and shoulders and thus deadlocked, we scuffled around until one of us lost his footing and we rolled down a gentle slope of about ten feet, to one side of the path.

The arrival at the bottom found us still locked together and since each was wary of loosening his grip lest the other get an advantage, it looked like an all-night session. Apparently similar thoughts were running through my friends' head for he suddenly gave vent to four or five cries that sounded like 'kill, kill!'. Those were my sentiments too but I didn't like the publicity he was bound to get. Looking about to see what results his cries might bring, I saw one of his pals, evidently intent on rendering assistance, about to descend from the path and to our right. This didn't enhance the situation from my point of view but it did give me added incentive to have things over in a hurry. In the midst of my renewed efforts it dawned on me that I still carried my pistol, until now unused. By considerable frenzied scrambling, due to my

having to hold my opponent close while doing so, I finally reached my holster only to find it empty. The cord or lanyard, however, was still about my neck and I followed it down until I reached the weapon. Another problem here presented itself. Due to the wound in my hand, I found myself unable to squeeze the trigger with my index finger – business of shifting from first to second – and – to spare the more sordid details, I finally managed to dispose of him.

Having expected these last few moments, to be run through from behind, one can imagine the feeling of relief on jumping to my feet to find myself quite alone – both friends and enemies having disappeared. Grasping my late adversary's sword, I made to reascend the bank but found, after a step or two, that I was too exhausted to even crawl – so I lay down to regain my strength. I tried to shout to the trench for someone to give me a hand, but I evidently went unheard. How long I lay there is difficult to say but while in the prone position, I again detected the swishing of the grass, denoting enemy movement, I crawled to a point beside the path and there the sound was unmistakable. The enemy, as near as I could judge, was approaching the trench from the front and right flank. Since their position to a degree, cut off my route back, I again shouted to the trench, warning them of the impending attack and how to prepare against it. By way of answer, I was rewarded by the firing of four flares that seemed to all find an attraction in my hitherto inconspicuous position, so that I was forced to lay quite flat, hoping that my shouting and the flares would not bring a “rubber-outer” my way. After a few moments that seemed as hours, I decided I had nothing to lose by a run for the post so I gathered myself to run the gauntlet. My run, which was more of a stagger, had carried me more than half way before I encountered any signs of the enemy, but at this point I again heard movements so I dropped to one knee for a look-see. On my left, I could just make out one chap in a standing position and, since I now carried my pistol in my left hand, I blazed away at him. (I couldn't even hit a barn with my right!) Not caring to await further developments, I again commenced to run the remaining distance, at the end of which I dove, quite ungracefully, into the trench. Again I had a shock coming. I found myself to be the sole occupant of our post!

This last jolt spurred me sufficiently physically so that I was able to reach the path to Company Headquarters without wasting a great deal of time. Just before reaching the first of the houses, I found one group of men, a Corporal and section, who, when questioned as to why the men had left the trench, declared that when the main body had pulled out, having believed me to have been killed, he had been willing to stay, but felt he could do little with eight men and so had gone along. Ordering him to return at once, I went a short distance further to find the remainder of the men on the road near Company Headquarters. Ordering them to return at once to the trench, after several slighting remarks regarding their character and antecedents, I had my hand given a rough dressing, then returned to the post to prepare for the enemy.

On returning to the position, I had no trouble getting every thing ship-shape as the men still felt somewhat sheepish over their earlier performance. As it turned out, the enemy apparently had no idea that they could have walked in and taken over our position without any opposition but instead, in their methodical way, they went ahead with their attack plan, making sure each and every man was in his appointed place. We had waited perhaps a half hour or more when we heard a shout to out left rear, answered by another to the right and behind us. This evidently was the signal for the attack to commence, for, with a great surge of yells, they bore down on us from three sides while from the fourth, the sides being too steep to climb, they kept up a heavy fire with rifles.

The next hour was quite hectic as anything one could possibly wish to go through, and it's really impossible to describe feelings or actions accurately. Since my job was to supervise and encourage the men as well as direct their fire, etc., I found myself seeing things through the eyes of a spectator rather than a participant, although I did lob a few grenades and fire my rifle occasionally. Even with this advantage, however, all that comes to mind is the terrific blend of noise, gun-flashes, and the smell of powder. I had cautioned the men to hold fire until actual sight of the enemy, then grenades were to be used in conjunction with the Brens. I believe this plan had considerable to do with the ultimate failure of the enemy attack, as their first formation was so badly

disrupted that there was very little actual hand-to-hand work after our first grenade barrage. Our Mills grenades, by the way, were so far ahead of those of the enemy that there was no comparison. We were fortunate too in having more than our quota of Brens for the job, having five for approximately thirty men and with four men per Bren loading magazines, we presented an almost impenetrable wall of fire. Again and again the officer endeavored to rally his men for a close-in fight, but to advance through that hail of lead would have been an impossibility. For the most part, the enemy contented themselves with getting as close as they dared, tossing a grenade or two.

After what seemed ages, the attack finally petered out and I was given a chance to reckon the damage done. Making a general check I found we had been most fortunate, for, aside from slight shrapnel wounds, we had only one man killed. Our "Sigs" had taken a bullet through the neck. Since there still remained more than two hours till dawn, we felt the enemy might make a further attempt and accordingly set to work to get things ship-shape such as gun cleaning, etc. As it turned out, such was the case, but it was only a very brief repetition of the first, except that it lacked the savage persistency of the earlier attempt. Evidently, the enemy, being human, had no taste for lead and we weren't given a good work out. (Thank Heaven.) After the last episode in which we had no serious casualties, we settled down to await the dawn which, fortunately was not far off.

A general check-up at daybreak revealed a shortage of ammunition and grenades, so contacted Major Hook by phone, reported the evening tiff, and asked him to send ammunition, rations, and rum (we hoped). I waited until around 9 o'clock and still no supplies, so since communication had broken down, sent in a runner. With no reply by 9:30, I sent another and at 11:00 still another, all of whom failed to return. Since Company Headquarters was only a matter of a ten minute walk and everything was quiet, I decided to go in myself and see what was what. Arriving at Company Headquarters, I was met by Major Hook who promised the boys would be looked after at once and who insisted I go with him to Base Headquarters to have my hand properly dressed. Since

the boys were a little on edge after the previous night's business, I asked that he send a senior NCO with the supplies to look after things until my return. Assuring me this would be taken care of, we set off for Base Headquarters and I took with me the sword of the previous evening's episode - turning it over to Harper to hide for me. I arrived at Base Headquarters and found the Colonel engrossed in a counter attack plan to relieve a platoon, surrounded by the enemy the night previous, on Bennett's Hill. After considerable argument, I was able to convince him that with a pair of Vicker's guns, I could quite easily work on the enemy's rear from my trench as we were a trifle out-ranged with the Brens. With his promise that the Vickers would be up by two o'clock, I took my leave.

I had just stepped out the door of the shelter when a man rushed up to say my men of the trench had gone through his road block on the run. Picking up a bicycle, I hurriedly made my way to the road block. Arriving there, I found everything quiet and the sentries completely in the dark as to the reason for sudden departure of my men or their present whereabouts. Since our position was quite important strategically, in the proposed counter attack as well as the Wan Chai defence, my first consideration was its re-occupation. Having no idea what the situation might involve, I called for two volunteers to man a Bren and accompany me back to the trench. Sergeant Porter with three men and two Brens stepped forward, so off we started, Sergeant-Major McFadyen promising to gather a few more men at once and follow us in.

On the path, between the block and the trench, we were subjected to a bit of sniping from the valley below but no casualties resulted. On nearing the trench, a Bren man and myself edged forward under cover of a slight ridge to a point where we could observe and bring fire to bear and, on arrival there, were quite surprised to find the trench apparently un-occupied. Calling up the remainder to give us covering fire, we dashed forward and finding no opposition set up our gun then signaled the all-clear to the rest. Investigation of the trench disclosed a mortar bomb had dropped on one of the gun positions, killing the gunner and

evidently the remainder had become panic-stricken and evacuated in a hurry, leaving Brens, rifles and equipment where they lay.

We spotted the enemy in fairly large numbers at the base of our spur and, since they seemed to have established some sort of breast-work in the woods, we decided we might just as well give them something to worry about from our angle. Although the range was a trifle long for really accurate shooting, we nevertheless peppered both that position and the enemy's rear on Bennett's Hill, causing considerable agitation in both spots. We soon found that two could play that game when they were able to bring their m.g.'s to bear on us, and things settled down to a sniper's game in which we had, due to our position, quite some advantage. Around three o'clock we heard firing to our rear, in the approximate locality of Base Headquarters and, since our Vickers party and reinforcements had failed to appear, I decided we had better pull out and investigate lest we be cut off from the rear. Our evacuation was a bit trickier than coming in as we came under heavy sniper fire, but managed to reach the road-block with only two casualties, neither of them very serious. Passing through the road-block, which we found deserted, we were further subjected to LMG fire from Cameron so I decided we'd better make for Base Headquarters at once. Arriving there I was again to experience that "when a fellow needs a friend" feeling for, once more – without our having been warned, we found Base Headquarters deserted and the Battalion headed for safer climes.

With no inkling of what might have caused the withdrawal, other than the fact that we were being shelled damned heavily and subjected to a bit of m.g. fire, we decided we should once again make for the peak. Gathering together all the workable Brens we could find and numerous grenades – quantities of both were lying all over the place – we hid what we couldn't carry and set out. Since the upper and shorter road beyond Magazine Gap seemed to be taking a terrific pounding, we took the lower road, which meant that we would be faced with a much stiffer climb at the end of our journey. After an hour or so of terrific exertion, due to our heavy

loads, we finally arrived at the peak, there to receive our greatest surprise – we had hoisted the white flag.

As can well be imagined, news of that nature, coming to men keyed up to battle pitch for days and with scant food and rest, can be a very great shock and the manner in which some received it was most pathetic. Pent-up emotions were given further impetus by the looting of stores of liquor and cigarettes and the combination of circumstances seemed to crumble the thin veneer of civilization within which men's animal nature seems to lurk. Such an exposition was most revolting and may I never witness again an army in defeat. Surely, nothing portrays more vividly the frustration, lost hope, and extreme selfishness of the individual.

And so – in a little more than two weeks, my usefulness, if any, as a soldier whose military education had cost the government thousands of dollars, was finished. Perhaps we all might have done better under different circumstances, but I feel that most of us did our best here, and particularly am I proud of the fact that the replacement officers were at all times in the thick of things as can be seen from the casualty list, nor did I hear of any instance of the new chaps “cracking”. So – all in all – though short but sweet, we're through and, when results are viewed away from the thrill of battle, we must admit that perhaps Sherman was right!

CHAPTER TWO

Who Was Leonard Corrigan?

Noted Canadian author, Kildare Dobbs, once wrote that “self-reliance, individualism, and a cheerful willingness to cooperate are special marks of Saskatchewan people. Some may sense isolation, but they are not daunted by it.”, he said. Leonard Corrigan would have all these qualities tested as he faced nearly four years of captivity in Hong Kong.

Leonard Bertram Corrigan was born in Whitewood in Saskatchewan in 1911, the son of Isabelle Hart Corrigan and William Hubert Corrigan. He was the third of four children born to the couple – Nina, Cecilia (who died in infancy), Leonard, and Charles Hubert.

Leonard Corrigan’s ancestors had left Ireland for Canada where some settled in Ontario before heading out west to live in Winnipeg. On his mother’s side, Leonard’s grandparents put roots down in Moosomin, Saskatchewan, where Anthony Hart and his wife, Mary, had pioneered at a time when the railroad was opening up the west. Indians roamed the plains and prairie fires threatened the settlements. The climate was harsh – both winter and summer – and those who came to the west were faced with many challenges. The Riel Rebellion in the late 1800’s brought troops from the east to quell the uprising. Anthony Hart’s business was to provide meat for the soldiers who arrived in Saskatchewan by train to fight Riel and his supporters. A.E. Hart also became fire chief in his community and he and Mary contributed to building the town of Moosomin. Their daughter, Isabelle, would marry William Hubert Corrigan early in the 1900’s.

In 1882, into the mix of soldiers, business people, farmers, and ranchers came a bizarre contingent of the sons of wealthy Englishmen to create “Cannington Manor”. Led by Captain Edward Pierce, who intended to establish an “Agricultural

College”, this group also wished to transplant their culture and refinement onto the Canadian prairies. Whitewood became the site of this adventure and soon the mansions were being built with elegant ballrooms, stables with wood- paneling housed the horses to be used for racing, hunting, and polo, and an Opera House complete with a full orchestra was constructed to be enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Manor and the nearby communities of Moosomin and Whitewood.

It was a world which entranced the young Belle Hart in her teenage years. She came to love the life of music and dance and the social outings which took place. Hugh Corrigan was a handsome athletic young man who would also have enjoyed the sporting life offered by Cannington Manor. He would play lacrosse with a winning team, baseball, hockey, and golf – which he played into his senior years. Together they would have been a handsome couple enjoying this elegant lifestyle.

By 1901, however, the new establishment failed when, according to Jane McCracken writing in the Canadian Encyclopedia, the inhabitants found they preferred polo, cricket, tennis, and rugby to farming and life on the prairies. Cannington Manor began to gradually disappear. Recognizing the unique aspect of this prairie history, the site of Cannington Manor has now been made into a provincial park and some of the original buildings have been reconstructed.

The marriage of Hugh and Belle would have been a grand social event. Pictures of Belle at that time show a beautiful young lady in her wedding finery. In 1907, the arrival of baby Nina would change Belle’s life, however. Weighing just two pounds, the baby’s chances of survival were slim until her two grandmothers wrapped her carefully and placed her on the open door of the wood stove in the kitchen to keep her warm. She survived and lived into her nineties.

Cecilia’s birth and death as an infant must have been extremely difficult for Hugh and Belle. It was never spoken about. Leonard and his older sister, Nina, never knew they had a sister

until her name was found while tracing the family history. Both were seniors when Cecilia's existence was made known to them. Learning about her young sister, Nina would say, "Now I can add her name to my prayers".

By the time Leonard was born in 1911, Belle was facing difficulties as a mother. Not only was she trying to cope with the death of her infant daughter, she may also have been suffering from tuberculosis, staying in Whitewood to recover from this illness. Leonard and Nina began a rather nomadic life of staying with relatives and, when they were older, of being sent off to boarding school. (At the age of five, Leonard was sent to an all-French boarding school in Saint Boniface, Manitoba – probably the only English-speaking child there.)

The one constant figure in the young lives of Nina and Leonard was their grandmother, Mary McIntosh Hart. Mary Hart was born in the year of Confederation, 1867, and facing the challenges of life on the prairies, she became a strong and forceful presence for the young Corrigans. Mary was widowed in her forties and by the time of her death – just short of 100 years – she had been a widow longer than she had been married. She had a no-nonsense approach to life and, while Leonard was developing into a dare-devil, carefree young boy, he knew that when he stayed with her in Moosomin, he had to do as he was told. She would be the stabilizing force in his life. She was a woman of many interests which included politics (Sir Wilfred Laurier stayed at her house when he traveled through Saskatchewan) and she played an active role in the development of the town of Moosomin. She loved hockey and followed the game all her life. When the town council of Moosomin waffled on building a new arena, Mary challenged the civic leaders to do the right thing and then successfully rallied the local ladies to raise money for the venture by holding bake sales, craft displays, and bazaars. She read the newspaper every day, tended her large garden, and remained active well into her nineties. When Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip travelled by train in Canada in 1959, Mary Hart presented the Queen with a white baby shawl when the royal couple had a stop-over in Moosomin. She explained to them that her grandmother had made

a similar one for Queen Victoria while a member of the royal household.

The Corrigan family would be complete with the arrival of Charles Hubert in 1915. By this time, Hugh was travelling throughout Saskatchewan on business. Saskatchewan and Alberta had become provinces in 1905 and many settlers were arriving to take up land grants and homesteads in these new districts. Looming ahead, however, was the prospect of war in Europe and Leonard's father would enlist in the South Saskatchewan Regiment, along with his brothers-in-law, Anthony Jr. and James Hart. Tony Hart would become a casualty of the First Great War in the Battle of Ypres at the age of 18 years. His body was never found and his name is written on one of the walls near the Menin Gate. Jim Hart would go on to become Colonel-In-Chief of the South Saskatchewan Regiment and would also play a part in the organization of the Royal Canadian Legion in Canada. Hugh went overseas with the Army of Occupation and so was still in Europe after the battles had ended.

Belle was left at home with three young children. It appears that Nina was sent to school in Manitoba where her talent in music was nurtured. Leonard's whereabouts are sketchy but mention is made in family stories of his time spent with his great-uncle, Austin McIntosh (where he nearly burned down the barn on the family farm). Leonard was always impressed by his great-uncle who was very inventive and managed to tap the natural gas on his property for use on the farm. (His gas holdings continue into the present.) He also had the first piano west of Winnipeg in his home. Nina remembered the piano with its heavy, sturdy legs supporting the square grand structure. For Leonard, this must have been a time of boyish adventures, staying with relatives and enjoying the freedom from parental restrictions.

By the 1920's, Hugh, Belle, and the children had moved to Swift Current, Saskatchewan, where Hugh was named Post Master. They moved into an elegant house on First West and Belle became part of the social and musical circles in the town. Leonard and Charles (Chuck) were enrolled in school and many sports

activities. Both would become excellent hockey players and golfers, as well as baseball players. Chuck would also become a noted track and field athlete in high school setting provincial records which lasted for decades in Saskatchewan. The competitive environment at home was encouraged by Hugh who began managing and coaching baseball and hockey teams in Swift Current. For Leonard, sports were an escape from the strictures of school and the pretentiousness of his mother's social whirl, which he disliked. Hockey became the major interest for Chuck and he would go on to play in the professional leagues, including one season with the Toronto Maple Leafs. Chuck was his mother's favourite while Leonard continued to search out adventures and hijinks, creating great tension between mother and son. During these years, Nina continued her pursuit of music in Manitoba and then later went to Toronto where she studied music with some of the leading musicians of the day. She was involved in a chorus led by Sir Ernest MacMillan and played in the homes of members of the Art and Letters Club in Toronto. A heady time for a young musician.

Leonard did not have a stellar scholastic career. He was always very tall for his age and had acquired a reputation as a mischief maker – sometimes with good reason. Years later, his children would speculate that he was naturally left-handed but schools of that day insisted that children be made to write with the right hand. Perhaps this accounted for his impatience and frustration in the classroom. At the same time, it would have added to his natural ability as an athlete in both hockey and golf. He loved to read, however, and his father had an excellent library in the Corrigan house. Magazines and periodicals of the day brought material written by the top authors of the 1920's into Leonard's world – an interest that continued all his life. He loved books and paper and words and writing and these would become his education.

In Grade Nine, he was sent to Champion College, where the Jesuits had a reputation for straightening out the less-motivated scholars. Life in Regina didn't change Leonard's attitude to school and, while he respected many of the teachers, he didn't do well

there. It didn't seem that his intelligence was in question, only that he couldn't seem to stand the structure and confines of a school situation. He went back to Swift Current to go to high school there.

At Swift Current Collegiate, he met and began to date Gladys Voldahl, a bright and outgoing fellow student, two years his junior. While Leonard was uncomfortable mixing in the social circles (probably a throw-back to his mother's advanced interest in all things social), Gladys was popular and loved to be with friends at dances and other fun-filled events. Leonard left the Collegiate before he had finished high school but their relationship continued.

Gladys Voldahl was the second child of Nels and Jessie Voldahl who had come to the Braddock area near Swift Current to homestead. She had an older sister, Florence, and a younger brother named Clare. Nels had been a teacher in North Dakota when he and Jessie decided to join the Watson family, Jessie's parents, on the drive north to Saskatchewan where there was a promise of land. Nels had lost part of one arm in a hunting accident as a young man, so farming must have been a challenge for him. In fact, after a few years on the land, he had decided to return to the United States to study law with his cousins. Tragically, he suffered an attack of appendicitis and peritonitis and died before his family could get him to the hospital in Swift Current. Jessie was left a very young widow with three children. She decided not to return south but instead stayed with the Watson family at Braddock. And, although her father and brothers helped her with the homestead, she was forced to sell the farm. She apparently got very little money for her property when the debts and lawyers fees were settled and she had to move her family to Swift Current and find a way to make a living. She was a talented seamstress and this became a way for her to keep her family together. Tragedy struck again when young Clare died, possibly in the great Influenza epidemic which was being experienced all around the world. Jessie would later marry Hugh McDonald, a member of one of the farm families that she had come to know in the Swift Current area. Hugh had served with the 209th South Saskatchewan Regiment during the First World War in France. Their marriage took place in the early 1920's. Gladys' older sister, Florence, would later marry

Jack Murphy, one of the men who was involved in the construction boom in Fort MacMurray and projects in the western provinces in the 1930's.

While Gladys continued her education at the Collegiate and graduated at the age of 16, Leonard began working in the Post Office and the two began an intense courtship over the next few years in which the post box #1313 played a big part. This was a fictitious box where the two would exchange letters almost every day – usually with Leonard apologizing for his behaviour the previous night and Gladys obviously agreeing to forgive him and take him back. This became a life-long pattern. Leonard must have found it easier to write about his feelings than to actually say them out loud.

Neither of the two sets of parents seemed to approve of this match. At one time, Leonard decided to do what many young men at that time were doing – ride the rails to British Columbia to see if there was any work. He discovered there wasn't and came back to Swift Current and the Post Office. He seemed always to be up for a challenge and for adventure. Before he turned twenty, one of his friends asked Leonard to go to Ireland with him. Leonard agreed and then decided to continue on a tour of Europe. The travel bug seemed to have been encouraged by his parents who probably hoped that this might discourage the romance between Gladys and Leonard. However, when he returned from his travels, Leonard asked Gladys to marry him. Their love affair lasted through many ups and downs until her early death by cancer in 1979.

At age nineteen, Gladys discovered she could play the piano by ear – never having taken a lesson and never learning to read music. She must have exhibited some musical talent earlier because her step-father, Hugh McDonald, had rented a piano for her to start lessons. Before she could begin, however, she returned home from school to find the piano was gone. Those were economically tough times on the prairies and it was likely too expensive for Gladys to have music lessons. (Years later, when Gladys was asked to play at a function for a local service organization, she realized the piano in their club room was the one

that was almost “hers”.) Music became important to both Leonard and Gladys and he decided to take up the saxophone so the two of them could play together. They formed a small dance band to play in Swift Current.

By the time they married, they had also started to play golf together – both were enthusiastic and competitive. Trophies and prizes began to accumulate in their home as both were winning local tournaments. It was another activity that the two of them would do together for the rest of their lives.

In 1934, Patricia Eleanor Corrigan was born. Relations between the young couple and the senior Corrigans had not been good and the problems accelerated with Patricia, known as Paddy, as to who would guide her life. Belle is reported to have said to Gladys, “Give us Paddy. You can have other children.”. Still dreaming of becoming a back-stage mother (or, in this case, grandmother) of a concert pianist, Belle hoped to mould Paddy into a world-class artist. She had tried and failed with Nina, who was recognized by her teachers as being gifted, but whose personal life and the constant interference from her mother derailed her career. Later, when the war had ended, Nina left for California and became a rehearsal pianist in Hollywood for movie stars in the 1950’s.

The senior Corrigans moved to Ontario shortly after Paddy’s birth and Gladys and Leonard settled into their domestic life. When Paddy was about three, her father took her on the train from Swift Current to Toronto – a rather unusual move for a young father in those days.

Paddy was later told that during a stop-over in Chicago with a few hours to kill, Leonard heard there was an open-air concert by Lily Pons that wasn't too far from the train station. So, off they went to hear this great artist sing. There was such a crowd that, when they moved from one spot to another, Leonard lost track of Paddy. He searched quite awhile and then decided to go back to the spot where they had originally been standing

– and there was Paddy! They had just enough time to get back on the train and continue their journey.

Paddy had another story from that same trip. She vaguely remembers seeing a picture in a Toronto newspaper that told the tale of a little girl from the prairies who went out to play in the rain because she had never seen rain before. This was the time of the “Dirty Thirties” when drought had consumed the prairies. Paddy was that girl.

Where was Gladys during this time? One can only speculate that it was too expensive for both she and Leonard to make the trip – or that she had chosen not to go, given her feelings for her mother-in-law – or that she had not been invited!

By the late 1930’s, Europe was in turmoil as Hitler began his campaigns. By the time that England had become embroiled in negotiations for peace – and the efforts failed – Canadians were beginning to consider what might be expected of them in the event that war became a reality. Leonard’s family had a strong military background and a sense of patriotism. It seemed only logical that Leonard would end up joining the South Saskatchewan Regiment where his father, uncles, and his father-in-law had already served.

In 1939, while King George and Queen Elizabeth were touring Canada, Paddy was staying in Winnipeg with her grandparents and remembers clearly being taken to the train station where she saw the Royal Family and ran alongside the train on the station platform. Her mother, Gladys, was in Swift Current awaiting the birth of her second child. On May 7, the day the royal train went through Swift Current, Shelagh Mary Corrigan was born – and her mother missed the whole spectacle of the royal visit.

By August of 1940, Leonard had joined the South Saskatchewan Regiment with the rank of Second Lieutenant. In 1941, he was sent to Farnham, Quebec for training, then on to Kitchener, Ontario as Conducting Officer for the draft in Regina,

Saskatchewan. Following a leave of absence, he was sent to Victoria for further instruction.

Paddy remembers

“I have a strong recollection of our going to Victoria in the summer of 1941, the time our Dad was going to Officer Training School at Gordon Head. The ship over to Vancouver Island was very exciting for me. I’ll always remember the huge staircases with their shining oak railings and thinking that the ship was really huge. The one war reference made was the time on deck when I was told that enemy submarines might be in the water. When I asked what they looked like, I was told that the periscopes were like broomsticks – so I spent the rest of the voyage looking for broomsticks in the water.

When I think of Victoria, I think of Cadboro Bay which was where our cottage was. I remember playing on the beach where there was an area of large rocks and stones. The water would roll through the area and leave behind all sorts of little sea creatures. I remember being somewhat frightened by the large crabs sunning themselves on the rocks. I remember, too, there being large spiders on the ceiling and in the corners of the walls in the cabin and pulling the covers over my head in case some of them dropped down on me. Revisiting the area in 2003 brought back some memories but, of course, all the cabins down near the water were long gone. The scene there was as inviting as it had been 61 years earlier.”

She continues

“I don’t remember any discussion between my parents about Dad joining the Army. But then, it was typical in those days not to speak about these things to children. There was not much discussion about the possibility of war, particularly where I might hear about it.

After being in Victoria, we went to Winnipeg. By this time, Dad had transferred to the Winnipeg Grenadiers and was going to be shipped off somewhere – although no one said where. Mom and Dad may have had some pretty difficult moments trying to decide what

to do as far as I was concerned. Grandma and Grandpa Corrigan would no doubt argue that I could get a better education in Winnipeg, living with them. When the decision was made to have me stay in Winnipeg and go to school at St. Mary's Academy, it must have been terrible for my mother to have to leave me with my grandparents knowing the bad feelings that existed between them and Mom. Again, these were not things discussed with a child. When Dad left, Mom took Shelagh and went back to Regina to be with her mother, Jessie McDonald. She couldn't stand being with Grandma Corrigan.

I don't have a strong recollection of my first year of school. I was back and forth to Winnipeg so many times that it's hard to sort out which experiences were my earliest. I do know that it was quite an adjustment, to go to St. Mary's Academy in Winnipeg. The big concern, as I recall, was the necessity of wearing the black uniform with the stiff white collar and cuffs everyday with long black stockings and black shoes. The one time we wore something different was on gym days. We wore long-sleeved white shirts underneath a black jumper with the same long black stockings and black shoes. I do recall leaving the apartment on Spence Street in a rush one day and putting on brown shoes. I was sent home on the streetcar because such a mistake was not to be countenanced!"

The war years had begun.

CHAPTER THREE

Westward, Whoa!

Being The Doings, Etc. of.....L.B. Corrigan, Temporary
Gentleman,

Winnipeg Grenadiers

Often, since the beginning of our “Stay Indurance Vile”, have I wondered just what influence so sways a man’s perception of things that he is not only willing to forego, on necessity, all the comforts and pleasures of civilian life, but actually goes seeking the opportunity to exchange them for the known discomforts of war. Perhaps it might be termed patriotism, though I’m inclined to think the motive is more selfish than that. Be what it may, however, as a result of whatever hidden urge prompted us to do this thing, I am now scribbling these few lines to while away the hours in an internment camp in Asia.

My little adventure started about the middle of October, 1941 when an opportunity to leave Canada as part of a fighting force presented itself. Maze, Black, Harper and myself, after what we considered at the time to be much serious thought, finally decided such an opportunity warranted our transfer from the South Saskatchewan Regiment to the Winnipeg Grenadiers. Having made and acted on our decision, we were not long getting underway for, on October 25 we entrained for the west coast, our final destination a secret, but the “experts” giving us everything from Somaliland to Singapore.

En Route Sunday –

Dear Mrs. C.

Just a few lines from your travellin’ man. So far it’s been a very pleasant voyage and the mountains today were loveliers than I’ve seen them yet. I still can’t seem to get over the winter-cruise idea so far as the trip is concerned and had it not been for the leaving of family, everything would be hunky-dory. I know that there isn’t much I can say about it as you’ve lived with me long enough to get my general ideas on the subject, however, I do believe it will in lots of ways do you the

world of good if you go at it properly and that means you've got to be in there "pitching" all the time – you can beat it easily just as thousands are, if you just go ahead without thinking (of you) (NO SARCASM).

Well we still haven't the faintest idea where we're going yet although we found out today that we will be with other Empire troops, so Singapore may still be the spot, it looks interesting regardless and while I understand we'll be working pretty hard, I'm looking forward to it. We arrive at Vancouver at noon tomorrow and have only 2 hours there so won't have any time to look anyone up.

This isn't even an excuse for a letter but I'm writing it on my knee and there's not much news anyway. The main main idea is to be sure you have my address which is –

LIET. etc. etc.

Wpeg Grenadiers Force "C"

Can. Army Overseas.

Well I'll sign off and although you won't hear from me for a month or so, keep the chin up and don't let your heart run your head.

Lots of love to you and the bairns,

Len

I'll cable on arrival but don't expect anything for at least a month.

Our excursion, as far as the coast, was quite uneventful, except for those who had never seen the Rockies, and for whom the trip seemed to take on the appearance of a pleasure jaunt, with all expenses paid. On arrival at the dock in Vancouver, however, sight of the ship which we were to share with another Battalion suggested even to these that the cruise might not be all pleasure for though a fair size, two thousand men might find things a bit cramped.

We boarded our ship, the "Awatea" from the Australian Trade, about mid-afternoon and spent until dinner-time hunting for, and settling in, quarters and trying to locate baggage. Our ship,

though not large, had been a luxury boat in peace time and, though most of the woodwork had been covered by veneer against the rigors of troop transportation, there were still sufficient evidences that under different circumstances she would be a lovely ship to sail on. Unfortunately, space for our numbers was sadly lacking, even though the lower decks, dining saloons etc., had been pressed into service. Quite a number of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, having had experience in tropical travel in their journeys to and from Jamaica, at once set up a howl about the foreseen discomforts when we should hit hot weather. Being more or less used to “beefs” in the army and being in no position to remedy things in any case, we more or less sympathetically dismissed the whole thing and went down to dinner.

Black and myself had managed to get a table together and had just commenced the meal when a Corporal of the Royal Rifles came to the door and, since our table was nearest the entrance, made for us to give us the disturbing news that some seventy Grenadiers had walked off the ship and were congregated on the dock-shed below. Not quite knowing what we might expect, we both came up topside and sure enough, there they were! With grave doubts as to our ability to do very much, we descended the gangplank and, after much persuasion, finally managed to convey the seriousness of their act and the possible repercussions if they did not at once reboard the ship. Having persuaded them to board, we found ourselves the centre of a pushing, growling mass of humanity in the Purser’s Well. Since the men were all new to us, we could do little but argue and for half an hour we did just that. Some of the men were particularly ugly and were most derisive when we suggested complaints should be made through the proper channels. This they claimed had been their method for two years with the Winnipeg Grenadiers and it always got them nowhere. Evidently we weren’t making much progress so I made my way down below to bring up one of the seniors to handle things. Meeting a Major on the stairs, I told him the situation and was surprised when he received my story with a shrug and a laugh, then started for his cabin. Being more or less crossed up on that point I again made my way upstairs. Here we again became embroiled in more argument, which finally subsided when the men set a

deadline of nine o'clock by which to attend to their grievances. Someone of the ship's crew at this stage had sense enough to have the gangplank hauled up, which resulted in considerable jostling and shoving. Shortly after, the Colonel hove into sight and gave the men a talking to, then ordered the square cleared. Black and I, with the help of a couple of NCO's, saw to this then made another try at our dinner. I neglected to mention that, in addition to the packed quarters, the men had been served a most unwholesome meal of mutton – which had proved to be the last straw.

Immediately after dinner, we were told there was to be a meeting of officers which we must attend. Gathered in the library, my first "official meeting" with my new seniors was to leave a rather bad taste in my mouth. The Colonel laid down the law to us and made the statement that the junior officers would be held responsible for any further re-occurrences of the evening's business. During the course of his remarks he also stated that the evening's trouble had been started by the new men who had joined at Winnipeg and Regina – a statement that rather provoked Black and myself, since we ourselves were newcomers and had certainly seen no newcomers in the evening's trouble. After our chastening lecture, we were told to mingle with and reason with the men, who had in the meantime gone to the upper decks where they milled about in small groups, talking and arguing. Our mingling with the men, we found, bore no fruits at all since they were unanimous almost in that the officers would not help them in any way, judging from past experiences in Jamaica. This didn't seem the best way in the world to spend the first evening of a Pacific cruise, so we were glad indeed when we saw the ropes cast off preparatory to sailing. This then was to be our first contact with the fellow officers and men of our new regiment and there crept into our minds a shadow of doubt as to the wisdom of our transfer from a regiment like the South Saskatchewan to one in such hands as this.

The journey, for the next week, was from a travelling point of view, perfect. The weather and seas were in complete sympathy with our crowd of landlubbers and though we had a few on sick list, the majority came through unscathed. After a week's sailing, we were all quite joyous when, on the morning of November 2nd,

land was sighted and soon we could make out the rugged outline of Hawaii. It was quite a thrill coming into this famous isle and, with perfect weather, it seemed even more picturesque than the travel folders boasted. Berthing in the harbour, we were somewhat disappointed to learn that our sightseeing would be done on board, but having been able to view the beaches and famous hotels, plus a troupe of Hawaiian girls, who performed on the dock for us, we were satisfied that we had at least seen some of the things for which the island is famous.

En Route Via Pacific
Saturday, November 1, 1941

Howdy Mrs. C.

Have a few minutes before eating so thought I'd pen a line or two. Actually I started one a few days ago but it seemed such a poor effort, I tore it up. Our voyage up to the present has been blessed by good weather and good sailing and comparatively few of the boys are suffering to any extent. The first day out we were fortunate enough to see a whale a few yards off and today numerous flying fish are in evidence, otherwise the trip has been quite uneventful.

Contrary to our expectations we have been quite busy since the beginning of the voyage. Our Brigadier was formerly Officer in charge of training for Canada so we've been trying to keep up a pretty fair system of training, something that is no easy job due to the lack of space on board, anyway yours truly has to dig in and give the odd lecture, much to his disgust.

We have our first port of call coming up in the morning for the taking on of fresh water, supplies, etc. but we won't be allowed ashore so will have to do our sight-seeing from the ship. The weather has quite definitely gone tropical on us, much to our discomfort as we're still in battle dress. A lot of our men have not been issued shorts as yet so we don't change until they do.

There is still no official inkling of where we are going and the rumours fly as thick as ever.

I understand though that we have another twenty days to go so you can have your guess as well. While I

think of it, I understand Buckinghams are fairly cheap \$2 or \$2.50 per thousand through the tobacco companies etc. for export so if you could send the odd bundle they'd be much appreciated as I can't get Bucks, only Winchester.

Well, we've arrived at our port for the taking on of supplies. Unfortunately, military regulations don't permit names but I can assure you it's quite a picture. It's my first visit to a tropical country, and believe me they're not exaggerating the loveliness. This particular island apparently is not as humid as most and it would be an ideal spot to live I should imagine. We're hoping they take on a supply of pineapples etc. as everyone seems to have a craving for fresh fruit. Saw a few sharks playing around the stern of the ship as we came in this morning – nice creatures – While I think of it, would you send my camera to me? Also some films – Hazel borrowed it when she went to Swift Current.

Well, this isn't much of a letter but it's hard writing so I'll sign off until the next stop. I certainly miss the family and imagine it will be even worse when we arrive. However, these things must be. Save your money and we'll come down here after for a trip.

*Love to you all,
Len*

En Route - November 2, 1941

Dearest Frau,

Well, the boat is still hanging around Honolulu and there's not much doing so I'll pen a few more lines and post it when I arrive at the destination. That being the case I guess I can divulge a few facts about our ship, etc. To begin with our boat is the "Awatea" a United Steamship Line ship from the Australian trade. She's really a honey – on the small side as compared to the "Empress" but really a lovely boat. She's comparatively new and quite modern being finished in Australian maple throughout (I figured) including furniture etc. All in all a lovely job and wonderfully smooth riding as well.

Our arrival in port was quite the thing. Strangely enough the old island is everything the shows, pictures and books make it out to be and more, that is from what we can tell from the boat. On our way in we passed Waikiki beach and its two famous hotels and the beach and surf looked terribly inviting, in fact there were a dozen or so surf-board riding as we passed.

As we came into harbor a few natives swam out to the ship but were promptly shooed away by the U.S. Coast Guard men. – May I break in here --? I'm copying this from a letter I had written on heavier paper to try and chisel a little on the money. As you may have guessed by my worse than usually handwriting – I'm a bit "high". I borrowed a saxophone and went out on the officers' deck for a sing-song – but (and I won't censor this in the morning) for some reason or other it seems that I must declare my love for you. Tonight seemed to bring me back to the old days of my criticizing of your playing – (who am I?) and it occurred to me how much I'm really missing you. Stupid! – yes – but that's how it is. I haven't realized what it is that's been eating into me and causing a somewhat bewildered outlook on everything – it's you – of course – we always did get along better apart. However, if it would perhaps give you a lift, or if it didn't, for that matter, I'd like to say that I miss you terribly – it's not that any threat of impending danger makes me this way – but just the intense longing for you. I hope you believe this passage – "high" or not it seemed most essential that I tell you how I felt, even in this moment of so called weakness – forgive me please but I just can't help loving the girl I married in spite of her little differences – will you remember that? In a moment of weakness give me a 50-50 break anyway will you? I've just read the latter part over and I'm not particularly pleased, but as I said – no censorship – not that I disagree – on the contrary it was a very stupid attempt or a description of my love for you – however – you know me perhaps better than I do myself, and I think you'll realize, in spite of the complete lack of grammatical sense, that I'm in a sense letting down my hair – I am - and if I don't ever do it again

don't be misled – I'm not that "high" – so on with the letter.

Assuming I'm my normal self will resume again as per previous letter.

The next leg of our voyage takes us to Manila, approximately 5000 miles from Honolulu. The best I can say is I have had my share of travel since joining the army. I just heard yelling and cheering from the troops and went to investigate. Found a troop of Hawaiian girls (15) putting on a little show on the dock – quite good too.

I managed to stay out in the sun last Sunday to develop a bit of sunstroke and repaired to my bed for the remainder of the day – I most certainly will watch that in future. Black and I have had our hair cut to the regular army style – ½ inch in front etc. – you should see us.

Nov. 3 – (I'm still quoting the previous letter.)

Well darling, went to Mass this a.m. and said a nice long prayer for a happy reunion in the near future. As I mentioned earlier, I certainly miss the family and I'm relying on you to inculcate in the girls that "something" which they should have that I haven't been able to get across, regarding the "old man". I don't think, actually, that you'll have a tough time adjusting yourself providing you are willing to let your own personal wants etc., go by the board and concentrate on your family – anyway – and I'm trying to be honest, it will be the best again – if you should – at any time feel like weakening, for God's sake let me know at once. I can take it – I think – if you were to tell me, but it would break me if you didn't and things turned out to the contrary – please don't forget that will you? You may have a right to a second choice but don't above anything – be deceitful about it. I think I'd better sign off as it's past 2 a.m. but while I'm still this way once again may I express, or try to, my great love for you. Actually magnitude of that love overwhelms me so believe me please – I'll be "old Butch" again tomorrow.

Well – it's the old man again. As you can see, I must have been "high", however, as I said, no censorship – that's how she stands. A good deal of incoherency perhaps but you get the general idea, I

hope. As I mentioned before I'm re-copying my letter so I'll get at it again. I might mention that I just came from the show – "Irene" – which I enjoyed. Saw "Swiss Family Robinson" and "Irene and Vernon Castle" previously and the latter was fair. Aside from that we have very little to do on board in the way of social activities. It's really too hot to do anything anyway. We're running close to the equator they tell me and I quite believe them. However, it's all been quite wonderful on board, the sea is quite smooth and the weather grand.

To get on with my letter-

Sailing from Honolulu was one of the most thrilling pictures I've ever seen. We cast off just after sundown and by the time we were out the lights of towns were twinkling all over the hill on which the city lies. At the base of a huge hill or mountain which runs for miles along the island with numberless small villages or suburbs of the city clustered across the slope which is quite gradual. As if to make the picture even more beautiful, a full moon pushed itself over the mountains behind Waikiki and then as we turned westward, it was directly to our stern and gave the impression that a huge carpet of silver, like the train of a wedding dress, was being laid out behind us as we moved off. Actually, it was very touching and a picture I'll never forget. It would have been perfect had I had you with me to enjoy it. I made up my mind right then and there that someday I'm going to do just that – i.e. have you and the family see with me that wonderful picture. There's a point for you to work on – start saving your money for a Pacific cruise, if this trip could be duplicated it would certainly be worth it.

Nov. 4 -

Nothing of much importance enters this chapter except the revealment of our destination. It is to be Hong Kong. The set-up appears to be OK but it will depend entirely on the Japanese Diet, which takes place on the day after our arrival, (no connection) and at which meeting the Jap foreign policy will be announced.

Nov. 10 –

Today's news seems to indicate that we might be stepping right into it. We'll only be 90 miles from Canton which is in possession of the Japs so will be close to a half-baked war anyway. Don't know much about the place except that the capital, Victoria, is on the island (population 380,000) and that we hit there at the beginning of the winter or dry season, temperature average 40 to 70 degrees F. from November to February. Then starts the wet season (85 in. of rain per year) temperature 80 – 95 degrees F., humidity 95 so – you can see we're in for a hot damp time.

Passed my thirtieth milestone quite uneventfully by being Orderly officer and didn't have a drink to celebrate – best procurable Scotch at \$1.85 for 26 oz. too.

Well, my previous epistle ends there and there's not much I can add except that we're due in Manila in a day or so and I understand it's only approximately two days to Hong Kong – Guess I'll sign off for a day or so and I'll add to it at Manila if I'm able – I'm anti-aircraft officer for the next 48 hours so expect I'll be kept busy. – so goodnight "Butch".

*Love,
Leonard*

The next leg of our voyage to Manila lasted twelve days and from the standpoint of physical comfort, was the most exhausting of the journey. With our only exercise amounting to a confined pacing of decks, although we did endeavor to carry out training, a point made ridiculous by lack of weapons, space, etc., we found the life aboard becoming terribly boring. We were also a fair distance south so that the heat, at times, was rather a problem, particularly at dinner when we were forced to wear full dress- i.e. tunic longs etc. This proved particularly offensive as far as I was concerned as I had no k.d.'s. The only deviation from routine on this stage of the journey was a bit of practice with the four-inch and a.a. guns on board, and two burials at sea. We were not at all sorry then, when we sighted the first island of the Philippines late

one afternoon and actually berthed at Manila the following morning.

Our stay in Manila was only a matter of fourteen hours or so and proved entirely uneventful. It was something of a relief, on sailing, to realize we would soon be at our destination, which had now been revealed as Hong Kong. Early in the morning of November 16th, after twenty days on board ship, we finally threaded our way through the channels to Hong Kong, having accomplished quite as much travelling as anyone could be expected to enjoy in one serving.

Our first glimpse of Hong Kong was, I believe to most of us, something of a surprise. It's rather difficult to say just what we imagined we would find here, but I think to most the very name suggested something of the mysterious East. It was almost annoying to find a very modern, bustling port and city awaiting us, although the junks and sampans did manage to impart some degree of orientalism. Four planes of the RAF turned out to give us a welcome and gave us the odd thrill, as we came into the harbour, with their close circling of the ship and low flying, particularly as the planes were obviously on the ancient side. We were to find out later, with a different kind of thrill, that this was "The Hong Kong Air Fleet".

Our ship tied up at the dock on the Kowloon, or mainland side, as docks on the island were not capable of handling anything the Awatea's size. After some delay, we were finally disembarked, forming up on a football field opposite the Peninsula Hotel, for our march to the camp. Starting from this point, we "marched past" the G.O.C. in what was probably the most horrible exhibition of marching the colony had witnessed in years. We were fortunate (?) in being honoured by the accompaniment of a Scots band and, inasmuch as there's considerable difference in tempo between their marching and ours, the resulting efforts were bloody. The march to our barracks, about four miles distant, gave us our first view of our neighbours, the Chinese, the most noticeable trait of whom, we found out very shortly, to be the smells. I'm quite sure there are no adjectives descriptive enough to properly define the smells of

China, but, when one considers the plumbing system, which is out the nearest door or window, and the type of food they cook, plus the numbers they have living together, well, it just isn't any wonder. Another feature noted was the noise. Everyone talks at once, making use of a half-shout, and all talk all the time. Our march, after much craning of necks in the initial stage, began to assume the proportions of work, as we were loaded with equipment and very much out of shape after the long voyage. So we welcomed, at last, Sham Shui Po, our new home.

November 17, 1941

My Dear,

A few minutes to compose a word-picture for you of some of my first impressions of the new (to me) and interesting land.

Interruptions may occur at any moment – so it may be somewhat disjointed but here goes anyway.

The trip over was pleasant – and uneventful. Our stop at Honolulu all too short – and we had but a glimpse and the men not even that – out of bounds for them, to their great disgust. But the little we saw was most attractive. A glorious day brought forth all its colour and charm and one was loath to leave.

I sent back some mail from there which I hope will reach you shortly, if it hasn't already done so. Speaking of mail, I hope that some will have been given wings and will reach here before too long. Mail can be, and is, of the greatest importance particularly as the distance from home increases. But – I digress.

First impressions – Noise – the Chinese the noisiest people. The streets were full of gibbering natives as we passed...we couldn't even hear our own band half the time – they were just talking among themselves – not cheering or taking any particular notice of our crowd.

All the troops were confined to barracks for 48 hours from the time we landed, after which each man satisfied his curiosity by making a personal reconnaissance of the island. The camp is ideal – all one-storey concrete huts for the men and open-air thatched roofs for dining halls. The junior officers are

quartered in makeshift four-story barracks, each with a room to himself.

It didn't take long for the men to get used to the Hong Kong or Mexican dollar which is equivalent to 28 cents Canadian currency. We all went sight-seeing at the earliest opportunity. The poorer districts of the city were a dismal sight. Imagine streets 20 ft. wide so crammed with humanity as to make the midway on Fair Day seem deserted by comparison...with a large majority of these people in wooden sandals and everybody gibbering excitedly in afternoon tea fashion. I went then to the better-class Chinese districts and found some of the story-book China. The better class is a group that looks freshly laundered and scrubbed.

While touring the island with Tom Blackwood, we saw an unusual sight. A large Chinese funeral. The procession included four bands, numerous banners, flowers, empty chairs for the ancestors and paid mourners. The graveyard was near the top of an almost perpendicular hill.

We attended a Hong Kong dance hall one night, a swank little place where no liquor is sold but where a stiff fee entitles you to a soft drink and an easy chair. At one dollar Mexican money you get three dances and have a choice of about 40 Chinese girls. These girls are as a group undoubtedly the best dancers I've ever seen...but they can't speak English and as soon as the dance is finished they drop you plumb in the middle of the floor.

Another side of the general picture are the refugees from the mainland – thousands of these homeless people sleep on the sidewalks or in doorways, some with a blanket or coat over them, others without any protection whatsoever.

How they eat is really tragic. Actually they descend lower than the beggar class and are nothing more than scavengers. We were told by members of our ship's crew that we would see no seagulls here because the scavenging was done by humans and of course we naturally didn't believe it, but, so help me, I think it is true. When the ship stopped, sampans came close and spread nets to catch the garbage and refuse and strain

out any particles that might pass for food. How they manage to maintain life on such meager rations, and without shelter into the bargain, is beyond my understanding. It's not unusual to see a group of two or three or more children living, eating and sleeping in the street in all its filth, with the oldest not being more than eight or ten years old. How they survive I can't imagine but they do and they have become so much a part of the native element that a person quite unconsciously steps over or around them as impersonally as one would the gutter.

*This will have to do for the present – more later.
Take care of yourself and keep the mail coming.*

*Love,
Len*

The barracks at Sham Shui Po we found to be clean and laid out in an orderly fashion, the men's huts sleeping about 35 men per hut, and it had excellent drainage for the wet season. The camp was actually divided into two halves, one called Hankow Barracks, which was our allotment, and Nanking Barracks, used by the Royal Rifles. The junior officers of both regiments used a block of buildings, named Jubilee, which had formerly provided quarters for married officers, and we found to be very comfortable, two officers sharing three rooms.

Life once more settled down to the old army routine and since we had considerable time to make up in training time lost on board, for a few days we were kept quite busy. The life of a supernumerary officer has its advantages and compensations, as Black and I were to find out. Due to "E" Company, of which we were members, being disbanded and re-attached through the Battalion, Black and I found ourselves relieved of platoons and their attached duties – with the result that we were practically the only two officers able to get across to the Island to any extent – a situation of which we took full advantage.

A week or so after our arrival, the officers were conducted around the island by land and water to inspect the defences, etc. This trip had the effect of giving us a great deal of confidence in

any likely action in the future and served, in the light of events yet to come, to mystify us even more of our miserable efforts to defend the island. A short time after our inspection tour we started the practice manning scheme as a preparatory measure to our future role as defenders of the colony. These schemes consisted of the placing of skeleton garrisons, usually a platoon, in positions later to be occupied by the company to which the platoons belonged, and it meant the possibility of familiarizing ourselves with the areas and defence works which would later be controlled by us. I was at this time attached to "D" Company and given a platoon to occupy Wong Nei Chong Gap. Brigade Headquarters was situated in our area and therefore part of our defensive job, so that our time was spent chiefly in the manning of P.B.'s and route marches around the adjacent areas, the latter proving particularly beneficial in the real show later on. The men were particularly enthusiastic as it meant getting away from the considerable over-government at barracks, and it was something of a disappointment to hear, on the morning of December 8th, that war had been declared and the rest of our Battalion would soon be joining us.

As for the war itself, I'll not dwell on the details as I've already done so elsewhere, however, it must be said that in the majority of cases, we put on a fair show. Unfortunately, the men were hopelessly untrained and still more hopelessly led. I quite believe that, though ultimate results would have been the same, had we been under the guidance of better superiors, we would have put up a better show – although I believe we did as well, under our circumstances, as could be expected. It is not surprising therefore that a week after the enemy had landed on the island, we had surrendered.

Letters from Gladys

Written in October, November, and December 1941
All of them were returned in January 1942 as undeliverable.

Winnipeg – October 27, 1941

Dearest Len,

Before now, I couldn't make myself sit down and write – but decided I'd better get a hold of myself and keep my chin up. Everytime I think of you having gone, I feel all choked up inside, and I have to start all over again – to look ahead – the time seems so long. I guess I'll just have to keep myself from thinking at all about it. Saturday as you can well imagine, was a terrible day. Evelyn took me to a show at night, which helped. Sunday, Bert took Grandma Hart, Paddy, Mrs. Bell and I to Mass at St. Ignatius, downtown to lunch afterwards and then to visit with Grandma Corrigan. So the day finally went – but it's going to be the nights that are long. I can just hear you say "feeling sorry for yourself again".

Today it's cold, feels very much like winter. I'll have to soon get home. I can see that. (More tomorrow).

Tuesday – Your letter came this morning and no need to say how glad I was to hear from you. I'm trying to take your advice, but it's not easy to say and not so easy to do. One just can't help thinking when one gets so many reminders in a day – especially with the kiddies.

I'm glad to see you're enjoying the trip so far. If your destination is Singapore, you'll have a long voyage ahead of you. This letter will probably sound silly to you by the time you get it, but I do hope you'll never regret you went. If you're going to be kept very busy you won't have much time to think either. I still can't really believe you have gone. I still feel you should be walking in, especially when the nites (nights) come.

I guess I'll be going to Regina around the first. I haven't since talked to your mother about the house, but she's not very much in favour of it, so guess it can't be done. It is a disappointment though. I heard from Olga Smith and she's going to store my things in a spare room

in their house until I come for them, so I imagine they'll be all right. I feel that I just have to go back to Swift Current and find out for myself whether or not I'll be content to stay there. But I know I'll always feel I want to go back until I do. Mother wrote yesterday and said they'd try to find a house in Regina but I'm quite sure I'd never be satisfied to stay there.

Grandma Hart took your mother and I to see the Rangers and the Americans last night. The game ended in a tie. We enjoyed it, but I thought they could have put on a better exhibition. I get a kick out of Grandma. She really got "het up". She said she wished Hubert would get out of it. It was too rough a game nowadays.

Well I guess if that's news I've given all of it so far. I've been trying to stretch it into a letter worth mailing. The main idea is that I want to get a letter started on the way to you.

I want you to know that I miss you terribly and always will. I'm glad I've had the experience of loving someone so greatly. I don't think all people have. And if my prayers are answered, you'll come back safely to us. God bless you and keep you well.

All my love,

Glad

I'll be sending some magazines as soon as the new issues come in.

G.C.

Regina – November 3, 1941

Dearest Mr. C.,

As you can see, I'm in Regina. Shelagh and I came up early Sunday morning. Today being your birthday, I have thought of you even more than usual, wondering just where you were and how you were spending it – or if you remembered. How glad I'll be when I hear from you, so I'll know where you are going to be. I'm sure the trip will have been quite an experience.

I haven't much news since I wrote last. I bought Paddy a new dark brown winter outfit before I left. There was about six inches of snow in Winnipeg and

quite cold. When we got to Regina, there was no snow, but it started today so I imagine we'll have winter now.

I went to Simpson's and bought a new winter outfit for myself. Now all I have to do is pay for it. By the way, did you take your camera? I couldn't find it in Winnipeg, unless Hazel took it by mistake. I intend to keep sending you some snaps. And, where ever you are, please try and send me back a photo of yourself, also snapshots.

We are going to soon send a Christmas parcel. Hope it gets to you. I guess I'll be here until Christmas anyway and then find a place in Swift Current. I'm going to keep making you socks. Let me know when you have enough.

Please give my best regards to Blackie, Maze and Harper. I intend to look up Harper's wife while I'm here.

Well, must close for now. I'm thinking of you constantly and I only hope you really meant all the things you said the last night we were together.

*All my love,
Glad*

Regina - November 11, 1941

Dearest Mr. C.

Here goes another letter. Seems so funny to be writing without a word from you. I think of you daily but what I do from day to day doesn't merit a letter more than once a week. It's so quiet here and this past week we've been out only once, and that was to a show.

I plan on going up to S.C. at the end of the month to try and find a place to live. I'm afraid I couldn't be content here at all. I've been away from home too long. We don't think the same. Mother and Flo have just come in from Armistice Day services. I hope another year sees you home. I've been feeling so blue and lonesome today. I have tried not to think, and let myself go, but there are so many things to keep reminding me.

Have been listening to the news. The British seem to be sinking a lot of enemy ships. Am eagerly

awaiting the day they announce where the Canadian troops have landed.

Shelagh is outside playing. She found a playmate down the street and is having a grand time.

Well dearest, I really have no more news. I could go on endlessly about how much I miss you, but I think you understand. And please don't change. It'll be a grand day when I first hear from you. I hope it's soon.

*All my love,
Glad*

Regina – November 16, 1941

My dearest Len,

Have just been listening to the news and they announced that Canadian troops had landed in Hong Kong, so I hope that means you. He said units from Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg, so it must be. I have been thinking of you so much, wondering just when I'd hear, so it shouldn't be long now. At least it's some consolation to know approximately where you are. I had such a vivid dream of you last night. My first thoughts this morning were of you, so was glad to hear the news.

As usual, I haven't much news of interest to you. There's nothing to do at all here. It's been snowing since last night and is quite wintery today. I bought Shelagh a snowsuit and she's been having a grand time playing outside, with kiddies from down the street.

Yesterday I mailed you a Christmas parcel. I would have liked to have sent more, but knowing the extent of my finances just now, I think you'll understand. I do hope you get it alright. I can't imagine Christmas this year without you. I can't remember when my Christmases haven't been associated with you – but I guess it will pass and we'll get through it. Hope next year you're home.

Have just been listening to the news from London, and it gave me quite a thrill to hear again that the Canadian troops had landed in Hong Kong and were greatly cheered by the crowds of people.

In case my next letter is too late for Christmas, I wish you all the best of everything and I hope you spend Christmas having a good time. But please think of me, as I will of you – terribly lonely for you. God bless and please don't forget the things you said that last night. I think of them often.

*Love,
Glad*

Regina – November 30, 1941

Dearest Mr. C.

Was quite thrilled and surprised to get your first letter – didn't expect to get one so soon. I had been looking for a cable after the news of your arrival in Hong Kong, but hadn't expected a letter for weeks yet.

I finally got in touch with Mrs. Harper. You can tell Blake I phoned her and she came to visit me today so we had quite a chat. Needless to say we had quite a lot in common, and I hope to see her again before I go home.

I'm certainly glad you seemed to enjoy your trip, although I can imagine you were glad to be on land again. I envy all the new experiences you must be having. My letters will be dull in comparison.

There've been quite a few write-ups in the paper since you landed, and I've read everything I could about you. All about your quarters, ceiling fans and Chinese servants – yes, and even about your Brigadier – Brigadier Lawson. It seemed funny to be getting that news before I heard from you at all.

We'll be sending cigarettes very soon. As to your camera, I couldn't find it at all when I left Winnipeg, so thought you'd taken it. Maybe Hazel has it yet. Will find out and send it when I do. I can imagine the scenery is lovely. It said the barracks was situated in a lovely setting between the foothills and the sea.

Well, Father is home from the Armouries and we're going to have some lunch. He seemed to think he might be called up for Active Service anytime.

Well, darling, will close. Think of me often and I hope to hear again soon.

*Best regards,
Glad*

Regards to your "bunch"

Regina – November 29, 1941

Dearest Mr. C.

Another letter to be added – I haven't much to say – only the folks have all gone out tonight and I haven't been able to keep my thoughts from you. I miss you so much. How I wish you were here tonight. I'd like your advice on so many things. Jack wired that he's coming home and will be here Monday, so I'm going up to S.C. with them to see if I can find a place to live. I dread going up there alone but I'm not happy here, so I'll have to try and make the best of it.

I had my fortune told with cards not long ago, and it really was uncanny the things the woman told me. She comes from Moose Jaw and does this sort of thing all the time. As soon as she started she told me that my husband wasn't near me, and she said she could see you changing clothes to lighter ones as if you were in a warm climate. She also described you perfectly and said you were an officer, a Lieutenant. Then she went on to say you were very happy and liked it very much, so I hope that's true. She also told me I had two daughters and she said I hadn't had all my family yet. (She said) that I would have a fair son, born in another country and that she saw an ocean voyage for me within the next few years, so I'm going to save my pennies for this trip of mine. It really gave me a funny feeling though. It was just after the troops had landed in Hong Kong, and it was just as if she were reading my mind.

I listen carefully to all the news broadcasts. Today they mentioned the Canadians in Hong Kong were undergoing all kinds of defence manouvres, black-outs etc. Seems funny to get news of what you're doing that way. Today in the Leader-Post there was a picture

of soldiers embarking at Vancouver for Hong Kong. The faces are in shadow but I'm almost sure you were standing near the sign on the gangplank saying "Officers and Warrant Officers embark here". Were you?

Will close now and write again soon. My thoughts are also always with you. Received cable this week.

*All my love,
Glad*

Regina – December 7, 1941

Dearest Mr. C.

I arrived home from Swift Current this afternoon to find that Japan had declared war. I hadn't heard any news since last night so was quite shocked. (I) have been listening to all the news since and just heard a short time ago that Singapore and Hong Kong had been attacked. God bless you and keep you safe. I can think of nothing else. Hoping you are well and safe.

I can't stand this idleness. I'm going to work for Christmas. I was house-hunting while up there and have the promise of a small house on 3rd West where Steve Marzek used to live, if you remember. I surely hope I can get it, so I can get settled again and have my family together. Four rooms and only \$20.00 per month, so I might be able to save some money.

I had a nice visit while there – stayed with Eleanor – went to the dance last night with Bob, Vi, Reg and Edie – had quite a good time, but couldn't help thinking of you, wishing you were there too. Can't get used to having no one to fight and argue with I guess.

Am going to see if I can sell the car when I return. Someone wanted to buy or rent your saxophone, but I said no, positively not.

Well, dearest, will close for tonight. (I) am anxious to get another letter away to you. I hope your Guardian Angel is watching over you and keeping you safe from harm.

*All my love,
Glad*

Swift Current – December 11, 1941

My dearest Len,

To say I was thrilled to get your first airmail letter is putting it mildly. I was overwhelmed, what with getting it so much sooner than I ever dreamed – airmail hadn't even entered my head – and when I read it, it was really more than I had ever hoped for. It certainly gave me the lift you hoped for. I felt happier and more light-hearted than I had for weeks. Except for the news of the war – hostilities – naturally I've been terribly worried, and have been following the news broadcasts very closely. If my prayers are answered God will watch over you. I'm trying to have faith. Somehow I feel you'll come out all right. You've got to come back to us.

Irrespective of whether you were "high" or not when you as you said "let down your hair", it was wonderful to hear it. In fact, it affected me so very deeply I couldn't read the letter through my tears and had to stop and start over again. And later on, when I went to bed, I read and reread it about three times. However, you don't really have to worry about me. Please have faith in me. When I married you I took my vows very seriously and I intend to keep them. I don't ever intend to have moments of weakness. And if such did come up, I'm assured, my love for you is deep enough to put my personal feelings aside and wait until such time as we are together again. And may it be soon. There are times when I feel I can't stand the waiting. I miss you so terribly. Please believe me, and I'm not "high", you speak of something eating into you causing you to feel that way. I know exactly what you mean. I have it all the time, an unbearable ache, which if I let myself get down at all, brings forth my woman's tears. First thing I know I'll be feeling sorry for myself again.

Your letter was wonderfully descriptive. I really was surprised and pleased with your powers of description. It sounds like it would be a wonderful trip – to see Honolulu, and the Pacific. One hates to think of it being bombed and destroyed. I sincerely hope we'll someday be able to enjoy the trip together. Your thoughts were grand anyway.

When I reread your letters mine sounded so pitiful in comparison. However, I haven't the things to narrate that you have, nor the gift to narrate them.

I received your first letter in Regina on Tuesday. Today, when I came back to S.C., and found the second one here, I was certainly pleased to hear so soon again. I won't attempt to answer it with this one. I'll do that separately, but your description of Hong Kong was perfect. I was pleased at the detail you went into. I really felt I could picture it. I've been so anxious to hear news of your quarters, meals, etc. – also the social side. I hope you received my cable – only wished I'd sent it much sooner. I'm sending you my photograph (I hope it arrives in due course), whether you wanted one or not.

I'm staying with Eleanor and have Shelagh here also. Paddy I hope to bring home for Christmas. I'm going to work at the office for about ten days. I still have my house promised so hope to get it soon. I wrote you about it some time ago. You didn't mention having received my letters. I have written at least once and sometimes twice a week since you left. How I wish I'd had brains enough to send them airmail. I also sent 1000 Buckinghams which I hope you received.

In Regina, I accidentally saw Noreen Blackwood. Tell Tom she came over and we had quite a time comparing letters. I was so glad to have seen her – also phoned Mrs. Harper. She's also terribly lonely.

Well, dearest one, I must end for tonight, I tried to write small and close to save paper. I will get airmail paper, so I can write more in my letters.

As I read this it doesn't sound very satisfactory, but I can't seem to express myself as I would like to. May I say, you are always in my thoughts, and I speak of you every day to Shelagh and will do so to Paddy when she comes home. They always liked you best and I won't let them forget you.

*All my love,
Yours only, Glad*

CHAPTER FOUR

Why Were Canadians Sent to Hong Kong?

The words of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, directing the British war effort in 1941, have been quoted in many accounts attempting to explain the Canadian presence in Hong Kong. In “The Alberta Report, 1987”, providing background to its story on events in Hong Kong, quotes Churchill as saying, “If Japan goes to war with us, there is not the slightest chance of holding Hong Kong or relieving it. It is most unwise to increase the loss we shall suffer there. Instead of increasing the garrison, it ought to be reduced to a symbolic scale.” Continuing on, the same article suggests that Canadian-born General A.E. Grasset who commanded the Hong Kong garrison from 1938 to 1941, was able to convince the British High Command in London that with the addition of only two more battalions, Hong Kong could be defended for up to 4 ½ months, “long enough for relief to be sent”. He had suggested that Canada had two battalions to spare. In September, 1941, the British sent a request to Ottawa suggesting that “the troops would serve only a diplomatic function and would never see combat”. The Alberta Report goes on to say that, “Their presence, the British argued, would deter Japan from going to war by showing Britain’s readiness to defend its empire.”

The Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association, anxious that the story of veterans be better known, commissioned Nick Brune, a noted author and historian, to prepare “Ten Selected Lesson Plans” to be offered to high school history teachers so their students could learn the details of the Battle of Hong Kong. In the fifth lesson, entitled “The Fateful Canadian Decision” he describes the reaction to the British request.

“Canadian authorities naively accepted this reversal of British policy in good faith. Nothing in the way of independent investigation was done. No one questioned or challenged the new

orthodoxy. Canada simply went along with the British request. To make a bad situation worse, Canada implemented the decision with far too much haste and too little thought. The troops chosen were ill-prepared and minimally trained. Some did not know even how to fire a gun. Their transport and other essential equipment, through bureaucratic incompetence, never arrived”.

Historians and military analysts have argued back and forth on decisions made in the heat of wartime and the political pressures brought to bear. Regardless of the opinions of academics and politicians – and regardless of the Royal Commission investigating the collapse of Hong Kong, in which no one apparently was to blame – volunteer soldiers and their families could hardly be blamed for thinking their government had abandoned them, not only after the defeat of Hong Kong but on their return to Canada. Hong Kong veterans had to fight every inch of the way for medical assistance, benefits and proper pensions. As if four years of internment was not enough!

Newspaper headlines in Canada brought the shocking news to Canada. The Regina “Leader-Post” led off with a heavy black topline – “HONG KONG OVERCOME – GLORIOUS CANADIAN CHAPTER”. “The defence of Hong Kong has broken under relentless assault by land, sea and air and the crown colony which for a century has been a British bastion off the southeast coast of China has fallen to the Japanese”.

“So ends a great fight against overwhelming odds,” the colonial officer declared Thursday night, announcing the surrender. No further resistance was possible. Without estimating the figures, the foreign office said “military and civilian casualties were heavy...”

The announcement said lack of water was one of the great handicaps of the British Tommies, the Canadians and the Indians, Sikhs who fought step by step across the mainland section of the colony and then held out desperately and with little hope in the fortified mountain fastnesses of the island.

“A somber but glorious page in the record of the Canadian Army,” was the description of the defence offered by Defence Minister Ralston in Ottawa.” The date December 26, 1941.

The list of men from Saskatchewan in Hong Kong included Lieutenant Alexander Black, Lieutenant Thomas Blackwood, Lieutenant Leonard Corrigan, Lieutenant Blake Harper and Lieutenant Richard Maze.

The next newspaper clipping, dated May 13, 1942, gives a list of Canadians “unofficially reported prisoners of war” by the national defence department. Leonard Corrigan’s name appears, along with Black, Blackwood, Harper and Maze.

An article printed in “TIME” magazine, July 1964, calls the war in Hong Kong “The sorriest episode for Canada in World War Two” “Of the 1,975 Canadians, 290 were dead.” Taken prisoner, another 267 died of malnutrition and diphtheria over the 44 months they were captive,” the article continues, “and most of the 1,400 who returned were sick.”

The period from December 26, 1941 until the unconfirmed report in May, 1942, left the families in Canada with no information on the prisoners of war – or the state of their health. The last word from Leonard to Gladys was a cable, dated November 23, 1941, to say, “All well and safe all my love my thoughts are with you”. From then on, no letters from Leonard are received and all her letters to him have been returned. It is the start of long and anxious days for the next nearly four years.

Returning to the words of Leonard Corrigan in his diary.....

Christmas Day 1941, was to be, for us, the beginning of a new mode of living. After being quartered, successively, in McAustin Barracks, university buildings, and Victoria Barracks, we were finally shuttled over to our former quarters at Sham Shui Po. What a change awaited us there after absence of a month. Chinese looters had systematically stripped the camp of every possible article that might prove of use or value, even to sills and frames of windows. On arriving there, we were again surprised at the numbers of prisoners the camp contained. Middlesex, Royal Scots, Navy, Air Force, Punjabs, Rajputs and ourselves represented a total of over five thousand, more troops than we had known were in the colony, to say nothing of the “Rifles” at North Point and all the personnel in hospitals.

Our first problem in the new home was that of feeding a crowd of that size. The stripping of the camp meant that we found ourselves with no utensils, stoves, fuel, beds, or even coverings for the doors and windows of the huts. The question of stoves and cooking utensils however, was our first consideration. The old saying about “necessity” and “invention” certainly held good here and it was amazing the way things were improvised in the next few days. Stoves were improvised from holes in the ground and cookers made from empty gas drums – no mean task as there wasn’t as much as a hammer in camp. Personal eating kits ran from ordinary tin cans to light reflectors. Everyone in camp at once became a scrounger and in a short time we were actually fairly comfortable.

One big difficulty with which we were faced was the abrupt change in diet occasioned by the new circumstances. For one used to European fare to quite suddenly switch to a diet of plain rice is simply “molder”. Due to the shortage of fuel, which allowed for only two meals a day, plus the fact that plain rice can be terribly unpalatable, we found ourselves forever feeling the pangs of hunger. Some of the officers were fortunate enough to have been able to retain some money, so a mess was formed and a pool made of all funds, to enable us to buy from natives “over the fence”, at most exorbitant prices, some of the supplies of tinned goods, sugar and so on, they had stolen from our stores during the war. With

these additional luxuries we were able to add a little taste to the rice and managed fairly well, although no one got too fat.

While on the subject of the camp, I'd like to digress a bit and put in a few words about morale, etc. in order that a few of the difficulties to be surmounted in a case of this kind may be appreciated. To begin with, I've already dealt elsewhere with the morale of the men at time of surrender. Unfortunately, a large number of our men were never quite able to lift themselves from the levels to which they had descended. The surrender left us with a gang of looting, thieving animals, slaves to their own desires, and to whom nothing was sacred. Houses and buildings in which we had been quartered by the Japs were looted of food, liquor and fags and every conceivable article of value. Tinned goods and fags, which at that time had been in abundance, were absolutely wasted. The whole thing was utterly disgusting! With this in mind, one can appreciate how much of a problem disciplining would be in a camp lacking any comforts and being as short on rations and fags as we were.

Fortunately, in most cases, the men settled down considerably, but, in the matter of food, the general behaviour was still that of animals. Let one man receive one spoonful more rice than the next and we had a near riot on our hands. Men fought (yes, fought) to clean up the large drums used for rice, after the contents had been distributed. Unfortunately, this condition of affairs was not confined wholly to the men for we found it, in a little more polished form, amongst the officers as well. I could enumerate a number of "incidents" witnessed by Maze, Harper, McCarthy and myself (we were "newcomers" so we formed our own little clique) which set us wondering what cruel prank of fate had made us choose this regiment to transfer to. Just to mention one incident is enough to give an idea of the character of our seniors in general. I mention only one minor, there were numerous major instances which prudence prevents putting to paper. As previously mentioned, a mess was formed and a proper meeting duly held, presided over by the Colonel and it was suggested by that worthy that – inasmuch as we were all in the same boat (etc. etc.) things should be pooled so that all could share equally. This,

everyone agreed, was an admirable idea and those of us that had money (by co-incidence Juniors possessed a vast majority of the funds) – immediately turned it into the general fund. Since our stay might prove a lengthy one, our buying, collectively done, would tend to stretch farther than individually, therefore a buying committee was formed and our co-operative began to function. Imagine our anger then and disgust to find, next morning, that the senior officers who shared a room, had purchased a bottle of Scotch and partaken of a lunch the night previous. The question was brought up at a meeting later in the day and due apologies made, but unfortunately, as we were to learn later, that type of thing was typical of the men chosen to lead and be an example to us. Small wonder the men had expressed themselves, on the boat, as having no faith in “Constituted authority” in their regiment.

Well – having relieved myself of that bit of unpleasantness, I’ll coast along. Life at Sham Shui Po settled down to something of a routine, although the curtailed diet limited parades to two very short ones. Our captors had, from the start, treated us with remarkable good humor and courtesy. Since most of them were small men, the disparity of size with most of us was a constant source of amusement. Two or three of the guards proved particularly friendly and a couple to who I demonstrated the mysteries of driving a car, repaid me a thousandfold in fags, chocolate and the purchasing of supplies for our syndicate. For the first week or so – although it was supposedly prohibited – supplies flooded across the fence quite freely, but toward the end of our stay, these were quite suddenly discouraged by the shooting and torturing of quite a number of the would-be “merchants”.

The first portion of our internment was, in several respects most unique from the point of view of our being prisoners and several rather amusing (to us) circumstances arose. In the first place, there existed in the surrounding fences large gaps, from ten to fifteen feet wide, to which our guards paid scant attention. In the dealings through the fence, naturally, there existed on both sides, a certain amount of roguery that included substitution of sand for other goods, grabbing at money or parcels and running and other little tricks of the trade. An amusing sight, not at all unusual, was

that of seeing “hawkers” being pursued, via the gaps in the fence, two or three hundred yards outside of the camp area, across a field used as a garden, by the irate prisoner who had been victimized. Another obstacle in bargaining was the difficulty presented in the language. As an aid in overcoming this shortcoming, the Jap sentries occasionally lent their limited vocabularies to our task and it was not unusual to see a sentry give his rifle to a prisoner, so that he might better talk with the aid of his hands. On numerous occasions when our lads considered themselves over-charged and appealed to the sentries, things were righted in short order. In fact, occasionally hawkers that sought to take advantage, had their wares taken, in exchange for a cuff or a kick, and same were distributed to the boys, gratis. Unfortunately, successive changes of guards found this spirit diminishing and things becoming gradually harder until, at the time of our leaving Sham Shui Po, things had settled down pretty well as they should in a prison camp.

Being a prisoner, in itself, presents a problem which, at best, is not at all easy for the individual to reconcile himself to. In our case we had additional worry in food and smokes. Our only release from the depression accompanying our plight was the eternal hope that something was, even now, happening which would affect our early release. As a result of this, rumours and so-called “authentic news” always found a sympathetic ear and some of the gems concocted were colossal. For example, I quote one “series of events, straight BBC News, as reported to us”. “Libyan campaign had folded with Rommell’s surrender; Italy Quits Axis, Sues For Peace; Turkey Enters War, Re-Occupies Greece; French Fleet Turned Over to Britain; Russia Reports Tremendous Advantages, Fighting on Polish Soil; German Army In South Europe Lays Down Arms; Russians Fighting In Danzig; British Land Expeditionary Forces In Norway, France and Denmark; Germany Seeks Peace But Stalin Says ‘No’!; Russians 120 Miles from Berlin.” In the East we have, quote “Yanks Bomb Tokyo from Vladivostock for Nine Hours; Premier Tojo Commits Hari Kari, Japs Sue for Separate Peace with U.S.; Hong Kong Blockaded by U.S. Subs (A Fleet of Some 20 Freighters Lay in Harbour For a Week to Form a Convoy); Two Parties of Marines,

One Yank, One British, Make Landings in Japan; Jap Fleet Bottled by British, U.S. and Dutch Fleets Around Japan; Yanks Land Troops in Formosa; Chinese Army Advancing on Hong Kong.” These reports came in as BBC News (from a radio alleged to be in camp) and were apparently verified by contacts over the fence. The pattern and continuity seemed so logical that, though admittedly it was too good to be true, a lot was taken as authentic, even to the extent of the General allotting regiments to different areas for police duty when things did break. It was something of a shock then to have a doctor visit us from a hospital that possessed a radio, and inform us our news was absolutely false – it was fun though.

Another gesture, while I think of it, on the part of our captors, was to put on a concert by their Imperial Army Band. We had heard, from a distance, their band work during their “Victory March” and were not at the time particularly impressed with their musical ability. The concert we heard, however, dispelled any doubts as to their ability and was very well received. The band numbered some twenty-five and several of their players were quite outstanding, and since we were familiar with most of the selections, we thoroughly enjoyed the whole thing. They, having heard some of our chaps had salvaged instruments and formed a band, requested them to play – so we were favoured with a double concert. The hand the band was given on leaving was quite spontaneous and generous, and they seemed to enjoy it immensely.

On the evening of January 23rd, we received orders to be ready to leave the following morning for North Point, on the island. This piece of news we received with some joy as we heard all Canucks were to be together in one camp, which meant also that we’d be parting with the Limeys with whom we just didn’t get along. We also hope for an improvement from a health standpoint. The barracks at Sham Shui Po are situated on a low lying piece of filled-in land and we were very worried about the Cholera prospect in the expected warm weather. Low tide exposed two or three bodies that lay in the mud a few feet from the enclosure and, since they were there the whole of our stay, it looked as though decomposition would be the only removal agent.

We formed up, on the morning of the 24th, everyone burdened with their worldly possessions, for the march to the ferry. While on the subject of possession, I may say that, in the matter of kit, I fared very well, thanks to the generosity of some of our men. The surrender found me in active position with no chance to replenish kit, so I had only those clothes in which I stood. My wardrobe now, thanks to charity, consists of the battle dress I was wearing, a couple of shirts, pair of shorts, socks, boots and even two blankets. The march to the ferry was made without benefit of rest, so that, by the time we reached there, we were quite glad of the rest provided by the ferry ride. North Point, being situated on the harbour and three miles from the centre of town, provided that our ride was a lengthy one and we had ample time to see the war damage in the harbour and on the water front. Aside from damage to storage tanks, docks, etc., there were approximately thirty freighters of various sizes, sunk in all parts of the harbour area.

We landed at a point approximately a mile from camp and again took up our burdens and marched. First sight of camp filled us with a certain amount of foreboding, since the buildings were of wood and the camp itself not very large. Prior to Britain's entry into the war, the camp had been used to intern Chinese soldiers who had fled the Japs and the wooden huts immediately brought the insect problem to our minds. Groups of the Royal Rifles thronged the wire, and when finally inside, considerable time was spent renewing acquaintances. We were given supper by the Rifles and it was a revelation. We actually received biscuits, butter and bully with the rice and at once began to think exceedingly well of our new home.

Conditions, particularly in relation to food, were much improved over Sham Shui Po. Rations consisted of such European necessities as flour, the occasional lot of bully, and some syrup. Luxuries such as this were a god-send and immediately everyone's spirits took a definite up-swing. We were still faced with the fag situation and, though we were given one issue of nine per man, things became so acute that cigarettes became a medium of exchange. Clothes, bedding, shoes, in fact anything of value could be had for so many cigarettes. The cigarette shortage brought an

additional problem in connection with our health, as butts were being picked up all over the grounds and our dysentery rate began to climb rapidly.

Mention should be made, I think, of the flour and bread problem. Flour had been coming in at rather irregular intervals but now they decided to cut our rice issue by half and increase that of flour. In order to make out the meal, bread had to be cooked, so ovens – after the old Quebec oven style – were constructed. This enabled us to enjoy two meals with rice and a noon meal of two slices of bread with tea, with a further slice of bread for the evening meal. When one considers that tools and equipment were lacking and that yeast had to be made, it seems almost miraculous that we should feast on such luxury as bread. It seems a pity that, if and when we do obtain our freedom, we will, in all probability, lose our evaluation of the simple necessities which we have discovered in our present circumstances, and exchange it for the false evaluation we put on some of our luxuries. It's rather difficult for one not in our position to understand our viewpoints in the matter of food – or for that matter – of smokes. In our present predicament we find ourselves forever craving something either to eat or to smoke, neither of which we are able to satisfy. Unfortunately, the result of these cravings, coupled with the amount of time we have on our hands, is that food becomes the main topic of conversation – the amount of appreciation we'll have for it and the quantities – when we arrive home. I imagine that long before we do reach home, we will have forgotten the lessons we're now learning the hard way.

Paddy, who was seven when Leonard joined the Winnipeg Grenadiers and left Canada for Hong Kong, was settling in at her new school, St. Mary's Academy. She remembers being astounded at the size of the Music area of the school. There were huge wide wooden folding doors that opened on a large room with hardwood floors. There was a wall on the left with floor to ceiling cupboards with slots where every student's music was kept for her to pick up as she came in. Straight ahead was a huge grand piano in front of a picture window. To the right was a long, wide hallway

with at least 12 semi-soundproofed practice studios on each side, where students would work and teachers would give lessons. At the end of the hall was another grand piano. The nuns were very strict. "I can recall being rapped on the knuckles with a stick about the size and shape of a knitting needle without the knob on the end of it, when my hands weren't correctly on the keys," Paddy said. "I have the recollection of coming back after my first stint at the school to find that my spot for keeping my music still had my name on it – even though I hadn't been there for some time. In later visits there are two moments that stand out," she continued. "The piano students had to perform for parents and friends in a large concert hall in the building – St. Mary's Academy was huge. Mine wasn't an overly fantastic performance.

Another time in regular studies, I had to recite a speech written by Leonard Brockington – as if I were the man himself. Each member of the class had to choose a politician to read and the speech had to be memorized. This speech was performed in our classroom as I recall. It must have been much later, I was probably in Grade Seven by then.

I don't recall there being much discussion of the war at home. I'm sure Mom made a point of trying to protect us from the truth of the matter for as long as she could. I think I can recall everyone's relief at learning, about a year or so after Hong Kong fell, that Dad was known to be alive. When I was in Winnipeg more was said because Grandma and her friends were always knitting socks and working at the Red Cross, where they packed boxes to be sent overseas. I spent some time packing boxes when I was 9 or 10 years old."

CHAPTER FIVE

Life at North Point

I have just managed to scrounge a cigarette, the first in two days, so once again I'll try and add a little to the old journal. Life in general, in our present status, is sometimes just a bit hard to cope with and, in the absence of smokes in particular, I find it most difficult to maintain any degree of concentration on a task such as this. Reading too is extremely difficult as there always, in addition to the natural restlessness of the imprisoned, is the babble and noise of some seventy fellow officers to contend with. So – while my intentions are good, the reader must bear with me in the wandering and lack of continuity evident in my writings. We are now finishing the third day of March and looking back over what has so far been put to paper, I find in most cases my powers of reconstruction to be sadly deficient. Deficiencies noted however, I will be able to a certain extent, to make up by word of mouth so that, even that which I have recorded will have served its original purpose – which was to have been solely a means of passing the time.

I have in my narrative arrived at North Point and, without making any attempt to bridge the interval between our arrival and the present, will endeavour to present the happenings of an ordinary run-of-the-mill day in our present, sometimes tedious life. Reveille comes shortly after day-break, about 7:30 a.m. and by the time we complete our ablutions, it's time for our first roll call at 8:15. This procedure occupies some twenty minutes and is a direct result of the break-away of some seven Navy officers shortly after our arrival here. Immediately after parade, we partake of breakfast, which usually consists of sweetened rice, a dish to which I am very partial. Immediately after this, junior officers are required to go to the men's lines to supervise the distribution of the precious rice to the men. Next we have at 10:30, P.T. parade consisting of ten minute periods of P.T. drill and games. This period is something of a waste as the men seem to have lost all sense of discipline,

personal pride and decency in appearance. Due to the fact that our only punishment instrument is a session in the guard-room, which the men enjoy because they miss parades and can lie on a bunk all day, the periods are just sessions in which the officers are reminded that they have little control over the men. The remaining time until lunch (at 12:30) is spent doing as little as possible and the main topic is, as always, "food". The result being that when our mug of tea does arrive, our appetites have been whetted beyond all hope of satisfaction and our lunch seems too inadequate. After lunch is usually spent walking the compound or reading and, at 3:30 we again have roll-call. Dinner is served at 5:30 and provides our second rice meal, usually garnished with some kind of vegetable sauce, after which we again supervise the men's meal. Then more walking, reading or what have you, until lights out at 10:30 p.m.

It will probably be noticed that the ordinary day leaves a large percentage of time in which we are left to our own resources. This, plus the fact that time taken up by parades, etc. is something of a loss, serves to accentuate the restless, caged feeling one gets – hence my reason for seeking the refuge provided by the composition of this journalistic abortion. I have been particularly fortunate in that I have managed to get out of camp on two occasions on work parties. These parties while entailing a lot of work and expenditure of our scant body reserve of energy, proved so exhilarating mentally that it's a day or so before one settles back to the norm.

My second trip downtown seems noteworthy enough to record since, for the first time since before Christmas, I was actually filled to capacity with food. About twenty of us set out about 10:30 by truck and were taken to the Dominican College at Rosary Hill, whose buildings had, since the outbreak of war, served as a hospital. Our task was to evacuate all hospital equipment and personnel as the Dominicans were again going to take over their buildings for private use. We worked hard loading the trucks at the hospital then unloading them again at the docks downtown until about 1:30 when we were told food was being served in the basement. Down we went to find stew, bread and

butter and sweet rice awaiting us. The rice, in particular, was extremely delicious, as we had cans of sweetened (thick) milk to go with it, and I'm a little ashamed to have to admit to having three servings. To top off this marvelous repast we were given a Canadian cigarette by the Padre, an almost unheard of luxury, since our sparse supply was usually made up of cheap tobacco (?) rolled in brown toilet paper. Needless to say, after such a sumptuous meal, we were quite able and willing to move anything – and we did just that until 6 p.m. The remainder of the day was not entirely fruitless either, as we managed to salvage almost a truck-load of pots, pans, etc. to say nothing of a piano and about twenty tins of milk and an equal number of packages of salt, for the camp.

Well, this almost brings the effort up to date, although I did have a number of episodes which I now can't recall and which I meant to list. Henceforth I will try to make this the form of a personal diary, written daily, something which I have never kept and which, in these circumstances, will probably prove anything but entertaining to read – or write. So – here goes nuttin!

March 4 – Wednesday

Reveille brings the prospect of another cigarette-less day although McCarthy succeeded in chiseling a small packet of "Golden Dragons" last night. Our little syndicate has become enlarged and now embraces Maze, McCarthy, Harper, Campbell and myself – and a newcomer – Captain Terry (paymaster) whom we welcome to our fagless faction. Ten fags, split six ways, don't go very far, so after breakfast, we had the last of our left-overs from yesterday. I wish the Navy would get in a supply as I've managed to borrow some Canadian money and they'll take it for cigarettes (at half the downtown rate). We don't mind being hooked though, so long as we smoke.

We were treated (??) yesterday with some storage duck eggs and I understand we have more today. I couldn't manage to get close enough for a taste but sight and smell were quite

sufficient. One of the eggs had 19-7-09 marked on it, but that may have been an exaggeration, it didn't smell over fifteen years old.

Rumour has it that the rice ration is to be increased by one third, which means $\frac{2}{3}$ pounds per day per man. I hope so – I must have twin tape worms.

I neglected earlier to state that, since my arrival here, I've added several new taste sensations to my somewhat limited gastronomic repertoire. The Nips send in the odd bit of fish to supplement our meager rice ration and so far I've had the pleasure of partaking of whalemeat – (fried, very nice), mullet – (terrible odour), squid – (smells a bit but rather good), garupa – (filthy smell, ditto on taste). It is also rumoured that some eel is in the offing, so I have that to look forward to.

Our search for smokes today unearthed a new brand, "My Buddha". For the benefit of posterity I'll list a few I remember. "Silver Dish, Flag, Spear, Swordfish, United, Ruby Queen, The Leaf, Golden Dragon, Gold Crown, Coronation, DoorFook, Pirate, May Blossoms, Horse (more truth than poetry in the choice of that name). These are only the few I can recall, there are dozens more. We know they contain some tobacco – because it says so on the box.

Another interesting development occurred today. One of the officers felt a little itch, searched his clothing and – yes, you're right – "lousy". On searching, half the hut found themselves similarly afflicted. Some, particularly one bed-ridden chap, were very bad. I found none today but did pounce on one a week or so ago. Not a very nice sensation!

We're hoping we can get some authentic dope on the D.E.I. situation. There's evidently been quite a naval skirmish there according to the "Hong Kong News", the local paper – Well, enough for my first interlude with "Dear Diary".

March 5 – (Thursday)

This day started off a little more promising than the last few, inasmuch as it seemed a little milder. It's surprising how cold it can become here, most of the last month resembling our cold, wet fall days at home. Heavy mist over-hangs the harbour almost all the time, even on rare days when the sun does come out. That same sun, incidentally, has a very intense heat and very little subjection to it gives one a lovely head-ache.

Two new brands of fags came to light in our scrounging today, "Heaven's Temple" and "Gold Stamp", the latter being a mild form of knock-out drop.

The morning was spent in our weekly "clean-up hut" campaign. All beds are moved out and the hut washed and sprayed with creosote. Moving back brings a re-allotment of space which leaves us not quite so crowded. Maze and I share two "uppers" since he has no blankets. McCarthy and Harper share a lower under the same conditions.

I had rice for lunch and some kind of smelly fish for dinner (which I traded for rice).

Heard today that Black and Nugent were sent to Sham Shui Po due to congested quarters here. I was certainly looking forward to Black's arrival here.

News tonight that Canada is to have a plebiscite on conscription – good old democracy -. Have started to read "The Diary Of A Slave" by Rastam Khan-Urp. Seems good.

Conscription Plebiscite - 1942

Word of a plebiscite in Canada on the matter of conscription turned out to be accurate news.

The Military Service Act of 1917 had proven to be a divisive political issue between the French and English population and in the west in Canada. It was also considered to be a failure, according to military historian, J.L. Granatstein.

When the issue arose again with the war in Europe in 1941, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King decided to deal with the problem by holding a plebiscite “asking Canadians to release the government from its anti-conscription promises”. Again divided along French and English lines, on April 27, 1942, 72.9% No votes were registered in Quebec and 80% Yes votes in the rest of the provinces. Bill 80 was passed “authorizing conscription for overseas services if it were deemed necessary”.

Writing in the Canadian Encyclopedia, Richard Jones describes King as hoping he would not have to invoke Bill 80 but was doing so in order to save his government. Relations between the French and English worsened once more with the second conscription crisis. By 1944, J.L. Ralston, Minister of Defence who felt conscription was necessary – was replaced by General A.G.L. McNaughton, a supporter of voluntary service.

The number of conscripted soldiers actually sent abroad during the Second World War was 12,908.

Source – The Canadian Encyclopedia

March 6 – (Friday)

Another day dawns bright and warm, so I celebrate by taking a shower before breakfast. The result is so invigorating, I've decided to do it every morning with 15 minutes of P.T. thrown in. Wonder how long it will last?

Not much activity here today so I sat in the sun and read my book. Grenadier Officers played Headquarters Company at softball and took quite a pasting. We haven't lost a league game yet though. Four of our good players are lost to us through lack of shoes and I hope the sport is abandoned as mine are wearing a bit. I've also lost considerable skin from sliding, etc. and I'm afraid of infection.

Read again after dinner and finished my book about 4 p.m. It was good.

The Nips have been using one of the sunken vessels in the harbour for target practice in dive-bombing all day. Seems rather odd to watch them and not have uppermost in our minds the thoughts of our own safety, which we experienced the last time we witnessed this sort of thing.

Again we had the pleasure of duck eggs tonight. This batch was fairly good and I, having tasted them mixed with curry sauce and rice, regretted having traded mine for bread.

The recollection that Dad prophesied the army would give me a liking for tea and my absolute certainty of the contrary, gives me the odd chuckle. Meals with which tea is served, finds me drinking at least two cups, usually straight, but once in a while with a little sugar – a form to which I'm quite partial.

Why – I couldn't say, but all day I have been almost bubbling over with good spirits. Perhaps we're going to hear some good news – I hope so – I've felt all along that mid-summer or fall would see us out of here and I just can't seem to let myself become too pessimistic in the matter of a long stay here. Maze, McCarthy

and I discussed the possibilities of a week in New York or Chicago for the double purpose of replenishment of wardrobe and relaxation...when this business is over. It would be a nice holiday which you've undoubtedly earned Mrs. C. – Maybe my Irish flights of fancy don't permit me to view this situation realistically enough.

March 7 – (Saturday)

This day oozed in with a cold drizzle, so all my grandiose plans of yesterday, re the body beautiful, went by the boards. I did take my early shower though.

Our table has been looking forward to Saturday as it is our turn for “first for seconds”. By way of enlightenment, we have four tables of roughly ten per, which take turns by days, on being first in the servings of second helpings. Unfortunately, a slight miscalculation at supper last night resulted in there being no seconds – but also leaving us a scanty “first”, so we were hungrier than usual after the meal.

Dinner, though light, proved quite a treat. We had three pancakes and a slice of bread – with syrup – and all agreed the pancakes were superior to anything to be bought at Childs. Absolutely delicious, although so finely textured that they didn't go far toward filling the void. Perhaps we'll have extra rice tonight to make up for it. I understand squid is on the menu as well.

I spent some time before and after lunch on Sweeney's sax, with Bardal on the guitar and the remainder of time warming up for an impending Bridge tournament which commences this evening. Remind me to have Sweeney and the lads up sometime for a jam session.

Supper brought us our squid, in a sauce, which I traded for rice after one taste. There was a marked similarity between the flavor of the squid and that of a Goodyear inner tube.

If my hunches and good spirits are going to have any bearing on things here, I'm turning pessimist. I was all a'tingle with expectancy yesterday and what happens? Last night the Nips mount additional guards and chase us off our exercise ground (parade square) at 8:30. Added to that is the horrible rumour that the flour issue has been cut off. – What a thought to finish the day with. –

McCarthy and I won our game against two Naval officers and a very close one it was. The scoring was a total of five rubbers and at the end of the third, there was a difference of ten points. The game was decided by last game last rubber etc. I guess our razzle-dazzle system got 'em.

March 8 – (Sunday)

This new week I started by going to Communion. It's remarkable how the time flies. Days and weeks simply rush by, but months seem as years. It seems ages since we embarked at Vancouver on this fruitless enterprise. Perhaps we should be thankful to be alive, but I would have liked to have had a little more honest to goodness scrapping, with some semblance of organization and a better type man with which to work. – Oh well. As long as we don't receive any worse treatment than we have so far we won't suffer much, most of the harshness is mental, so I guess if we can keep the old noodle thinking straight we'll be okay.

No smokes again today – which means we'll feel the pangs of hunger that much more. It's really remarkable the difference smoking makes to the satisfaction of appetites and I never would have believed we would become as dependant on them as we are. What a treat we'll have – later!

Played ball against the Rifle officers and muffed a chance to assume the league leadership by being trounced 12 to 5.

Supper tonight was heaven-sent for McCarthy and I. We two Micks are notorious rice polisher-offers and, since the rice was

dry and plentiful with not a great deal of vegetable sauce, we had numerous offers of left-overs, the result being that we have finally had a filling of rice. To touch off this repast, we had a pancake sandwich, with jam inside, and tea – watta feast!

Tonight the hut sounds like a meeting of the Altar Society, our bridge tourney is in full cry and, since we have better accommodation than the Navy, most games are being played in our hut. Tonight's session had twelve tables.

I decided to sacrifice some more Canadian money on smokes this afternoon, so we again light a weed. (no pun either). A new name is added to the brands we've smoked. "White Rose". I might add the names shamelessly mislead the prospective smoker.

I think I'll spend the remainder of the Sabbath evening trying to take some money from the Company sergeants. We play "push-pull" at a nickel (Canadian) a game and the book records a profit of \$1.35 for Corrigan. "Lucky at cards, etc."??? Managed to wriggle out of the push-pull with a nickel profit.

The news tonight was anything but encouraging. Rather looks like a long, long time awaitin'.

So far Mac and I are the only Army winners in the bridge tourney. I guess we're good – for one more game.

March 9 – (Monday)

Another dull day today, although it isn't raining. The Nips started their bombing practice early today and a plane zooms over the hut every three or four minutes.

McCarthy and I had another field day at lunch. We had brown rice and soybean sauce and it was rather hard to get down, the results being that, though I don't like the sauce, I did get scads of rice.

I spent the great part of the afternoon playing bridge. I haven't played much since I started my "stretch" so Mac and I decided we'd better get some practice playing together. We are now sufficiently acquainted with one another's style that we are able to get thoroughly muddled in our bidding before we have reached the "slam" brackets. Incidentally, we are the only Winnipeg Grenadier team to win first game.

Supper again afforded us a chance to go "all out" on rice, we had squid again in a sauce, and it was bloody awful. The rice, though plain, was a bit more palatable (??) than at noon so we enjoyed our second filling of the day.

More bridge again tonight. Twice a day is once too many. Too much thought.

I had a chap in from the Navy who seemed to know considerable about terrain, relative strengths and conditions in general where fighting is now taking place. He is of the opinion that September or at the most – the end of the year – should see us out of here. I hope he's proven too pessimistic. The only possible glimmer of satisfaction I can salvage out of this business is that by the end of September the government will owe me one thousand bucks of back pay. Nice pickings eh? What a way to earn it though. There must be easier methods to practice economy.

The war situation definitely is not good tonight. Maybe the government will owe me more than that.

March 10 – (Tuesday)

Still another dull day and we did get a light rain about 9:30.

The bombers are going strong again this A.M. What a stupid waste of time and money this war business is. Somebody manages to come out ahead of the game usually. After seeing the side of the Army that I have, for the last two or three months, I'm convinced that 90% of all the officers in the Army, particularly from Lieutenants up, join for purely selfish reasons. Perhaps we

have here a particularly poor group to study. I'm sure we must have lower than average, but it's amazing to note how much of the talk and general conversation hinges on the gratification of personal desires and appetites. A neutral person listening to such talk would, I'm sure, form the opinion that "joining up" opened a way to the satisfaction of these desires, as in most cases civilian life would not have allowed, through one circumstance or another, their gratification. Granted that, in view of our circumstance here, talk of this nature is not unnatural, still I'm sure the listener would agree that it's carried considerable beyond the normal, in fact it becomes damned annoying. These last sentences are not meant to prove the selfishness in joining that I mentioned earlier, as innumerable other incidents have prompted me to form that opinion, I merely mentioned them as a side issue. Naturally I include myself in the group mentioned above.

Rain is falling quite heavily so I guess parades are "out" this morning.

I don't feel particularly robust this a.m., think I've managed a slight (I hope) touch of dysentery. We have been particularly fortunate, so far, in respect to this disease as, though we have quite a number of cases in camp, they are of the mild type. Even so, by the time the men get over a bout with it they look like living skeletons and unfortunately, on our present diet, they have no chance to be built up to normal again. Were we to go home now we would indeed present a sorry spectacle.

The Nips "asked" us to turn in all flashlights, tools, cameras etc. today. Don't know what's behind it but they're gone. I believe I've mentioned this before, but if I haven't I'll do so now. We have nothing to complain about in the treatment accorded us by our captors. They aren't passing out too many cigarettes or giving us week-ends downtown, but outside of that I believe that, according to their way of life, we are doing all right. Naturally the big drawback is the vast difference in our mode of living. Certainly I believe we are receiving better treatment than would be meted out by most of our enemies in this conflict.

Wonder of wonders – we actually had a small pork chop for supper. Needless to say we enjoyed it immensely. We had a lovely rich gravy with it and, by application of a little imagination, I almost believed the rice to be potatoes. A slice of bread would have topped it off nicely. – Never satisfied are we? – Actually, while very nice, I’m of the opinion that in these circumstances it would have been better to spread it farther by making stews – chops seem a mite on the luxury side.

The men had their squid fried tonight and it’s a peculiar looking animal to have to eat. They came back for more though. Guess they get pork tomorrow.

Mac and I spent the evening playing more bridge with our Naval opponents of the other evening. Dudley and MacDowell were their names and they’re both damned fine chaps. We again demonstrated our bridge superiority.

March 11 – (Wednesday)

Still a bit on the dull side but no rain this a.m. Much activity in the way of cleaning this morning. Some Jap big shot is paying us the honour of a visit at 10 a.m.

The Jap paper announces the successful termination, for Japan, of the Java and Burma campaigns. Nothing official yet but the last we received indicated things were far from good in both places. Certainly credit must be given our erstwhile opposition. They had everything planned down to the most minute details and knew how to execute their plans. Our general defensive policy doesn’t seem to stand up at all, although I imagine lack of air support is the answer. It will be interesting in years to come to follow the details of this eastern campaign in a magazine like “Time”, just to see how they treat the whole affair. Events in Java, Singapore and Burma, which to us seem to be of vital importance will, in all probability, rate very little copy in America, depending of course on the strategy of the Yanks. Naturally we are definitely prejudiced here and apt to place too much importance on the

different places that fall, possibly because every loss seems to us to be a few more weeks or months added to our stay.

Our visitor this morning proved to be the Commandant of Prison Camps in Hong Kong and his visit started the rumour train again. Apparently he did mention that we were fortunate in our treatment here as Japanese nationals in Canada and the United States were being under-fed. He also intimated to the Colonel the possibility of the men being allowed to work, with pay, and the opening of a canteen – both in the indefinite future. We have heard these before so are not placing too great hope in either. All reading material is called in, presumably for censure.

I wound up the day with pork gravy and rice for supper and a session of push-pull after. The push-pull developed into a gossip session, so I broke even financially.

Once again, no word from the “great-outside”. Guess they are being cautious.

March 12 – (Thursday)

The weather is still dull, but there’s no rain. I wish it would do one or the other.

I’m Orderly Officer today but duties consist mainly of meal supervision so it makes no great difference.

Forgive my continual relation of items on our menu, but after all there isn’t a great deal else to provide material for a diary. Every day is a repetition of the one previous and, while I’ve tried so far to get away from a straight line or so entry, it becomes increasingly difficult to avoid without repeating.

I think lunch today provided our tastiest meal to date – it consisted of fried sole and dry rice. Whether the fact that the fish was fried in peanut oil made the difference or not I can’t say, but it was delicious.

After our enforced diet of rice here, we've had our eyes opened to the possibilities of the grain, both as a staple vegetable and dessert. Served with cream and sugar, syrup, jam or chocolate sauce, it makes a tasty dessert and as a vegetable the scope is almost unlimited. We have had it with all types of fish, from sardines to squid, as well as bully beef, pork, beef, peas, beans, meat gravies, sauces made from greens, soybean sauce, curried sauces and even plain, with or without salt. I don't know how the price would affect things at home but at breakfast for example, sweet rice would be a good substitute for cereals or porridge. The ease and speed with which it can be cooked should make it acceptable as a main course for those meals which have to be made at the last minute due to bridge or golf. It's an idea anyway. I hope I manage to retain my taste for it.

Mac and I were ousted, most emphatically, from the bridge tourney this afternoon. Such cards – wow! We bid only two hands all afternoon.

The local paper today plays up the loss of the East Indies and Burma and says it's a foregone conclusion that Australia will follow without any trouble. Our situation here wouldn't appear to be the most hopeful in the world, would it? Do we let it get us down? Ixnay, ixnay.

Makes one wonder how things are going at home. Why we haven't enough sense to appreciate our standard of living without having to go through something like this is beyond me. Still – we're very much alive and that's something! My sympathies are with those at home who won't have the boys coming back, particularly the brother combinations, of which we had three or more wiped out. Again I say – we're lucky. –

Once again as I try to throw these few lines together, the hut buzzes with bridge tourney gab. The event is going well.

Again we are out of smokes – but do we decide we had better quit? No, something is bound to turn up. Strangely enough it usually does.

Well, that would seem enough for one day so – 30 -.

March 13 – (Friday)

Time marches on and we hit our second “unlucky” Friday of the current year. As long as they get no worse they’ll be okay.

An hour or so of the usual dull weather was quickly dispelled by brilliant sunshine this a.m. and immediately everyone’s spirit brightened. It’s quite remarkable how much the weather influences the general feeling.

Dinner was no hell and consisted of plain rice, a little mushy, and peach jam. Flour has once again come in, in limited quantities, so we also enjoyed one slice of bread.

Most of the afternoon was spent lapping up vitamins in the form of sunshine. I think our diet, if it could be held at its present high standard, contains most of the ingredients necessary for a reasonably healthy existence. If we are able to withstand the tropical diseases during the wet months, I think there’s the possibility that we’ll get out of here an extremely healthy group, the officers I mean. Certainly most of us are in finer shape than for years, paunches and surplus weight have come off and, with abstinence from liquor and lots of rest, we’re really better off than normally – from a physical standpoint. Naturally our diet does lack things but, I don’t think, too seriously. I mention the officers as a group because they have definite standards of cleanliness not practiced by the men – since most of the Eastern diseases seemingly hinge on cleanliness. At any rate, God willing, it may be just what the doctor ordered for some of us.

Another ball game this afternoon and we were on the short end of an 8-4 score.

Supper was another gastronomic orgy. We had pork pie, rice, turnips and cooked lettuce. I didn’t even try the last two articles mentioned but the remainder was delicious. I don’t know

how long they can keep up this good meal schedule, but I'm all for it.

Once again nothing in the way of news, so we take us to bed feeling none too optimistic.

March 14 – (Saturday)

By way of a change, the sun peeked out while we were having breakfast and now it is damned hot.

We had an inspection by the Guard Commander at eleven o'clock as the Commandant apparently was none too pleased in the other day's turn-out, and he's returning Wednesday. This was evidently a dress rehearsal.

I had a hair-cut this morning, so will have to watch the sun for a few days. Some of the boys have shaved off their hair and, with the general appearance of thinness, some of the resultant sights are rather on the grotesque side.

It's my day to shave today, which means I must hack away at a two-day growth with a dull blade. Our shaving equipment unfortunately, is at a minimum and blades, brushes etc. are passed from one to the other to alleviate the situation.

Today I'm nursing a sore arm – slipped while running bases in the ball game yesterday and took some skin off my elbow and, though I put iodine on it right after the game, by this morning infection had set in. This gives an idea of how careful one must be in this country.

The cigarette problem is again acute and today our scrounging brings forth still another brand, "Blue Eagles".

Mac and I, discussing our situation, both remarked on the fact that penned up as we are in our little enclosure, we still – strangely enough – don't seem entirely displeased with our lot – barring the question of food and fags. That may seem funny –

actually it is – but no one has the desire to get out of camp such as they would were we on duty, say at home, and confined to barracks. There may be some truth in “way to heart – through stomach”.

The afternoon proved very hot and not wishing to take a chance with “Old Sol”, I slept until parade.

We again resumed Saturday evening concerts tonight and the standard of entertainment is strikingly high. Sweeney and the lads are very popular and some of their stuff is good.

Again no inkling of how things are progressing, but I guess it really doesn't matter. If things go well we get too optimistic and if not we go to extremes the other way. I'm afraid men are very strange and selfish animals.

March 15 – (Sunday)

Well – Paddy – many happy returns on this date, hope we have the next one together. I have ample time here to ponder on the things I should have done in these nine years. I hope also that things have been progressing smoothly since my departure. May we meet soon anyway, Paddy.

Communion and Mass this a.m. and just managed to finish when it commenced to rain.

I still can't get used to the “no Sabbath” of the East. Small, the Chinese are noted for their expressionless faces. Without a Sunday morning sleep-in to look forward to, I'm afraid we'd all become sour-pussed, sooner or later.

Dinner consisted of two eggs, two slices of bread and tea. We hope this is followed by a nice bulky supper – we're seconds!

Thinking of Paddy's birthday brings to mind the days at Swift Current. I wonder if Bob “joined up”, married or what? – and Rooney – will he have found his “groove” yet? Seems years and

years since I ceased working (?) for a living. I hope my Christmas cards and letters managed to wriggle through before the war struck. Seems rather odd to be in our position, people not knowing whether we're alive or dead. Makes one wonder just how much concern was shown by so-called "friends". This is like being detached from the general picture and not being able to make out the details. Too bad our families can't be informed, one way or another, although I guess that will come – maybe it has already.

We did have our bulky supper. Plain dry rice, rice and cheese (like macaroni and cheese) and a slice of bread. Fortunately the cheese content was not too high so I managed to enjoy the mixture. Had seconds too, and left the table satisfied.

Rumours are again rampant – the latest is a reported 48 hour truce between Japan and Britain and the United States for discussion of terms. We even have the details. The reported separate peace between the two would be dependant on Japan being allowed to retain Singapore and Hong Kong. She, in return, would keep all but the vessels of these two countries out of the Pacific for trading purposes. Refusal of these terms would result in the Japanese conquest of Australia. Acceptance of course would mean our immediate release. Beautifully simple, isn't it?

News did come through tonight that a Compradore would be in camp in the morning to take orders for food, etc. The only drawback is lack of money. Arrangements seem to be under way for a pay though so we may eventually have some.

Well, this seems to about exhaust my mental capacities for the day – so we'll just wind up the Sabbath with a little prayer that it won't be long now.

CHAPTER SIX

Patricia – age nine:

On my 9th birthday, I was living in Winnipeg with my grandparents. They had an apartment at 185 Spence St. not far from Broadway. The Parliament Buildings were just a few blocks away.

When I travelled from Swift Current to Winnipeg, as I did several times, it was either by bus or by train. Things were very different then. A child could be sent by either mode of transportation, with the understanding that the bus driver or train conductor would make sure that the child was looked after.

St. Mary's Academy was the school I went to in Winnipeg. We lived a long distance away from the school, and I took the street car every day, to and from school. I made a few friends at school, but there was never an opportunity to see those friends outside of school hours. Regarding Winnipeg, I do remember the gym classes, where we were dressed in navy tunics, and white long-sleeved shirts. What one wore on a regular day was a black dress with long sleeves and white collar and cuffs. To complete the outfit we had black wool stockings and black shoes. When I arrived one day with brown shoes, I was sent home on the streetcar and missed a whole day of school because my uniform was not completely correct.

For the times that I was living at home, I attended St. Patrick's School but the friends I made were close to where I lived, and didn't attend that elementary school. The Catholics were definitely a minority in Swift Current, and many of those I knew at school came from the farming communities outside the town, as well as being scattered through the various areas of Swift Current itself. Quite a few were French-speaking, with names like Laverdiere, Lepage, and Toupin.

Living with Grandma and Grandpa Corrigan meant some opportunities to see movies, usually ones dealing with music – either musicals, operas or the stories of musicians. It was understood that I would practice every day, and when there was company, I would be expected to play the piano for those who were visiting. We travelled to Uncle Bert and Aunt Kathleen’s house for Sunday dinner once in a while.

When they were in season, my Grandfather would take me out berry picking to the end of the streetcar line where the blueberries were larger, and we would come home with large shopping bags at least half full. Very tasty! And Grandma would make blueberry pie. My grandfather was very caring, and would help me with my studies, particularly history and geography. He also began to take me golfing with Uncle Bert when I was nine or ten, and made the experience a very positive one.

Relatives visited occasionally. Margaret and “Teenie” were Grandpa Corrigan’s sister-in-law and niece, and visits usually involved conversation, a performance and dinner. We did go a few times to Auntie Voi and Uncle Mike’s house, usually for Sunday dinner.

Auntie Voi was one of Grandpa’s sisters, and had several children, most of them much older than I was. The two youngest were Theresa, who was in her early teens and Allison, a boy who was probably about twelve. Theresa and I got along very well, and there are pictures of she and I with a sled, sliding on a small hill near their house in the winter.

Friends that Grandma and I would visit once in a while lived in St. Vital, and we would take the streetcar just about to the end of the line, either the St. Mary’s car or the St. Anne’s car. They lived at 73 Crystal Avenue, and there were seven children in the family. The younger children were closer to my age, and we enjoyed the playhouse which their father had built in the back yard.

I do remember helping pack Red Cross parcels with my grandmother and many other women in a large building, probably some place like the Osborne Barracks. There were always socks being knit as well,

and a lot of searching for even more ways to support the men who were overseas.

As far as food rationing was concerned, I wasn't really aware of it in Winnipeg, but I do remember Mom talking about food stamps, and small portions of things like butter and meat.

I remember going to Clear Lake in Riding Mountain National Park one summer and getting a terrible sunburn. My body was covered in ointment in an attempt to ease it. The only problem was when I took my nightgown off after sleeping fairly comfortably the attempts to take it off resulted in a fair bit of skin going with it. A quite painful experience!

March 16 – (Monday)

Heavy rain awakened us this morning and though it stopped around breakfast time, the day remains quite dull.

I spent most of the morning with a kit inspection. Why, I have no idea, but the Japs want all souvenirs turned in, so we had to list and tag our collection.

Our noon meal was long on taste and short on quantity again. We had pancakes and though good, they couldn't compare with the first lot. Seems we're getting damned particular sudden like. We did appreciate them though.

Supplies, for some unknown reason, simply rolled in today. We received quite a large quantity of flour as well as vegetables, pork and three kinds of fish. To add to the picture, the Compradore came in with his load this afternoon. I don't know just how the latter will be worked, but I imagine each unit will receive a percentage to sell: at any rate, coffee, milk, sugar and cigarettes (of tobacco) were included in the load.

There may be "some" truth in the Armistice rumour, at least in so far as the offer might have been proffered – this according to a Navy man who swears he read it in the paper himself.

Our “syndicate” is not broke yet but we’re getting awfully bent. Our capital now rests at \$10.00 Canadian, which might just as well be circus money sometimes, depending on the “black market”.

After a lovely dinner of fishcakes, Mac and I sought out our wavy Navy friends, Dudley and MacDowell, and spent the remainder of the evening playing bridge.

The canteen prices were announced after dinner but they were so high as to be prohibitive in so far as we’re concerned. In most cases such as fags, tobacco, etc., we could do better right in camp. It is thought however, that when listing the prices, the Compradore – used to dealing with the Jap “sen” has become confused with the Hong Kong “cent”, which is only half the value – i.e. 20 sen equals 40 cents (Hong Kong) or 1 yen equals \$2.00 Hong Kong or Mex.

March 17 – (Tuesday)

So dawns another “17th of Ireland”. What hellish spots we pick to spend holidays such as Christmas, New Years and the 17th in. “Join the Army and See the World”!

We had quite a heavy rain last night – in fact at home it would likely have been termed a cloudburst – but here where they’ve had as high as five inches to the hour, it’s just a rain. I believe our rainy season is about due to commence, even the last few days the drizzles we encountered formerly have given away to rains. The rainy season also brings with it the typhoons, which can and sometimes do assume proportions that aren’t even funny. The highest “recorded” velocity experienced here was a mere breeze of 176 miles per hour, at which point the recording instrument ceased to function. This happened six or seven years ago but the natives, quite optimistically, assure me the average typhoon doesn’t venture much above 125 miles per hour – which seems a hell of a good thing!

I'm afraid this inane volume, to the casual observer, will present a cross between a weather report and a menu in a Chinese café.

Lunch consisted of two slices of bread, two eggs, a rolled pancake containing jam, and tea. Very nice but not bulky enough.

The day turned out to be one of those lovely sunny days such as we get in June at home, so I sat around lapping up sunshine.

Good news arrived late in the afternoon. The Colonel received the news that Tokyo had agreed on a pay for officers and that a casualty list would be sent home.

Planes flew over the city dropping pamphlets to celebrate the fall of Java, Rangoon, etc. and to announce that India and Australia would soon follow. Even this news failed to dim our exuberance caused by the rumour of pay.

Good St. Patrick was still with the "Micks" in the matter of food. At dinner, Mac and I managed to get properly filled on dry rice, bully stew, bread and tea. -Wotta repast-

The evening we spent in song – or something. The officers had a sing-song in the hut with Doc Gray at the piano, Bardal on the guitar and yours truly on the sax. We managed to fritter away three hours without any serious casualties.

And so – with another day closer to home and another five spot in the sock, I'll lay me down on my nice soft boards for a bout with Morpheous.

March 18 – (Wednesday)

Today is our inspection day so breakfast and lunch are to be advanced a half-hour to ensure ample time to have things arranged for the visit of the Camp Commandant.

Breakfast provided a slight change since we had brown sugar in place of the usual white. I believe it's actually a maple sugar, although it's considerably weaker than our Canadian type. It blends nicely with rice however.

Our company hut was chosen as the hut to be inspected so we had no parade to worry about this morning.

Lunch consisted of rice, flavoured with soybean sauce and fried into patties in peanut oil and pork fat. Absolutely wonderful. It's remarkable how the little things we consider quite ordinary at home are absolutely luxuries here. Unfortunately, as with all things, the quantity is insufficient.

Parade at two o'clock proved to be one of those things so common to the army, as we stood for almost an hour – a task not made easier by the hot sun that came out just as we arrived on parade. Things seemed to suit the Commandant as he gave the word out that he was well satisfied with the manner in which the camp was being run.

After parade, time was spent just sitting and talking, most of the latter being concerned with the matter of pay and the question of writing home. I'm afraid the former won't come to pass for a month or so – at least,

Dinner, due to a shortage of wood, consisted of two eggs and two slices of bread. A bit light to go to sleep on.

Dud and Mac were over after dinner and we bridged and gossiped until lights out.

March 19 – (Thursday)

Another prospective sunny day, although the breeze is a mite chilly. Maze and I dispensed with our sack coverlet last night and damn near froze to death.

Today is clean-up day so we have the business of moving all beds and equipment out so the hut can be sprayed.

Lunch was a slim replica of last evening's dinner and consisted of bread and tea and some kind of bread pudding, fried. Fortunately dinner was again replete with rice and we had it with a small amount of stew, so – once again the inner man was satisfied.

News brought in from one of the hospitals proved almost as stimulating as the meal. Apparently the Philippines have been holding out better than we've been led to believe and Yanks and Canucks were reported to have landed in Australia, if such be the case our plight would not seem quite so dismal as formerly. Burma was also reported as progressing, as were our friends the Ruskies.

Dud was in tonight for a bit of a chat and we were given some interesting view points on life in the East. He has spent some time here, prior to this was stationed in Singapore, on the Malay Peninsula mainland and in New Guinea, all of which makes him an authority on the subject as far as we are concerned. I'd love to have things break in such a way here that we would be stationed here for awhile, to enable us to get around a bit and see the East. Actually, it still has its good points, at least as far as I'm concerned, although this view-point is not shared by most of my fellow officers. It would be a shame to have come this far and to have seen only Hong Kong.

My day to shave again, so I took the opportunity to get rid of my moustache. However, one look at my puss and I'm immediately working on its successor. I can imagine how Mrs. C. would criticize, but I'll have it off by the time I reach home. – Unless I'm flaunting a full beard!

Dudley tells us the summer months are really lousy here. Actually, the temperature rarely exceeds 90 degrees but since the humidity amounts to 90%, things get pretty grubby. Walls drip continuously and clothing, boots, etc. become mildewed and covered with green mould. Lovely prospect, what?

Well, things are quiet today so I'll sign off to await what the morrow has in store. I'm afraid my efforts will become even more fruitless unless something breaks soon. The old brain just can't seem to conjure up the facts.

March 20 – (Friday)

This day's chronicle I'm having to do on Saturday as I neglected my secretarial duties yesterday.

Nothing of any consequence took place except that the meals again proved skimpy, with tea and two slices of bread for lunch and patties for dinner.

We played another ball game with the Navy in the afternoon and again we were trimmed. Why, I don't know, but our ball team seems to have gone to hell lately.

Last night they had another meeting with the Japs on the question of pay and it seems that they were asked to get their pay lists in by dinner time tomorrow. Maybe the pay she's come soon – we hope!

The sun came out in the afternoon, but a cold wind discouraged sun-bathing somewhat.

Spent the evening making up my detention book and listening to everyone spend their money.

March 21 – (Saturday)

Again I'm Orderly Officer so that will take care of a few extra moments. The sun is trying desperately to elbow its way from behind the clouds and we certainly hope it succeeds, the wind has quite a bit of bite to it today.

Lunch proved a little more sturdy than usual with the addition of a little baked rice to our eggs and bread.

Afternoon found us taking advantage of the advent of warm sun but, unfortunately, there are some people that can't seem to stand the sight of others being comfortable, and some miserable soul picked two teams for a game of softball, routing us from our position of ease. As if I didn't have enough trouble keeping my body resources ahead of my stomach and appetite. Woe is me –

Dinner was another more or less short order meal. I think the rice ration must have been cut again.

After dinner we had our usual Saturday night binge in the way of a concert and it was quite good. You'll probably recall Willis (Post Office box 812) who travelled for the I.H.C.? He's with us here and tonight he sang the "Lost Chord", rather well too. I couldn't help thinking what a far cry from the last time I heard him, at a band concert in the Elks' Hall at Swift Current.

March 22 – (Sunday)

Once again the week has rolled by and we're on the threshold of another. The day dawned clear and bright so I went to Communion and later to the recitation of the Rosary. It's rather peculiar that religion here seems to be the medium most capable of bringing me into closer contact with family and home than any other line of thoughts or associations. Oh well, another week has slipped by us, another week closer.

Breakfast was a porridge mixture of rice and oatmeal, aided and abetted by a bun. A very good combination. Unfortunately the firm is again out of cigarettes so the pleasures of today's meals are dimmed somewhat by the absence of that luxury.

The morning, in spite of the sun, proved a mite chilly so it was spent in the hut where, for want of a better thing to do, we re-fought the war.

Lunch consisted of pancakes, which though very nice don't put the bulk in the diet that my system seems to crave.

After lunch we again absorbed more sun – I’m beginning to take on some semblance of brown now – and once again some idiot suggested baseball, so we took revenge on the Navy – giving them a 12-7 trimming.

The fag problem is most acute and is accentuated by the paymaster, who tantalizes us with the thought that our pay will probably be forthcoming within the next couple of weeks or so.

Dinner finally gave me an opportunity to “catch up on bulk” as we had dry rice with a thin vegetable sauce. I added still further to mine by trading bread for rice.

After supper I walked the square until 8:30 with Simons of the Rifles, exchanging experiences etc., then wandered over to the C.S.M.’s for a further session of chin-wagging there.

There seems to be a small flurry of excitement amongst the Nips tonight – passing street cars are stopped and searched and there seems to be considerable military about. Guess it won’t affect us however, so off to bed.

March 23 – (Monday)

Another day of days for table #3 – first on seconds – although at breakfast, as usual, seconds there were none. The porridge rice combination again, a lovely dish, I could eat four portions like we get.

The day is very dull and seems to threaten rain at any moment. It’s not cold however and that’s something. I understand we still have some cold “snaps” to go through.

Another bridge tourney commences today but I’ve gracefully retired from this one. Anything over an hour’s bridge in a day taxes my temper and patience to the limit.

We’ve had another series of rumours which, if correct, have the Russians going great guns almost on the old Prussian

border, as well as on the Polish. An English landing at Le Havre is also reported but I think that's too obviously a "latrinogram". It seems a bit early for a spring offensive but we do hope to hear of things commencing shortly.

Lunch proved even more meager than usual and consisted of tea and bread – fine days we're picking for seconds!

More activity amongst our captors today. Street cars are still being searched and, in addition, a large party of Marines has been searching the hills across the road from camp.

Our meals and afternoon "basks" are taken in the real Continental style, with music. The piano that was brought in is housed in the hut next to ours, and one of the occupants plays fairly well.

Another fagless day doesn't improve the outlook in general. Damned annoying with a pay in line soon. We'd quit smoking were it not for that.

Dinner consisted of fish, fried in peanut oil, and dry rice and, after considerable barter – i.e. bread for rice, etc. I managed to stuff myself sufficiently to alleviate that "Grand Canyon" feeling.

Fortune again smiles on her wayward offspring – but what a price per grin – our syndicate just floated a loan of \$90.00 (Canadian) to be repaid in Canada with \$135.00. Not a bad rate of interest what? Just to make things a little more binding, we must change this sum into Hong Kong currency, at the rate of \$3.00 Hong Kong for \$2.00 Canadian, in order that we may purchase putrid cigarettes, that retail at 40 cents per package, at the rate of \$1.00 for ten fags. After all that's worked out it makes for rather expensive smoking, doesn't it? However the old law of supply and demand holds and we're quite content. Having partaken of my first fag of the day I find myself endowed with renewed vigor and optimism. Checking my "books" I find that all I owe is around \$40.00 Canadian, which isn't bad for about three months smoking.

Once again the hut takes on the atmosphere of the old meeting house as the bridge tourney staggers along. As a matter of passing interest, our friends Dud and Mac, whom we defeated in the first round, managed to go right through and are tonight playing in the finals of the first event.

Well, there being no news and no rumours, I'll close this for another turn at my bed and boards.

March 24 – (Tuesday)

Weather still is warm today but the clouds obscure the sun. Breakfast found us back again on straight rice, but rice in any form is good medicine for me.

Our company has a clean-up the hut campaign this morning, so there wasn't much to our parade at 10:45.

There is still considerable military activity in evidence today and much scurrying to and fro, of trucks loaded with Marines and soldiers. Marines are still searching the hills behind the camp. Rumour has it that six or eight Nips were killed night before last, but that may not be the case.

Lunch consisted of bread and two eggs and, while not what I'd choose at home, it sufficed.

There's still no sun this afternoon so we just sit around and gossip until parade time. There's another ball game at 4:30 which means I'll be extra hungry for dinner.

This must be my extra special week – for a change we win our ball games, incidentally I modestly admit – under pressure – that I lead the team in batting averages, - then comes a bang-up dinner. Such a repast has not been our lot for many moons. Roast pork (one slice), rice patties (two patties per), a slice of bread, plain rice and gravy and tea. Outside of quantity I couldn't have hoped for a better meal at home. – Even traded my bread for more rice and – to top it off – we were able to smoke after supper. I only

hope we get out of here before I lose my taste for rice. One of these days I'll have bushels of it.

A little side-light on the rice question is brought to mind here and, though its propriety may be questioned, I think it's worth recording. As you may know, rice contains an exceedingly large quantity of water, the way we have it cooked, and until our systems became accustomed to it this, coupled with coldish weather, was the cause of much amusement and inconvenience due to the number of nocturnal rises from the warmth of our beds it occasioned. It actually entailed not one or two but from five to seven visits of an evening. Fortunately this was diminished as time went on, but it was humorous at first.

March 25 – Wednesday

How time flies – three months – a quarter of a year since our surrender. How much longer now? I think we've managed to bear up exceedingly well so far.

This morning there's a heavy mist that's almost a rain, in fact I guess it did rain through the night.

Breakfast this a.m. provided a new item for our diet sheet, unpolished rice, which is reported rich in vitamin B. There are quite a number of cases of Beri-Beri in camp due to lack of "B", so we hope by supplementing our diet with the new rice occasionally, to avoid this danger.

Once again I seem to have a slight (I hope) touch of dysentery, the last – fortunately – was more or less a false alarm so I'm staying quiet, just in case.

As a result of the above, I did stay quiet all day and started a book, "Nanking Road" by Vicki Baum, which I'm enjoying. It's fashioned after the "Grand Hotel" type of story and, since it centres around Shanghai and therefore has considerable of things Chinese in it, it's proving doubly interesting in these circumstances.

Today was again a light lunch day and brought only bread and tea. Dinner consisted of dry rice with vegetable and pork gravy, so it was in some measure a compensation.

Rumours again appear optimistic regarding the general war situation and we seem to be doing fairly well on all fronts with the exception of having cut the Burma Road in one place.

The evening Terry and I spent trying to convert Canadian money into Hong Kong currency. What a situation. Now that we have the money, the rates are so prohibitive (even seven now) that we can't get fags. – Wotta life! –

March 26 – Thursday

This day holds promise of a little sun later on and even now it manages to push its chin from behind a lather of mist every few minutes.

Breakfast again consisted of unpolished rice and, though it seems to demand more sugar than the other, it's still very palatable, not unlike Dr. Jackson's bekkus puddy in taste.

Dinner consisted of bread and eggs, one of which I traded for more bread.

Sure enough, out came the sun and though it seemed to lack the intensity of other days, it was very enjoyable. The morning was spent moving bunks in and out of the hut for washing purposes.

After lunch we witnessed another episode of a kind which I have so far avoided mentioning – namely, brutality to the passing Chinese. While we personally have had no cause for complaint, there has been considerable undeserved inhumanity to many an unfortunate Chinese, male and female, who has happened to do the right thing at the wrong time – dependant seemingly on the whim of the guard. As an illustration: Directly opposite the camp, across the street, are situated the barns of the Hong Kong Tramways and, shortly after dinner, four men obviously employed there, dropped

off a tram which doesn't ordinarily stop here, and started for the barns. Half-way across the street they were hailed by the guards and taking off their hats they meekly made their way to the camp gate. Here they were lined up in single file, facing the road and one of the sentries began to talk to them. Suddenly the other sentry grasped the man on the end by the shoulders, from behind, and the first proceeded to slap – first with one hand and then the other – the poor unfortunate's face. This was repeated down the length of the line, then the Chinese were kicked and sent away. Whether or not the reason is a misunderstanding I can't say, but it does seem peculiar.

Supper consisted of dry rice and fried fish cakes and they were the ultra. – Nice diet for prison camp, eh?

Mac and I are invited over to the Navy hut by Dud and Mac so I look forward to a pleasant evening.

March 27 – (Friday)

A cold, windy, dull day greeted us this a.m. and the dust of the camp, swirling around, brought memories of good old Saskatchewan.

Only half rations of sugar with rice at breakfast. I hope supplies come in.

Last night was a lovely gesture on the part of Dud and Mac. We enjoyed a sing-song in the Navy Hut and were then served tea, and, of all things, an egg sandwich apiece. Now *that* is hospitality. Anyone who has the necessary will power to enable them to save rations to provide snacks for their guests deserves a meritorious service medal of the highest order.

Rumours are flying around of a speech made by Churchill in which he is supposed to have stated that reverses in the East are finished. From now on the woim toins! Hope he's right!

Dinner gave us another of “those” nights. Dry rice, pork pie with vegetables, bread and tea. By a series of deft trades, involving bread and a fag, I managed a banquet fit for a king. Certainly we’ll not suffer much if this standard of grub is kept up. In my anxiety to record dinner, I almost neglected lunch, which consisted of dry rice, pork gravy and a bread fritter. Truly this has been a day of days.

Work has been going apace on the sunken ships in the harbour and the Nips have managed to salvage a couple. The shipyards too have been brought into production and are going to town. One must hand it to these chaps for a lot of things.

Further supplements to the Winston Churchill speech have him making the statement that the next six weeks will find the Germans in such a position as to make it likely the war will have terminated by the end of summer. Is it wishful thinking or is there finally something concrete on which to base our hopes???

March 28 – (Saturday)

Once again I start the day with P.T. and a shower. How long this latest venture in building the body beautiful lasts will depend largely on the weather. Today began very dull with a cold wind, but toward noon the sun did manage to come out for a while. I’ve been endeavoring to encourage a nice tan, but after a day or so of no sun at all, the previous results seem to disappear.

I spent the morning rustling about the “Corrigan Home For Delinquents” which, it turned out, was decidedly lousy. A situation of that kind, if allowed to run unchecked, may seriously hamper the degree of hospitality we like to extend to our guests, so, the morning was spent delving into corners with quantities of disinfectant.

Lunch consisted of bread (three slices today) and tea and since the bread was fresh and heavy, it filled the void nicely. The rice ration has again been cut and that of flour raised, so I don’t know just what the future has in store. My stomach has been up to

its old trick for the last few days. A fine pickle I'd be in if I were forced to "change" diet.

The fag situation remains doubtful. We're smoking, but at what a price. Imagine paying ten cents (Canadian) for one cigarette which, under ordinary circumstances, we wouldn't even smoke for hospitality's sake.

I've started another book, "Little Steel" by Upton Sinclair, which is supposed to be quite good. I find it hard to read here, for though we have ample time, it seems difficult to maintain any degree of concentration.

One or two faintly amusing circumstances arose last night due to a complete change-over of our guard. It seems some of the laddies, since it was their last night and all, delved a mite too deep into their "juice of the grape" supply, the result being one or two became quite plastered. Some time in the "wee sma' hours" one of them wandered into our hut and, from all reports, just sat down on one of the beds and "unlaxed". Another apparently not in as fine shape, wandered into one of the Rifles' company huts where, being worn out by his day's labours no doubt, he climbed into bed with a sergeant and went to sleep. This might have escaped notice, had he not left his rifle standing by the foot of the bed, in such a position that commuters to the latrines, each and every one, managed to knock said rifle to the floor with a great crash. Someone evidently reported the performance to the N.C.O. of the Guard, who came in and proceeded to knock hell out of the ex-sleeper. While on the subject, the Nip method of enforcing discipline, according to their privates, is a cuff on the side of the head and they thought the swagger sticks we carry were for the purpose of beating our men. The Jap system also includes the saluting of N.C.O.'s by privates, all salutes being accompanied by a slight bow from the waist. I hope the new guard is sufficiently lax to enable the "across the fence" trade to loosen up.

I spent the remainder of the afternoon trying to relax with my book but couldn't get interested.

Dinner was again a bang-up meal consisting of fried fish, dry rice and a bun – and again we were properly filled up.

Heard the rumour tonight that McNaughton had been made Commander-in-Chief of British and Canadian forces in England. If true it might indicate a more aggressive policy.

Saturday night and again it's "Town Hall Tonight" in North Point. The Concert was particularly good tonight and the wealth of talent un-earthed is amazing.

Must close this off as the sentry has just requested "lights out" although it's only 10:30.

March 29 – (Sunday)

This new week crept in enshrouded in deep fog. Apparently this Sunday has been chosen as a National Day of Prayer at home, so there was quite a crowd at church this a.m. I went to Communion, had breakfast then meandered over to the men's lines to see how they fared. In the good old days when we did manage to get news, I was the purveyor of the latest items to the men – now the situation is reversed and I must depend on the men for my rumours. Most of them are trash but it's a sport that we all enjoy. The latest this morning is the recapture of Rangoon and Canton by our forces.

Lunch provided us with pancakes and a bun which, for a wonder, proved sufficient. My innards are still kicking up and I don't seem to desire as much as usual.

I just noticed today how our bunch, as a group, are beginning to fatten up. Everyone's face has lost the gaunt, hollow look so prevalent on our arrival here. Most of us had used up our surplus body fat during the battle, due to short rations, and lack of sleep, and Sham Shui Po offered no opportunities for replenishment. I understand that, when the system is taking on large quantities of carbohydrates, the supply not needed by the

body is turned to fat, so that probably is the solution to our filling out.

Rumours, rumours, rumours – In the absence of news it seems everyone's spare time must be devoted to concocting rumours. The latest – General McArthur, from Australia, announces that sufficient reinforcements have arrived in Australia and the Philippines for operation there. Turkey has reached the point where relations with Germany have become strained and possibly broken off. Dardenelles closed to Germany – being used by Britain to bring in supplies at Germany's back door.

I received my weekly news digest after dinner to find that the above doesn't seem to jibe with the accepted version. Strange!

Dinner again the deluxe class – with bread, dry rice and a piece of roast pork and gravy.

Popped in on Dud and Mac after dinner and chewed the rag, chiefly about typhoons, since the dull weather suddenly developed into a stiff rain with thunder. Some lurid tales of the 1937 typhoon were told – one in which a 20,000 ton Jap steamer was blown up on shore, stern first, until only the bow remained in the water. Another freighter in the harbour was deposited over the quay in such a way that it straddled a road along which traffic used to pass – until its removal. The Empress of Russia was in harbour at the time and had to maintain full speed ahead, with anchors out, to prevent her from being blown ashore. All this in a harbour fully protected by hills on all sides. The winds, incidentally, only reached 160 miles an hour on this occasion.

Talk then turned to the "Dairy Farm", a firm that supplies milk, vegetables and imported meats to the island. To give an idea of the scope, just prior to the outbreak of war, they milked three times daily a herd of over 1,100 cows. Supplementing their meat supplies, they kept some 3,500 pigs. All stables, corrals, etc., are built on the sides of hills and corrals are terraced, after the manner of pineapple plantations in Hawaii.

“Lights out” is due – so again it’s -30-.

March 30 – (Monday)

This day broke cold and dismal with the odd spot of rain – so P.T. was called off. Later on in the morning it began to rain in earnest, with the result that the morning parade was postponed.

I dislike these cold, wet days. Having less than usual to do everyone remains inside and the resultant chatter defeats any attempt at concentration on reading, etc. that I’m capable of putting forth. One of these disturbers of solitude (now I become personal), a senior officer, is situated a bed or so away and his efforts to regale anyone who will listen is often the cause of a tendency toward murder on my part. Considering himself quite a story-teller and entertainer par excellence, an audience of one is all that’s required to let loose the rush of half-witticisms that comprise my gripe. Actually, the foundation of my lack of appreciation is the fact that during the war he proved himself anything but an officer or a man. In fact he “blew up” proper. After the surrender, he slunk around like a beaten puppy with its tail between its legs, but unfortunately he has again recovered his cockiness and is, once more, every inch the soldier – even to the extent of criticizing the efforts of others in battle. I can well imagine what a brave, courageous group of officers we’ll have by the time of our arrival home. For the benefit of the record I may state that there were only two officers above the rank of Captain whom I considered to have earned their salt. The remainder I can only classify as useless.

The meals remained at their recent high standard today. Lunch consisted of two eggs and three slices of bread, and dinner of dry rice with pork gravy and peas.

Rain continued throughout the day, cancelling parades, so I utilized the time in taking a nap.

After dinner I put through a big business deal. For four packets of cigarettes, I purchased a parka, much the same as a

Hudson Bay Company parka only tan in colour. Actually, it wasn't as cheap as it looks, as it works out to \$6.00 Canadian, but it's still a bargain.

After dinner I played various games of cards with Dud and Mac until "lights out".

March 31 (Tuesday)

In the normal scheme of things today would be payday, but now – well – it's just another day. Unfortunately it rains cats and puppies so it looks like another day of sitting around. I'm Orderly Officer so that helps a wee bit.

I understand that McNaughton has been in Canada and the United States. I hope they have decided to let loose on the enemy this year. The rumour about Andy being Commander-in-Chief must have been confused with McArthur's appointment to the Pacific Command.

Lunch again reverted to the bread, tea and jam status and dinner gave us rice and cheese. Having no taste for the latter I left the table with a slight feeling of lacking something. We hear tonight the disquieting news that nothing but rice and flour will be forthcoming until Thursday, so I guess it's straight rice, with a vengeance ----.

Sure enough, it rained all day and – being cold as well – proved quite miserable. The afternoon I spent reading a rather good book titled, "The Yellow Briar", by Patrick Slater, dealing with the Irish in Ontario about 100 years ago. Some of the incidents described, particularly his treatment of an Irish wake, were quite amusing and I enjoyed the whole thing thoroughly. Although I haven't as yet read more than one or two good books, still I am reading a bit – hope it brightens my spelling. The struggle to get my brain functioning is terrific.

We are told that the rain such as we're now experiencing, runs for weeks at a stretch, plus considerable heat with it later, so

I'm not looking forward to summer. It seems so damnably hard to keep spirits up under such circumstances. – The devil finds work, etc. etc. –

Major Hodgkinson came back from Bowen Road Hospital yesterday and professes to have seen a list of amounts to be paid officers when the pay does start. A Lieutenant will receive MY 90 or 90 Military Yen, or approximately \$180.00 Hong Kong at the present rate. – 'Twill keep us in fags anyhow. –

I think I'll drop over to the Sergeants hut and gossip and try to pry loose some of their dough.

April 1 (Wednesday)

April Fools' Day lived up to its name as far as the weather was concerned. It did stop raining this morning but, although the sun ventured from behind the clouds from time to time, it also remained damnably cold.

Most of the morning I spent playing bridge with Mac and demonstrating our quite evident (?) superiority over Maze and Harper.

Lunch was light, bread and tea. I fear I'll be more than losing my girlish figure.

This afternoon I tried to sleep but only managed an hour. I don't know how I'm going to manage if and when I hit a good mattress again. This board business may be healthy to sleep on but it can be damned uncomfortable as well. It's a pleasure to get up in the morning.

News today has the Secretary of the Navy, Knox, telling Americans to prepare for a long war. Hope you don't mean in the Pacific, Knoxy old boy! Maze and I were doing a little fancy thinking while walking the square this evening and managed to engender a keen feeling on having left the South Saskatchewan Regiment, most particularly in respect to promotion. Assuming the

Second South Saskatchewan Regiment has been mobilized, we would all likely have had our Captaincies, as senior Subalterns; as it is – with politics as they are in this outfit – oh well. We also planned our way home. Assuming the Canucks are in Australia in force and, by the time of our release have come in for some fighting, we figured a logical move might be to ship us there when this blows over, re-equip us, then have other units there absorb us. That is too damned rosy however. Wonder how they will handle us? There are three or four alternatives.

Supplies are low today so dinner is on the light side. Rice cakes, a slice of bread and a very small portion of dry rice was our lot. Not at all bad though.

After supper, Mac and I noticed another of those little incidents that places some of the seniors in such an exalted position in our esteem. The Colonel has been under the weather all day and so stayed in bed. At noon to supplement our meager lunch he had a mug (not a cup) of hot milk brought to him. The mess, by the way, pays \$1.00 per can (small Carnation) for milk. At supper, the same thing again plus a cup of sugar to go with the bread. So what?, I hear you say. Well, actually you're right, perhaps we're taking on the very spirit I condemn, but, in these circumstances we felt things not justified. Our mess at present has no funds and stocks are low, with the result that milk is diluted to the extent that, aside from colour, it is almost unrecognizable as milk. Sugar too has been scarce so as to warrant half rations the last few days to make it go around. In other words, the milk used would have been sufficient for two breakfast for 35 officers and the sugar about one meal for the same. Still you say – "So what?" – What gripes us is the fact that the other of our officers, numbering at least four, lay in bed for days, and some for weeks and there was no suggestion from the Colonel that they get anything different – even when they were unable to eat the meals. A situation like that couldn't possibly have existed in the South Saskatchewan Regiment. Rather we would probably have insisted on the identical course the Colonel took on himself. No one insisted here though – such is life away from home.

I must have climbed out of the wrong sideboard this morning. I've felt depressed and sour all day – possibly because of the cold.

Think I'll close up and go rumour hunting!

CHAPTER SEVEN

April 2 – (Thursday)

Although the wind is still cold, the sky is comparatively cloudless and we may later get a spot of sun. I hope so, depressions seem to lift and settle with the weather.

The fag situation becomes, once again, a matter of extreme seriousness. It seems almost incredible that we have managed to smoke about \$70.00 (Canadian) worth in the last couple of weeks. At home that amount would purchase 7,000 fags – quite some difference.

Still no word as to pay – except that there is liable to be a “slight” delay. Rations are low as well, so it means cutting down a bit. Maybe I should have cut smoking for Lent. Speaking of Lent, tomorrow is Good Friday, so our Easter season will soon be upon us. Doesn’t seem long since Christmas and New Years. I hope celebration of these feasts is carried out in a better clime next year.

We did see the sun from time to time this morning, but a cold wind proved too much for our sun bath intentions.

Bread and tea for lunch, with a minute spot of jam.

We played ball this afternoon against the Rifle Sergeants and again lost, although the decision was close – 8-7.

For dinner we had a fried fish, resembling our herrings, with a soggy portion of rice. We have been issued lately with what is called “tapioca rice” which seems a cross, as indicated by the name, but not possessing the qualities of either.

After dinner we had a surprise muster occasioned by a miscue in the book-keeping system, then bridge with Dud and Mac until lights out.

April 3 – (Good Friday) – 1942

This day dawned bright and cheery, rumour of pay helping considerably, but the sky was clear and everyone tumbled out in good spirits.

True to the old pagan custom, we managed our hot cross buns this morning. We enjoy these little gestures – they remind us of better days to come – we hope.

In connection with the approaching Easter festival, our present situation will exclude subjection to the usual monstrosities that make their debut under the flattering alias of “Style” on Easter morn.

Lunch brings us the usual bread and tea but we find ourselves satisfied easier than formerly.

The “big moment” came this afternoon. Our pay finally becomes a reality. The pay schedule is as follows – Lieutenants Y 25, Captains Y 62.50, Major Y 110. The Military Yen (MY) being worth \$2 Mex. or Hong Kong means we get \$50.00 Hong Kong. Not much but it will keep us in smokes. It was amusing to note the excitement that spread through the camp when the news got around. Unfortunately, arrangements for the men’s pay have not been completed and as a result, our hut was like a honey pot for those wishing to sell, loan or borrow. A mess meeting after dinner decided the messing fee would be 17 yen per month. Since this doesn’t leave much leeway for a Lieutenant, it was decided to debit us that amount monthly, payable in Canada, and spread the cost pro rata amongst the other officers, giving them credit payable by us later. This, it must be admitted, is most fair to the “juniors”.

The general undercurrent of excitement persisted far on into the night and yours truly didn’t manage to sleep until after 2

a.m. It was amusing to see fags being lit in all parts of the hut even at that late hour.

April 4 – (Saturday)

Though this day dawned dull, everyone's spirits were sufficiently exhilarated by yesterday's events, that such a thing as depressing weather didn't stand a chance.

Breakfast, aided and abetted by a can of milk with the rice, was a distinct success. I neglected to mention that, immediately on being paid yesterday, a concerted rush was made on the canteen stores and, since stocks were low anyway, everything was soon disposed of. I managed to get some milk but no fags. On learning of the fag situation our local "merchants", who obtain their supplies over the fence, immediately upped their prices from \$1.00 Mex. to \$1.30 for ten. Even this was no deterrent and, as a result, all fags in camp are sold out. I hope for some in tonight though.

The afternoon proved particularly disastrous for us in the world of sport. The Rifle officers administered a 17-0 pasting at softball. Blaver of the Rifles pitched a remarkable game and I "modestly" boast of robbing him of a no-hit game by connecting in the last frame.

Dinner brought the old stand-by of dry rice and some fried fish. The old stomach has soured considerable in the last week or so and when it empties as rapidly as it does on this diet, it's not funny.

The evening was spent running hither and thither making deals and bargaining, so I was rather spent by bedtime.

April 5 – (Easter Sunday)

Although lovely and warm, Easter Sunday lacked the traditional brightness of the sun usually prevalent.

By way of a change, breakfast brought us pancakes in place of the customary rice.

There was a good turnout for Communion this morning with over 200 having partaken. The Padre mentioned that he had served some 2,500 communions since coming into camp, which is a pretty fair figure.

Lunch took the form of sweetened rice plus bread and jam and was most acceptable.

Efforts to get this diary up to date after lunch were discouraged, to a large extent, by buying and dealing.

A volley ball net has been set up so we made a team up and took on a Rifles officer team, trimming them handily in two games. It's a good thing we can win at something --. A heavy shower cut short our session and we retired for dinner.

Dinner proved particularly tasty and was made up of dry rice with fried patties made from sardines and bread. Considering the equipment our cooks work with, the quality of our meals is amazing. It's too bad the men couldn't fare as well.

More trading and running around after dinner. The fag market is rather peculiar – there seems to be a goodly supply but at times it's difficult to run it down.

April 6 – (Monday)

Heavy rain throughout the night and early morning put the crimp in a proposed volley ball game at 7:15.

Breakfast had an added treat this morning. This was a large slice of buttered toast with our rice.

A light drizzle keeps us indoors so we spend the morning teaching Maze and Harper the “finer” points of bridge.

The day remains dull so the first part of the afternoon was spent indoors.

Lunch will be light again, but the splendid breakfast leaves us not particularly hungry for a change. I neglected to mention that oatmeal porridge was mixed with the breakfast rice and it seems to help it stick to one's ribs.

The day remains dull so the first part of the afternoon was spent indoors reading. After the parade, Mac and I grabbed a wheel barrow and filled up the low spots that were collecting water on our volley ball court, then again walloped the Rifles three straight.

Dinner again proved a treat and included whale steak, dry rice, gravy, catsup and bread. The excellence of our meals of late is a continual wonderment to me. The whale tonight was perfect – about half an inch thick and as tender as liver. It's no exaggeration when I say that meals are more satisfying in their present state than those received in the mess at Sham Shui Po before the war.

My bargaining lately has brought me a variety of decent "buys". A new wool sweater for four packages of fags, pair of shorts, one deck, pair wooden clogs, seven fags, and a big China plate for five fags. The values going are remarkable – I've passed up watches, pen and pencil sets and heaven knows what, all for a few cigarettes.

April 7 – (Tuesday)

This day dawned dull but warm, with the faint promise of a continuance of yesterday's rain. Mac and I arose at 7:15 for a proposed volley game but found the others somewhat lacking in ambition in the cold grey light of dawn. I think we'll forget this early morning sports program.

Once again toast with our rice this morning. It was almost as good as dunking toast in our porridge at home.

I managed to garner a pound of butter this a.m. for \$6.50 Mex, which at present rate of exchange amounts to \$3.25 Canadian. Not bad for the farmers, eh?

News came in after morning parade that the Colonel died last evening at Bowen Road. Apparently he suffered from a combination of dysentery, anaemia and malaria. I think however, that his spirit suffered most. He looked a beaten man when he left here. The quotation, "The evil that men doeth" etc. seems to hold and, though it's not the proper thing to say at this time, general opinion seems to be that it's for the betterment of the regiment. Funeral arrangements have not been completed but it is believed burial will take place this afternoon. In the tropics all bodies must be buried within twenty-four hours.

In relation to the above, the seniors of both regiments and some N.C.O.'s from the Winnipeg Grenadiers, as well as representatives of the Navy, were allowed to attend the burial service. Apparently the affair was a little rough, the body being wrapped in a sheet and buried in the hospital yard. To all intents and purposes however, he was buried with full military honours. Pax Vobiscum.

Dinner was again the heavy duty type and consisted of bully beef and whale meat patties.

We saved buns from dinner and christened the new can of butter by inviting Dud and Mac over for tea. It was delicious and how we splurged on the butter.

The sentries nipped one of our chaps trading tonight and apparently are a bit annoyed as we're having a muster at 10:45 – evidently someone tried to nip out.

April 8 – (Wednesday)

(My apologies re Shelagh's birthday).

Still another dull day in prospect, also another birthday slides by, for I believe today is Shelagh's, or was it yesterday? We never did settle that. Anyway lots more of them for you, Shelagh. The lousy part of this business is trying to follow, in the mind, the development of the children. I have no pictures or remembrances of any kind, having lost all that in the trench. The day will come though – pray God it will be soon.

Last night's activity was evidently the result of one of the traders having a parcel thrown to him by his Chinese accomplice outside and it dropped short. The trader climbed through the fence to retrieve it and there the sentry spotted him. Result, general muster.

The morning was spent gossiping in the company hut with the Sergeants. Rumour has the British making four separate landings in France, and apparently the capitol of Ceylon was raided with the loss of 57 Jap planes.

I officiated as score-keeper for a ball game today then had lunch of cocoa, bread and biscuits. We later took on the Navy at volley and trimmed them.

Dinner was another mark up for the cooks. Sardines, large - on toast, plus dry rice. Truly a lovely meal.

Most of the evening I spent running down cigarettes to pay my debts. A chap we're keeping out of trouble in the "klink", (he's nuts) until he goes to hospital, created a little diversion by climbing walls and fences.

Shelagh –

As it turns out, April 8 is not my birthday. But one can understand the confusion of months and years with the way Dad was spending his time. Even with the entries in the diary on a daily basis, it must have been overwhelming to keep things straight.

I was two years old when my father left Winnipeg for Hong Kong and so I have no recollection of him or what having a father in your life was supposed to mean. I rely on pictures and notes in letters between my parents during this period to put into context what was happening to us in 1941 – 1942.

At this entry in the diary, my mother still doesn't know what has happened to the men who were captured in Hong Kong. I know from her letters to Dad that she has left Winnipeg, (her relationship with the Corrigan in-laws was not great) and gone to Regina, Saskatchewan to be with her mother and step-father. But she is obviously unsettled and uncertain as to where she should be – given the unknown of the war. Her story must have been repeated all over the world as wives and children were left to try and collect themselves with husbands fighting on the war fronts.

Not only were my parents separated because of the war, but my older sister Paddy was also in and out of my life at that time. She spent some time in Winnipeg going to school while she stayed with my Corrigan grandparents – and then would be back to Swift Current for the holidays. My mother may have been working in Swift Current, but I was too young to know what was going on around me.

My saving grace, and a huge comfort for me, was my time spent with my mother's parents. They were the haven for unconditional love, though I'm sure I tried their patience over and over. Some of my first and best memories of that time are sitting in Pop McDonald's big arm chair and having him read the "funny papers" (comics) to me. He was the male figure in my life at that point.

Dad makes reference in the diary as to when my birth date actually was. Apparently I arrived at midnight on the 7th and 8th of May, and there was some question as to which day was my correct birthday. May 7th was decided on and became the official date.

April 9 – (Thursday)

Prospects of a bright day for a change were evident this morning, so I started the day off with a brisk shower. After breakfast a session of volley provoked a sweat-up, so another shower was in order.

The latest rumour has the English landing a million and a quarter troops in France. Even quotes the casualties at 40,000. A naval action between Jap and Yank fleets is also reported. Wish half our rumours panned out.

Lunch consisted of tea and baking powder biscuits but the latter seemed to have taken on some of the qualities of sponge rubber and weren't so hot.

Dinner, however, was a jackpot meal and consisted of rich mutton stew, rice, a piece of toast, a large bread biscuit and stewed dates. For almost the first time in history, I was unable to finish my portion.

After dinner, Maze, Mac and I were invited to a concert by the Navy as guests of Dud and Mac – and we thoroughly enjoyed it. I do relish the company of these two lads, in fact there are six of them, all R.N.V.R. who mess together and they're all "tops". Dud is a tall, lean, angular chap from Australia who, before the war, managed a steel import and export firm here. His mannerisms and speech are somewhat along the lines of a western cowboy, in short, very colonial and, since he's been stationed in such places as New Guinea, Singapore, Malaya and Shanghai, he's quite interesting to chin with. Mac, on the other hand, is his very opposite. Built somewhat on the lines of Rooney, he strikes me as being just the type of chap Jack would like to be. An Honour student at Cambridge he was, before hostilities, in government service as sort of Cadet Governor – i.e. his promotions and positions would eventually work up to some governship or other. Very quiet compared to Dud. Still he manages to carry his quietness well enough that there is no suggestion of aloofness. All in all, he's the perfect gentleman and one of the finest chaps I've ever met. The

other chaps in the mess with them are very much above our standards educationally, numbering amongst them a young architect, considered one of the finest in the Colony, two doctors and sundry managers of quite important businesses of the island. Taking in these considerations and knowing the reputation for cliques in the Colony, I feel quite happy about the open-handed way Mac and I have been welcomed by the lot of them.

Well, another step toward the goal, so again it's -30-.

April 10 (Friday)

Early evidence of a bright cheerful day were enhanced by a good breakfast of rice and porridge.

Rumours were rampant early and the beauty of the day was somewhat dimmed by their advent. The Jap paper featured the loss of two cruisers and forty-four Merchantmen in the Indian Ocean and the imminent fall of the Philippines. News of this nature, if true, doesn't make things any too inspiring for us, in fact, the general situation as we know it is none too bright for the Allies, at least in the Pacific. I still cling to the hope that we'll be out of here by fall, though I must admit that I can hardly base my hope on any concrete course of action we're liable to take. Just the good old Irish wishful thinking, I guess.

Nine heavy bombers pass over at noon going southwest and caused considerable buzz as to its probable destination.

Lunch consisted of pancakes with jam in lieu of syrup and was, to my notion, rather filling but tasteless.

Meals are attaining such a high standard generally that I'm afraid they've almost passed out of the picture as items of news value.

This afternoon proved very hot so I spent the greater part of it flat on my back.

Dinner consisted of rice, baked beans, a light meat stew and baked dates. Once again, I was forced to admit I was licked and couldn't finish my dates. I'm afraid I'm liable to lose my amateur standing as a big eater if this keeps up. I had myself weighed today on two different scales and found I had lost 24 pounds. I had imagined I was gaining some too. Must be getting soft.

Tonight's scrounging brought me a mattress for six decks, so I'll think I'll drop this and give it a try.

April 11 – (Saturday)

This last day of the week started rather dull, with indications of rain. With another week rolled back I again marvel at the passage of time.

Today's Jap paper adds the aircraft carrier "Hermes" to the two cruisers reported sunk yesterday. – Not good - . I wonder just what Russia's commitments are in return for the planes, supplies etc. which Britain drew from her Pacific posts. Surely it must mean some measure of retaliation, by way of Vladivostock, on Japan. That seems almost our only way of striking back in this sphere. I just can't see the United States sitting back for very long allowing the Nips to pick off units of the British Fleet as they have been doing. It would seem that something should be starting soon.

The afternoon I spent in research testing my new mattress. Seems to work okay – I hope it isn't lousy though.

Dinner was again A-one – rice, gravy, delicious whale steak, baking powder biscuits and stewed dates for dessert.

A drizzle of rain spoiled the usual Saturday night concert so I spent the evening chin-wagging at the Company hut. Hope it clears tomorrow, these rainy days are a bore.

April 12 – (Sunday)

Another week in the offing. I started the week as usual with communion then chatted with Dud for an hour or so. The weekly news summary was nothing to get excited about and served to confirm most of our adverse rumours of last week.

The day remained dull throughout so we took advantage of the coolness and had a couple of games of volley before lunch.

Today we inaugurate the daily “quiet hour” or siesta time, between the hours of two and three. We of course haven’t as yet contacted any great heat, but later I understand the rest period will be necessary.

How I’ll manage to find anything of sufficient interest to put to paper when the hot weather comes, I don’t know. Heaven knows it’s been dry enough reading so far. Every day is a repetition of the one previous and in this environment, my mind just won’t wander.

Dinner consisted of “whaleburger” with dry rice and more dates.

After dinner we held the first of our evening services of the Rosary, those of mid-morning being discontinued on account of the heat. Rather an unusual occurrence in regards to religion developed this evening. With a radius of 200 yards, three religious services were in progress simultaneously – Catholic, Protestant and Buddhist, the latter consisting of a group of the guards walking around in a circle, officers and N.C.O.’s in the centre and all chanting and singing as they marched.

I can’t help but note the friendlier atmosphere in our group as a result of the Colonel’s absence. Major Trist and Major Hook as officer Commanding and Second-In-Command respectively, have a much better understanding of officer handling, particularly the latter, and the difference is apparent to everyone.

April 13 – (Monday)

Another day has wasted away. This one – judging by our standards was one of almost feverish activity. Taking advantage of a promise of sun, we spent the morning cleaning hut and placing our beds in a new allotment scheme. The cleansing activities occupied most of the forenoon until parade, after which we partook of a much-needed volley practice.

Lunch consisted of very soggy pancakes and jam and was most disappointing. It seems a recently constructed grill failed to measure up.

Most of our quiet hour I spent getting my belongings in some semblance of order, although I did read a bit of “The General” by C.S. Forrester. The book, by the way is rather good and one I would recommend for Dad’s pleasure.

McCarthy, Maze and I, in a moment of weakness, organized a game of baseball, which kept us occupied until parade at 4 p.m. After parade we still had sufficient energy left to play volley until dinner – so my athletic activities for the day included three showers, seven games of volley and a game of baseball. Ain’t life hell in a prison camp???

Dud and Mac dropped in after dinner and we did a spot of chin-wagging. If we come out of this on the right end, Mac is going to show me around, in fact we more or less planned a week in Peking, a city he claims to be perfection.

April 14 – (Tuesday)

Arising more or less fresh from a particularly good sleep, I found the new day promising in regards to weather – although we were evidently to be denied the enjoyment of lolling in the sun. I find this business of acquiring a suntan almost vexing at times. We manage to get nicely browned up one day only to lose most of it before being given an opportunity to “stabilize” it.

The weather remaining cool, we played volley until parade at which time I played a game of “Hand” football with the men in their P.T. period to round out my sports program for the day.

A lunch of a bun and some jam, supplemented by a chocolate bar, proved very tasty. The arrival of supplies brightened the “eats” future.

Again the quiet hour proved a nap, after which we played a practice game of ball with the Sergeants until parade. Time again hung heavy, so I organized another game of volley before dinner.

Dinner tonight, while not giving possibly as much quantity as other of our meals, was, I think, the most completely satisfying meal since capture. Naturally rice provided the main course, garnished with a gravy of meat, vegetables and celery, and a large bun served as a side dish. Dessert brought forth baked dates with un-watered condensed milk as a sauce and a large chocolate biscuit, almost an éclair, to top it off. Charming repast, what?

Dud was in trying to trace down or confirm a couple of disturbing rumours circulating through the Navy. He heard the Nips had made landings in Ceylon and Aden which, if true, would be anything but promising to us. Another spot, slightly more favourable, has the Yanks retaking Guam.

I’m afraid our captors are fast learning our western methods of doing things. Two truck-loads of barbed wire arrived tonight, plus generators – presumably the latter to be used for the purpose of charging said wire. We weren’t going anywhere anyway!

Read a book, “At Your Beginnings”, rather good, then retired.

April 15 – (Wednesday)

Today holds more promise of lots of sun, so we played volleyball all morning lest it be too hot this afternoon.

Rumour has it that there will be a movement shortly of either the Navy or some Canucks from this camp. I hope not as I do enjoy the company of some of our Navy friends. Speaking of the latter, it seems that Dud and Errol Flynn worked together in the same firm down in the East Indies somewhere, and were more or less buddies.

Letting my thoughts run wild last night before sleeping, I find that I'm of a slightly different frame of mind than that of two months ago. Perhaps I've managed to finally adjust myself to our present mode of living. At any rate, my plans for the future have altered somewhat. Remember the Chicago trip? I've become more conservative now. My plans include now the purchase of a new car and the taking of about three months off for a leisurely motor trip to California or Florida. How would that register Mrs. C? Of course, a lot would be dependant on the length of time we are stuck here. Present indications are such, although contrary to my private intuition, that it would appear quite likely I'll be able to finance a car on my return, with the shekels accruing during my tenure here. I'm only frightened lest my age should prevent the obtaining of a drivers' license.

The day did turn out bright and warm but we were denied the luxury of sun-bathing by a visit of the Jap prison Commandant. Evidently he found things to his satisfaction, so we're okay again for awhile.

Dinner again proved a treat – dry rice, a bun and a baked mixture of fish and rice, topped off with stewed dates. It's significant that the steward was unable to dispose of a single second helping in his rounds.

Dud and Mac dropped in to invite us in to a Navy concert in Hut #10. Jolly good it was too. – Well another day goes west. I do hope I'll get something interesting in this blasted thing soon. – So far ---- not good.

April 16 – (Thursday)

And still another glorious day in the offing. We have not so far, experienced any great amount of the humidity usually prevalent at this time of the year. In fact, we are assured it has been particularly dry to date. Someone among our Navy friends cheerfully informed us last night that, if the typhoons hold to their usual cycle, we could expect a dilly this year. Although I understand this spot is a particularly un-healthy one in a blow, I'd still like to experience a "good one".

The sun began to sizzle this morning a bit, so we had our morning volley session right after P.T. parade. I was called up after the game to take charge of a party to clean up one of the godowns, preparatory for use as an annex to our hospital.

The above work party didn't materialize due to a visit of the Camp Commandant, to inspect the new wiring system. Evidently there have been several recent escapes from Sham Shui Po, with the result that a general tightening-up has come into force. Our wire here has been reinforced and heightened and, to further discourage wanderers, electrified. This afternoon brought an amusing incident in regards to the working party. The godown which I was ordered to clear, is adjacent to the building now used as a hospital and was formerly connected to it by means of an archway, since bricked up. The work of clearing the building being well in hand, we commenced opening the arch and had advanced to the point where we had a lovely hole about five feet square punched through. At this point the guard commander appeared and almost blew his top when he realized that he had permitted an opening to be made that hadn't been accounted for in the laying of the wire. Result – we had to rebrick the new-made avenue of "escape".

News today fails to substantiate rumours of yesterday re Ceylon and Aden, but neither did it give us cause for excessive jubilation.

I've meant to mention a small item regarding funerals for some time. I believe I mentioned, in a letter home, something about the funerals before the war, with their bands and banners and quaint ceremonies. How totally different things are now. Dozens of coffins pass daily but, instead of the elaborate processions of pre-war times we find the majority made up only of those men carrying the body, without even mourners – although on one or two occasions, I have seen a woman, presumably the wife walking behind. The coffin, a huge heavy-looking wooden affair, is usually carried by either two or four coolies, suspended between them by ropes and carrying poles. These pall bearers are usually dressed in peculiar conical-shaped straw hats and pale blue jackets, the latter usually open to reveal a very dirty shirt or chest in similar condition. Apparently this pale blue and white are the colours of mourning in China – and the general effect is not enhanced by the filth of the coolies' pants and feet. I'd like to get hold of some really authoritative book on these people. They have some strange ways.

Dinner tonight, in the light of recent feasts, was almost common and consisted of whale stew, dry rice and dates.

Dud dropped in after dinner and the remainder of a lovely day was spent gossiping.

April 17 – (Friday)

This morning dawned in a way very reminiscent of home. Dull and with a stiffish breeze that caused dust to swirl, it was just one of those mornings that one might say, "No, don't feel much like golf today. Think I'll read instead." That's exactly just what we do here, only we didn't have the choice.

After a lunch that provided something of a change – i.e. cocoa with honey and toast – I spent considerable time in a horizontal position on my bunk. I've often wondered just how a lengthy stay, such as we might have to undergo, will affect us in subsequent civil life. The longer we are here, under present conditions, the more pessimistic I become in the matter of re-

adjustment later. Even here, with time on our hands, everyone has become alarmingly lazy. For example, this is a wonderful opportunity to better ourselves mentally, by way of language and mathematics classes, but we find that, after one or two lessons, interest dies and people don't attend.

The Nips are making remarkable progress on the sunken hulks in the harbour, having raised about six so far. The channel here is a mile or so wide and there still remains a dozen or so to be raised – so it's quite a neat bit of salvage. Unfortunately, either because of incompetence or their smug, contented disparagement of the possible capabilities of their enemies, the British failed to destroy most of the industrial plants, etc. on the island, with the result that it has become quite a rich prize for its captors. Vital works such as dock-yards, dry-docks, oil depots and even ship yards were left virtually untouched. It's almost time some of Britain's colonial policies had something besides the profit motif as their foundation. If the news from India be true, it might well mean the beginning of the much prophesized breaking up of the Empire, a prophesy that doesn't appear quite as fantastic, even with our brief contact with the East, to us here as it would in Canada.

Late in the afternoon, news came around that the Navy was being moved to Sham Shui Po in the morning. This will mean that, with the exception of a few Dutch sailors, the camp will be Canadian throughout. The move will also alleviate accommodation to some extent, freeing about five huts for our use. At present each hut sleeps about 160 men, which is just about double the normal capacity. Another good feature of the move will be that Black, Blackwood and Nugent will be joining us from the other side.

After dinner, considerable time was spent bidding adieus to friends made in the Navy and exchanging addresses, lest circumstances later prevented our meeting. Mac and Dud particularly I shall miss tremendously and I think there was considerable disappointment on both sides at the abrupt severance of new-found friendships. A farewell concert was hastily organized and we enjoyed this and the accompanying sing-song

tremendously, then sojourned to Dud's bunk for a spot of tea. Something of a coincidence occurred at the end of the evening. Word was passed around quite late, that a kit inspection of those going out would be held in the morning and articles of rubber, electrical goods, tools, rapids (?) flashlights etc. would be confiscated. Shortly after my leaving the Navy hut, Dud came over to ask if I should mind keeping a pair of binoculars for one of their blokes. Telling him that I would, I took them from him and returned to my bunk where Harper, noticing the bulge in my tunic became curious as to make, etc. Showing them to him, he expressed the opinion they were Canadian issue, a point with which I disagreed as I had thought they were Navy. To settle the issue, I took them under a light to look for possible verification and almost went through the floor when I discovered my initials cut into the frame. The last I had seen of them was at McAustin Barracks when I had tossed them over a cliff to prevent their further use by the enemy. – I hope I can manage to bring them through now, I also still retain a hope I can pick up my sword again.

April 18 – (Saturday)

What a day for a move. A cold, dismal rain fell all morning, making things utterly miserable.

Unfortunately I didn't see Dud or Mac this morning as they moved out quite early to the car barns across the street for inspection. The ratings are not so fortunate however, and have been standing on the square for the last hour and a half in a pouring rain, their kit becoming pretty well water-logged.

This morning we find the general move involves minor ones as well. Six junior Subalterns from each regiment are being moved into a quarter hut available next door. The six being, of course, those newly joined.

Black and Blackwood arrived just at dinner, so the remainder of the day was spent exchanging news and views. Incidentally, all Imperial officers were moved to Argyle Street

today and we're wondering if we too might be separated from the men - hope not. Our boys, as usual, report lousy relations with the Imperial officers at Sham Shui Po, particularly the Royal Scots, so they're quite happy to be here.

April 19 – (Sunday)

Another spongy day in the offing. Evidently our weather is stabilizing itself.

The peace of our Sunday morning breakfast was disturbed by a surprise visit of a delegation of military big-wigs, headed by a Major-General no less. Our first inkling was the opening of the hut door by a sentry and the entrance of some twenty officers who slowly made their way through the hut. Not a word was spoken and we just arose hastily and gaped.

After breakfast we had another surprise, a muster parade – and many were the probable reasons for this strange sequence of events.

The remainder of the day, after lunch, we spent moving beds etc. to the hut next door – our future home. The new set-up promises to be homey. We have some sixteen Subalterns of both regiments occupying half a hut and they comprise a goodly crowd. We also have the piano stored in our hut and had a little sing-song tonight for a start. I'm afraid we might get too comfortable and settled then have to move to some other camp. What a change not having to climb to the attic portion of a double bunk for my nightly repose.

April 20 – Monday

Again a prospective dull wet day confronts us, although it hasn't yet begun to rain.

Breakfast, due to a shortage of sugar, failed to live up to its usual high standard but we had date juice in its stead so it wasn't too bad.

Due to the buzz of getting things ship-shape – i.e. sleeping quarters etc. for the newcomers, no P.T. parade was held this morning - for which we were very thankful and made good use of the time further establishing ourselves in our new home. As mentioned yesterday, the new set-up at present seems almost too good and our one fear is that we might be moved away from the men to some other camp.

Rations have not been forth-coming the last few days, so dinner consisted of meat stew with dry rice – very good too.

Since the rain persisted all afternoon, we took the opportunity to delve into the intricacies of Mah Jong, and, rather enjoying it as we progressed, we played most of the afternoon and evening, although we don't by any means feel we are yet fully acquainted with the game. It's an enjoyable pastime though and I must try to take back a good set with me. Nugent's arrival fills our compliment of officers from the hospitals.

April 21 – (Tuesday)

Another day has crept in and, as though in shame at its lack of accomplishment of anything momentous, is as silently slipping out.

The day has been dull throughout and, on the whole, a bit depressing. This morning we started a bit of ball practice, but being plagued by pains of unknown cause in my chest and right arm, I enjoyed it not a bit. One of the Jap Sergeants started to toss the ball around with us so we picked up two teams and had a game, the Nip standing his sword against the fence and taking the first sack for us. Very good he was too!

After P.T. parade we had a session of volley which further aggravated whatever hurt I have done my arm – so I spent the remainder of the day quietly.

Someone unearthed a ping-pong set, so we have that to add to our athletic ventures.

This afternoon I started a book translated by Pearl Buck, “Shui Hu Chan” or “All Men Are Brothers”, and since it contains some 1,300 pages, I expect it to keep me quiet for some time.

Tonight, having read my fill, I spent the evening gossiping in the men’s hut, then back here to finish this miserable effort, and so to bed.

April 22 – (Wednesday)

And still another dull day in the offing. Although we’re not having rain, the threat is ever-present and discourages any untoward activity.

Breakfast returned to normal this morning with the arrival of a small supply of sugar yesterday – once again permitting sweet rice.

The morning I spent reading my new Chinese book but I’m afraid it’s not going to be as beneficial as I had hoped. I had imagined that it might contain considerable useful information of things Eastern but so far I’ve been disappointed.

After P.T., I foolishly played volley and further aggravated my chest and arm.

Lunch consisted of sardines on toast plus dry rice – quite a departure from the usual bun and tea. After lunch, being somewhat lackadaisical, I slept until just prior to parade time. We were again inspected by the Camp Commandant today and heard no complaints so assume he was satisfied.

After a dinner of dry rice and fish I again betook myself to my book until almost bedtime, when for some unexplained reason I felt suddenly unwell. I barely managed to get out of the hut before vomiting, so suddenly did my illness come upon me. The cause of this disturbance I still don’t understand as there was

nothing I could have eaten that should affect me alone. At any rate I had two further upheavals toward early morning.

April 23 – (Thursday)

Due to last evening's disturbances no doubt, I awoke feeling none too refreshed and, as the day was again dull, I decided I had better skip parades – lest I be again taken unawares.

Lunch consisted of buns, fishcakes and jam – for which I had little taste, although I did finish my share. I wouldn't like to fall from the habit of eating.

The afternoon I spent making up for sleep lost the night previous and though my stomach still wasn't exactly normal, I did peck away at rice and meat sauce for dinner.

April 24 – (Friday)

Last night brought further recurrences of the previous evening's unpleasantness, so I was particularly empty this morning. The doctor suggests a laxative and a cessation of eating for a short time, so meals of the day are of no great concern.

Last evening we had something of a round-table conference, consisting of Black, Maze, Campbell, Blackwood, Nugent, Harper, McCarthy, Terry and myself, during which we discussed our various roles in the war and compared notes on specific incidents. I think perhaps the less we re-construct and re-fight the war, the better state our peace of mind will be in. Last evening's session merely served as a reminder of the horrible incompetency of our noble "peace time" army and again re-opened the old sore caused by our transfer from the South Saskatchewan Regiment.

Today has been cool and dull with intermittent showers that spoiled the morning as far as sports were concerned. After lunch Terry and Nugent took our measure (Black and I) at bridge, and

since I'm not attending parades, I slept from the end of the game until dinner.

Nugent brought us a fair bit of news re the bombing of four Japanese cities by the Yanks, but aside from that, even our rumour crop has been most unproductive. The old standbys of Germany's collapse and war between Japan and Russia are again circulating, so low is our supply.

Blake and I take on Harper and Maze at bridge so that will pretty well use up another evening.

I managed to get hold of "My First 2,000 Years", by Viereck and Eldridge, an autobiography of the wandering Jew and supposed to be quite good and, though I haven't finished my Chinese book, I'll let it slide for a few days. Instead of the educational angle I sought, I find the subject matter of "Shui Hu Chan" to be concerned mostly with robber bands and killings.

April 25 – (Saturday)

Another week-end rolls around, this one enshrouded in mist and, at intervals, heavy rains.

Due to my indisposition and the rains that kept us in huts all day, there's even less to relate than usual today. Breakfast due to the sugar shortage, brought us stewed prunes and toast, which as an invalid I found most palatable.

After breakfast, Black and I played Bardal and Trist in the Bridge Tourney, losing by a good margin. Again after dinner Terry and Nugent took us for a ride. We're consistent anyway.

My illness (so-called) seemed to diminish today and I'm looking forward to eating the regular meals any month now. Tonight's repast was very satisfying for them as likes them, there were sweet spuds and cabbage plus whale steak. The latter I enjoyed in a bread sandwich.

Rain spoiled our usual Saturday night concert so, aside from bridge, the evening was without event – and so passes another week in durance vile.

CHAPTER EIGHT

April 26 – (Sunday)

And yet another Sunday. The morning remained unspoiled by rain just sufficiently long enough to enable us to hold Mass out of doors then just as we had breakfasted, it came down in torrents. Having nothing further to do the remainder of the morning, we took Terry and company on at bridge, managing to lose a dollar for our efforts. Evidently the penalty for Sabbath gambling.

I finished “My First 2,000 Years” and can’t say I enjoyed it. I think possibly the author put more thought to the rousing of baser sensibilities rather than producing a document such as the material seemed to warrant.

This afternoon we were again, at intervals, subjected to heavy rains. It was almost as though it would stop pouring just long enough to refill some unseen vessel then, with a sudden rush it would gush forth again in cloud-burst proportions. I’m sure we must have had as much rain in the last twenty-four hours as we would ordinarily get at home in six months.

I commenced reading “God of Clay” this afternoon and, since it represents a new side of Napoleon’s life, it should prove interesting – if true.

I’m afraid the moving of the Navy must have taken with them some of the brains behind our rumour supply. The old favourite, of an alliance between Japan and the Allies against Russia, again raises its ugly head.

Another “lights out” in the offing so – with the hope of some sun tomorrow – it’s -30-.

April 27 – (Monday)

At dawn, the new day gave promise of a day of sun, for a change, but even before breakfast, this was dispelled by clouding accompanied by a light drizzle.

Later in the morning, we thought of braving the elements to play volley, but our minds were quite made up by the coming of the rain – in full force – so to pass the morning we had another session of Mah Jong. The afternoon remained dull but the rain did stop long enough to enable us to play three games of volley before parade.

Still no news or even fair rumours of the outside world. It's peculiar the sense of detachment one acquires in circumstances like this. Whether it is that we cannot think beyond the boundaries of our own selfish desires or whether we just give up mentally, I don't know. But we do seem to lose interest in things outside, unless they would appear to have a direct bearing on our release. Certain I am though that, if conditions remain the same, this "stretch" is going to play a tremendous part in the lives of a lot of us, particularly the more youthful ones. Actually chaps about my own age seem to be standing up best of all, those older slipping physically and the younger mentally. The foregoing of course, applies only if conditions remain unchanged and if we have to put in much more than a year or year and a half. And how am I holding on? Very well, I think (I hope)! My brain (?) never too sturdy at the best of times, seems to let me down considerably in the matter of concentration, but whether that's due to my not having given it much practice in that field, I can't tell. Physically I've shrunk considerably – roughly 25 pounds, but I don't think that's done much more than soften me up. But the two days or so I spent on my back taught me how easily one might make a habit of doing same.

Well, not much to do so I think I'll organize some bridge until bed.

April 28 – (Tuesday)

And still another day of rain. For curiosity's sake, although the fall could in no way be compared to Sunday's, we put out a can for an hour. Our meteorological survey reported it had rained one half an inch in said hour, not heavy, I'll admit, but when one considers we receive up to ten hours of rain per day, it's a fair amount of moisture.

Since rain curbed our athletic ventures we spent the morning playing Mah Jong and with usual beginner's luck managed to take the boys.

Lunch was again on the light side and consisted of sweet spuds and sour bread. Rations haven't been forthcoming lately and things are getting pretty slim.

Taking advantage of a lull in the rain we played some volley in the afternoon. I might mention that the camp is situated on reclaimed land which is sandy so that the rain which doesn't run off is absorbed almost at once.

Dinner, aided and abetted by a visit from the Comprador, was something of a culinary gem and consisted of roast beef, sweet spuds, a fried bread patty, gravy, bread, dates and cocoa. Life again looks bright.

After dinner there being not much to do, I spent most of the evening chin-wagging, which in this place usually means gossiping or criticizing someone.

I understand our news sources are once again in the saddle, so that's something.

April 29 (Wednesday)

By way of change this effort gets a start before breakfast. I'm Orderly Officer today and, having to be on parade a bit earlier

than ordinarily, I climbed out of bed on waking. No rain so far this a.m. although it did rain through the night. Maybe we'll manage some volley after breakfast.

Noting the date brings to mind the fact that we've spent a third of a year in prison camps. Actually it hasn't seemed that long, although quite long enough. I dread the thought of changes that "may" have taken place at home.

Breakfast provided an appetizing change, pancakes with maple syrup. Lunch too rated high with fried lemon sole and rice. The Comprador's visit has set things up nicely for awhile.

Athletically speaking, the morning was very full. A baseball game with the Rifle Sergeants gave us a tie and from the conclusion of P.T. parade until lunch, we played volley ball. Needless to say I utilized the quiet hour for a siesta.

The afternoon was to be a Jap inspection day but he didn't show up so we missed it.

Dinner provided another treat, the menu included whale steak (as tender as liver), sweet spuds, bread plant, stewed dates and bread with butter. Strangely enough, even after such a tasty meal, I've felt the pangs of hunger all evening. Too much exercise I guess.

Rain after our afternoon parade, discouraged sport so I started John Buchan's "Courts of the Morning". Later on we spent the evening winning twenty cents from Maze and Terry at bridge.

April 30 – (Thursday)

Dull again and more rain through the night. I lay awake until 3:30 so I don't feel particularly robust this morning. I spent my hours before sleep with thoughts of home running through my mind. I'm still sold on the car idea but last night I added a new touch. If time doesn't permit a lengthy journey as previously planned, I'd like to spend a couple of weeks just playing golf. I'd

like to join one of the Winnipeg clubs such as Niakwa or St. Charles and take two weeks of lessons just to ensure a good start. There's much controversy on what might be done with us on our arrival home, but everyone seems to think we'll be given a fairly lengthy furlough to enable us to pack a little meat on the old bones. Strangely enough, later on in the day, we had some discussion on things after the war and for one point that rankles. It's the Seniority List. We find ourselves junior to some members of the regiment who are not, as yet, even qualified for the second pip, a point that isn't so good with promotions bound to come up.

Meals today were very mediocre and aside from the breakfast which gave us the rice and porridge mixture, are hardly worth mention.

Rain throughout the morning queered a proposed game of baseball so our athletic endeavours consisted solely of volley ball, played after the four o'clock parade and we again took the Rifles three straight.

The evening was damp and chilly and we did nothing more exciting than play Mah Jong all night. I'm glad our stakes are imaginary. My luck took a complete reversal.

Started the "Island of Dr. Moreau", by H.G. Wells this afternoon so I think I'll finish that before retiring. It's trashy anyway.

May 1 – (Friday)

This traditional "First Day of Spring" crept in with a very slim promise of a look at the sun, but by midmorning, even that promise was dispelled by a gentle drizzle. In the matter of vegetation, this is one of the most barren countries. The hills of the island and mainland are covered with grass and some very small bushes which gives them at least a greenish look, but on the whole it's pretty desolate. What a combination the soil at home and the rainfall here would make. That things grow well if given decent soil is indicated by the small plots of flowers, etc. the boys have

fixed up. In most cases I find plants seem to look as though they lacked any permanency. We have a couple of banana plants that seem to be doing well.

Rain again spoiled the morning sports but, after a lovely lunch of cocoa and buns, we played a couple of games of volley with the Rifles.

Parade schedules were altered slightly and should represent an improvement. The morning parades remain the same but the former afternoon parade changes to 7:30 in the evening, giving us a clear afternoon.

Another day in which I've been unable to conjure up any worthwhile ideas or thoughts so will desist until tomorrow. I've started another book that promises to be fair, "Crippled Splendor" by Evan John – so I'll away and at it.

May 2 – (Saturday)

Another weekend coming up and the rain and dullness still persists. We've had no sun for sixteen days, hence my daily reference to the weather. After breakfast, though it sprinkled a bit, we took the Rifles on at volley until parade, then, since it's our company's turn on the court, played with them until lunch.

Around noon we noticed the arrival of armed guards, who took up posts on all the side-roads and at intervals along the main road, and decided some big shot must be expected. Sure enough, we were ordered by the Nips to see that everyone remained indoors away from the windows, as one of their princes was to pass and we were not to view his august person.

After lunch, volley activities of the morning making a little rest advisable. I slept until 3:30 then more volley until dinner. After dinner and the evening parade, it being concert night, we gathered on the square and again listened to an evening of high caliber entertainment. Returning to our huts we found something

amiss with the lights so this miserable effort is being written on my knee, under the light of a street lamp outside.

May 3 – (Sunday)

As though to properly inaugurate the approaching rainy season, we commenced this new week with a proper downpour, although last night at time of retirement, it was clear as a bell. Heavy rain commenced about 2 a.m. and it has simply poured since. How many inches have fallen I can't say but at home it would be classed as some cloudburst. Unfortunately we still retain in our hut roof, several souvenirs of the war in the way of shell holes through which the water streams, though efforts have been made to patch them. Some well-meaning numbskull comes to bat with the information that this type of weather usually lasts from twenty days to three months, with few breaks. Nice country – serves the Nips right if they have to keep it.

Some thing went haywire with our rations yesterday and the results were a day in which we ate no meals which used rice. Breakfast consisted of pancakes and syrup, with bread and jam, while lunch brought froth bully, buns and fresh cucumbers. Dinner brought forth the grand touch – sweet spuds, roast beef, buns, dates for dessert and – wonder of wonders – corn on the cob – can you beat it?

News the last day or so, while containing the odd morsel of good tidings, remained on the whole, decidedly unpromising. India with her present attitude, not entirely unwarranted, remains something of a problem and it looks as though Burma has gone. The only ray of hope is the commencement, although still in a minor way, of an offensive from the south, I guess we can wait though.

The evening I spent at a concert in our company hut which while not good, was not bad. Thought I'd have to give a sax solo but the boys were spared when I pleaded a lack of reeds as a cause for postponement. I'm stuck for two weeks hence.

May 4 – (Monday)

Having neglected to keep my daily diary assignment on the above mentioned date, I must needs write this on Tuesday. Fortunately our life here is not so complex as to make difficult the reconstruction of a day's events an arduous task.

The weather remained dull and for the most part consisted of an almost continual drizzle, interspersed with heavy showers. Most of the morning, due to dampness, was spent indoors playing Mah Jong. We did manage to squeeze in a game of volley before lunch however.

Lunch proved a trifle frugal with cocoa, a bun and jam. By a little deft trading, I managed to wangle an extra portion of cocoa, so I fared very well.

After lunch we received the wholesome news that the pay master had arrived, so the greater part of the afternoon was spent squaring accounts and purchasing supplies. With the present scale of prices, it's surprising how far 25 yen will not go.

Dinner was rather well put up and included corned beef and onions on toast, with sweet spuds plus dates for dessert. After dinner I played Mah Jong until ten, then ping pong until "lights out".

May 5 – (Tuesday)

To carry on with the above – once again we're plagued by rain, not heavy but in sufficient volume to spoil most sport activities.

Breakfast again had the added touch of oatmeal with the rice and it was most acceptable. After breakfast, though the weather remained soggy, we filled in time by slushing through five games of volley. The rain spoiled parade, so we played bridge until

lunch, the latter consisting of rice and a nice curried stew of corn beef. Most curried articles, so far, have had too much curry for my liking, but today's portion was rather good.

The last few days have found the Nips, for some reason or other, taking a number of precautions against air attacks. A look-out stand has been constructed on the guard house roof and a sentry with binoculars posted. Black-out curtains have come into camp and huge letterings reading "Canada" are being constructed around the camp area. The Jap paper states the ships "North Carolina" and the "Washington" were proceeding eastward through the Suez. This would almost seem to indicate that the Yanks are preparing to "step in" in a large way in this neck of the woods. These events, coupled with the air raids, while so far I'll admit are not particularly far reaching, present something resembling a slow awakening and I have no doubt that when the scope is enlarged it will, like old Mississippi, roll along.

Dinner brought us our old friend the whale in the form of steaks, so that with sweet spuds and buns, it was almost a European meal.

After the evening parade, my time was spent putting this Chronicle in shape and gossiping. And so another day has come and gone. I've allotted myself this daily task of writing, regardless of how fruitless it may be, in order that my brain is ensured at least of a light workout every day.

May 6 – (Wednesday)

Once again we awoke to the sound of rain, although the volume was not as large as of late. Breakfast, once more, found us dependant on straight rice, sans porridge, but since I have procured a small can of Carnation milk, the meal was most enjoyable.

We were to have played baseball with our Sergeants this a.m. in the new summer baseball schedule just drawn up, but found that Brigade, for reasons best known to themselves, has issued an order prohibiting the formation of teams consisting of Officers or

Sergeants exclusively, for competition with the men. Apparently, in the recent series between the Rifle Officers and “E” Company Grenadiers men’s team, for the camp championship, it was thought that the R.R.C. men, in their efforts to inspire their officers to greater heights, had been too free with nicknames etc., for the food of discipline. – Just isn’t done, old thing, you know!

After a light lunch of bun and bully we made plans for volley only to have them dashed by the advent of heavy rains.

Today being Jap inspection day we hoped that the parade might be cancelled by rain. Alas, even the elements are against us and, as though to mock us, the sun shone with burning intensity the full hour we were forced to stand waiting.

Dinner again brought curried stew and rice and, while filling, it seemed to lack by comparison with recent evening meals.

This air raid mania being assumed by the Nips is evidently not in jest. Tonight we are to have our first A.R.P. drill, to consist of the men being hustled out on the square and lying down in pre-arranged company areas, on the sounding of a warning bell. First Aid and fire prevention squads have also been organized.

I understand the Nips are taking some Officers and men from the camp and allowing them to make a four minute transcription for broadcast purposes, to be picked up by the BBC for re-broadcast. Evidently the Brigadier will do the majority of the talking the first time. The consensus of opinion amongst the Officers is that propaganda uses will be given to the scheme. We Anglo-Saxons seem to have a horror of other people using subtle means against us, though we take great pride in our own employment of same. Everyone is afraid the Brigadier will have to say we are being treated well, a point which they seem to hate to have to admit as the absolute truth. For my part, as long as they continue treating us as well as they have, it’s their right to make use of the fact any way they see fit. In the eyes of the world – “guess I ain’t got no pride, or sumpin’”. A.R.P. drill is due so I will terminate this for the evening.

May 7 – (Thursday)

I find that I've made a terrific blunder in the matter of Shelagh's age, having taken it on myself to give her an extra month. My apologies, Shelagh.

The morning opened with a slight rain which dissipated toward mid-morning leaving us, if not a clear day, at least one in which our sports were not too seriously hampered. As a result of this we had, throughout the day, about two hours of volley. But around dinner, rain again visited us and for the remainder of the day it poured.

Meals today were just mediocre, breakfast providing porridge plus, lunch a meat patty, dry rice and bread and for dinner – sweet spuds, rice and bread pudding.

Our air raid practice drill went okay last night. A little extra excitement was provided when one chap, taking advantage of the black-out, filched 25 decks of fags from another who had sold his watch in order to smoke. The result of this was a turn-out of three companies – after midnight – and the catching of the culprit with the goods.

After the evening parade, there being nothing to do, I spent the time initiating the sergeants into the mysteries (?) of Mah Jong.

May 8 – (Friday)

Another weekend in the offing and with it comes another breach in my daily writing stint, so that I find myself peering back from Saturday.

As usual nothing of any significance occurred, unless a visit by the Comprador could be considered of news value. It certainly would have been two months ago. It's peculiar how quickly we humans fall into the way of, and accept, improved conditions. The meals no longer excite one to a frenzy, as they did

not long back, and the fag situation, while not yet having reached the point where we can afford to be careless with them, is at least no longer a matter of major importance. I'm afraid if and when we do get back, we will take with us nothing in the way of true evaluation of the necessities but memories.

As usual rain dampened (no pun) our sporting activities somewhat but we did manage to play a couple of games of volley. As a general rule the morale of the camp has risen to a point where the men are taking more interest in sports such as baseball and volley, particularly the latter, with each company having about nine teams. Another item of interest and one which will no doubt prove a remunerative diversion, is the gardening project. The Japs have set aside a flat area, across the road, approximately 150 x 35 yards, which we have fenced off. Here a garden is to be planted and maintained by our boys – thereby assuring – we hope – a supply of fresh vegetables for the camp. Actually the amount of vegetables forthcoming will be negligible but the greatest advantage will be in giving some of the boys something to do outside of camp.

The evening I spent playing Mah Jong with somewhat better success than has been my lot recently. Around 10:30 I was called to the “Corrigan Hostel” to admit a couple of so-called thugs, alleged to have purchased rations from the kitchen – a most heinous crime in these straits.

May 9 – (Saturday)

To continue with the new day, our dull weather is still with us and a sharp wind makes the day too cold for shirt sleeves and lolling about.

Breakfast again brought us the porridge plus, and with a lunch of rice and gravy and a dinner of rice, meat pie and dates, the day from a grub standpoint was a decided success.

Our news sources hint at a large Naval battle raging in the south Pacific, with fairly substantial losses by the enemy evident at

this stage. Occupation operations at Madagascar and activities in the East in general the next few months should present sufficient indications to allow us to hazard reasonably accurate guesses as to the length of our term in duration vile. I still remain as optimistic as of three months ago anyway.

Tonight our usual Saturday night concert was presented but unfortunately my provost duties intruded and I was unable to attend. I did manage to get in on cocoa and tarts served in the hut afterwards though.

May 10 – (Sunday)

After a cold, dismal, rainy night, we awoke to a day anything but pleasant. Breakfast by way of a change, included pancakes in lieu of the traditional rice and, as far as I'm concerned, it was a poor substitute.

Since Black and I are entered in the current Bridge Tourney, we played the Bardal-Trist combine and were soundly trimmed. We did get some measure of compensation by trimming Terry and Nugent by an even greater margin in the course of the afternoon and evening. But ten rubbers of bridge is stretching (again no pun – or is it) things a mite too much.

Our athletic urges being squelched by both rain and bridge, I find myself dopier than usual from lack of exercise.

Harper had a rather nice swagger stick made by one of our sergeants, so Black and I have both placed an order. A handicraft competition is being held soon with suitable prizes (cigs) for the winning entrant. It's remarkable some of the things that are being made. One lad has made a "Crucifixion Scene" inside a pop bottle and it's a marvel. Another is fashioning rings from silver coins (price six decks) and his workmanship is almost perfect. If I can get the coins I'll have a couple made for the girls. Numerous other items such as wood-carving, sketches, etc. are coming to light – even knitted articles.

I realize Sunday isn't the best day I could pick for reference to this subject, but a decapitated Chino body floating by brought to mind the following. From the time of my entry into the army I have been plagued with a horror of future probable associations with corpses, and my reaction to them – this due partly to a natural squeemishness on my part and a lack of contact with said corpses in civilian life. Strangely enough, even the somewhat grizzly sensation of having shortened a man's allotted span prematurely with my own hands, failed to move me at all. The sights of bodies in various stages of dismemberment and decomposition fail to rouse anything more than a feeling of morbid curiosity. I could never have believed such an attitude possible, viewing it a year or so ago, and yet I'm sure there's none of the "hardening" one reads about.

After that bit of sordidness I'd better call it a day.

May 11 – (Monday)

Although we did get some rain during the night, our working day week looked promising enough to make plans for a long neglected hut clean-up, and with the arrival of some sun, about ten a.m., we set to work. Our cleansing efforts took up greater part of the morning but they did leave sufficient time for me to drop 10,500 points at Mah Jong before lunch. Tales of cafes and laundries changing hands overnight can hardly be discredited when the speed of winning or losing is as apparent as that.

We see by the local paper that Canada must have some of the facts concerning us there. A dispatch from Ottawa was quoted as saying we were getting in vegetables, meal and flour and were making our own bread. It will be interesting later on to learn just when our casualty list does reach home. I can well imagine that our "sufferings" could be made into lovely propaganda material by some of our politicians. We did hear of Anthony Eden's protestations in our early captivity – all highly touched up, of course.

The afternoon, with the sun peeping through at odd intervals, proved rather on the warm side, in comparison with our weather of late. The volley court being vacant, we took advantage of the break and played an hour or so of stiff volley ball, with the result that I feel deliciously tired and lazy. Guess I'm getting soft.

Meals today, in my opinion, were again a bit below par. Breakfast was as usual, so was okay. Lunch and dinner were definitely on the light side with buns and bully forming the main courses.

Feeling not overly ambitious, we spent the evening playing Mah Jong and I managed to cut my losses of the previous session down by one third.

May 12 – (Tuesday)

This day commenced with a light rain which gave way to some sun about mid-morning. We are duty company today so I was relieved of the necessity of attending P.T. parade this morning.

Harper, as second-in-command of the gardening project, reports the men are doing a fine bit of work and are seemingly very enthusiastic. Considering our (or their) diet, it's amazing that they should react this way, but Harper confides they're mostly "new" men so that may explain things.

The Nips today held some defensive manoeuvres against probable attack and in conjunction with artillery practice on the mainland, set several very efficient smoke screens along the island waterfront. Rumour has the Chinese army endeavouring to retake Canton, so it's possible these precautions are quite vital – we hope.

Rain again set in this afternoon but not before we were able to get in four games of volley. We residents of dried-out Saskatchewan find it extremely difficult to accustom ourselves to the continual patter of rain.

Nine large bombers passed over around noon headed south east, so again, will guess as to the objective, etc. The legitimate grapevine appears somewhat optimistic over the European situation and Winnie's speech against the use of gas against the Russians tends to create the effect that they think the Hun is being pressed a bit.

Queer people our warders. This afternoon they brought a young Chinese over to the gate, then lit into him with a stick, felling him and rendering him unconscious. Some time later, the victim seeming loathe to come out of his trance, they bundled him into a wheel barrow and dumped him over the sea wall. Surely as humans, they're hard to fathom. One minute they seem to be generous, decent and friendly then, without turning a hair, they pull some stunt as I've mentioned. For a race of people claiming to love animals, flowers, etc. they can be decidedly callous to human sufferings.

Mah Jong again provided the evening's entertainment and again I picked up some points on my heavy losses of yesterday.

The meals today were very good. The usual breakfast, a lunch of fish on toast, bun and tea and a dinner that gave us cucumbers, sweet spuds, bully, brown bread, buns and the most delicious raisin tarts I've tasted.

FINALLY.....

Although men in the Hong Kong prison camp heard that Canada was to be given the news of their names, it was May 13, 1942 that Canadian newspapers had the information on who had been captured.

The article in a Toronto paper says "Official silence concerning Canadian prisoners of war at Hong Kong has been pierced for two Toronto women. They have been informed by the National Defence Department at Ottawa that their husbands are 'unofficially reported prisoners of war'". The clipping kept in a scrapbook by the Corrigan family goes on to say that "the two

Toronto officers were among 34 officers and one civilian auxiliary service man in the list announced by Ottawa. The information came through London from the British Embassy at Chungking.”

It continues...”Several from Winnipeg – Unofficially reported prisoner of war” – and includes the name of Lieutenant Leonard B. Corrigan.

We know from letters written later that Gladys was notified of Leonard’s status as a prisoner of war officially on May 10th. There must have been some sense of communications getting through prior to that because on May 1st, 1942, she writes a letter...

My dearest Len,

At last we have some hope of getting in touch with you...I pray that you are well and safe.

As you see we are back home again – we have been here since February. I have taken a small house – on Third West where Steve Marzak once lived, four rooms, and have fixed it up quite nicely.

June Murphy is staying with me and it’s nice to have the company. Paddy and Shelagh are both well...growing every day and praying for their Daddy...they speak of you often. Paddy is taking music at the convent. Your Dad and Mother sent us a piano from Winnipeg. They are keeping well.

I received your two airmail letters in December and your Christmas card in January. I’m sorry you didn’t get any of my letters.

This letter has to be brief so will close. We are well and think of you daily – praying for your well being. I do hope you can send a reply.

*All my love,
Always, Glad*

Another letter in August of 1942 suggests that Gladys still hasn’t received word from Leonard.

August 15, 1942

My Dear Len,

These letters to you seem so hard to write until I hear from you, then it will be much easier. I am sending some snaps taken lately and will send more later on.

Paddy is still in Winnipeg and will be coming home to go back to school. Mother may be coming to stay with us for awhile as Hugh has joined active service and is going to (deleted) later on; they are having headquarters in (deleted) just now. Florence and Jack are moving to the coast; he is working there now.*

I heard from Vern Nesbitt yesterday – Jack has just arrived overseas and she is quite lonely now. I also heard indirectly that Barnes had been in (deleted) and was asking for you.

I have been golfing with the Dunlops quite often – they always ask for you and wanted me to give you their regards.

I had subscribed to Readers Digest for you and as soon as I can send them along I'll do so. Jimmy Steer called on me the other day – he comes in here now. Hilda just had a son last week.

Your Dad and Mother are well. Grandma Corrigan is still living and well, also Grandma Hart. I spent two days with her in Moosomin – and she thinks of you constantly. Shelagh also speaks of you often and she will remember you. Just tonight she was talking about you always calling her "Buttons". I'm constantly reading articles about where you are, trying to get some idea of what you've been through.

We miss you terribly and pray for you daily. God bless you and keep you safe –

*Your loving wife
Gladys*

**Gladys' sister and brother-in-law*

May 13 – (Wednesday)

Still another dull day in prospect, in fact by mid-morning it was again pouring down, to continue until late afternoon.

Breakfast provided a change, not a pleasant one as far as I'm concerned, in the way of pancakes. Lunch too was not the best from my point of view. The main item being cucumbers with brown bread and tea. Dinner was rather exceptional providing good steaks of beef (yes, beef!) with a lovely gravy, sweet spuds, bread and dates. A point in the connection with these "good" meals. Unfortunately for our peace of mind, we subalterns, whose duties include the supervision of the men's meals, still have sufficient conscience left to feel that every time we partake of a meal such as that, the men are being gypped, one way or another, on their rations. The shame of it is that we can do nothing about the situation. There's absolutely no question in our minds that the officers get more than their proportionate share of rations, but it's typical to this outfit that anything we do or say seems to have no effect. Unfortunately it's an impossible job to try and trace the proper facts and figures. Harper lost his job as Quarter Master for not "playing ball". – So much for gastronomic news.

The rain eased sufficiently before dinner to enable us to get in four games of volley, so athletically the day was not entirely wasted.

After dinner we played Mah Jong and I managed to elevate myself to the plus side of the books. One of the Nip sentries wandered into the hut while the game was in progress and after watching for a while, took my chair for a hand. We had thought ourselves progressing fairly well, but he made us look just what we are – rank amateurs.

Now that we have the fag situation more or less in hand, another problem threatens to rear its ugly head – that of matches. They're as scarce as fags formerly were.

May 14 – (Thursday)

Another lapse of energy in this work of art finds me casting about on Friday for pearls of wisdom I should have on Thursday.

By way of a change, although most unusual for this time of the year, the weather was dull today with the odd splash of heavy rain, of sufficient quantity that volley ball was disrupted for the morning.

Something of a “situation” has arisen over the above mentioned volley. As will be recalled, the Junior officers of both regiments were shifted to one hut, away from the Seniors. As is natural under the circumstances, or perhaps it may have been the reason behind the move, the Junior group as a whole might be termed a bit “leftish” in their ideas. So much for the general situation. Enter the volley ball theme. The popularity of the game, amongst the officers I “modestly” admit, has been built up chiefly because I made it my business to arrange games and get the required number of players out every time we wanted to play. The same general set-up applied to Pete McDougall of the Rifles. Yesterday some of the men in my company, having played considerable volley in Jamaica, came to me with a challenge to play against an officers team. I accepted and, not trying to pick a particularly starry aggregation, chose six of us who have been playing together a fair amount, including Pete and one other Rifle officer. – So far so good. – We played two games and won both and promptly received challenges from two more men’s teams, including the band team, champions of the regiment in Jamaica. Imagine our surprise on returning to the hut to find ourselves the objects of snide remarks and general ridicule – one Winnipeg Grenadier captain referring to us as “that superior group of officers that style themselves the officers All Star Team”. Considering myself to have taken quite enough guff from Winnipeg Grenadier officers in general, I took up the offering and entered into quite heated talk with some of the members of the “old school”, which got us nowhere except a challenge to play a team of their picking – which of course was accepted.

Chapter two of this nerve wracking drammer will be found in Friday’s issue of the North Point “Noose”.

Meals of today followed the general recent trend, so for once I’ll spare the gory details.

Black and I played off two of our bridge games today and being in our usual good form, managed to lose both.

The Nips are at a new game now, the shooting at coolies gathering wood on the hill across the street. No scores available yet.

May 15 – Friday

Today again gave promise of some sun and actually, for the first time in ages, we have – up to time of going to press – had no rain.

For breakfast we fell back on the old reliable straight rice, lunch of cucumbers and bun and a fill dinner of sweet spuds, roast beef, buns and dates.

Comes now Volume Two of the grip(e)ping inside story of volley ball in North Point. This day found the enemy camp slashing at one another with double-edged verbal thrusts, a perfect set-up for a grudge game. The game took place in the afternoon and resulted in the justification of my choice by the trimming of the belligerents – two straight. Victory on the field, rather than settling the case merely caused a change of tactics on the part of our opponents. A further argument was started in the showers – my adversary this time being the adjutant, who had played with the losers. His complaint was that it wasn't fair to the rest of the officers who wished to play, to have us together as a team and he saw the need of organization so that everyone would stand a chance. In theory, I admitted the truth of his contentions, but I was forced to remind him that teams had previously been drawn up, but unfortunately some of the Captains and Subalterns, who had played in Jamaica, were cursed with a prima donna complex that made them feel I should extend a personal invitation to them every time we went out. This had been one of the big reasons for picking the “new” men on the team I had fielded, the other and lesser reason being that some of the newer addicts played a hell of a lot better. The Adjutant did agree, in part, with these remarks and

asked that I organize things on a larger scale, for the general benefit of the majority – a suggestion to which I, ever the diplomat, replied that we preferred to play just as we were, although there was nothing to prevent him or anyone else who might wish to go ahead and organize. The upshot of the whole business was the placing of the volley situation in the hands of a regimental sports committee for re-organization, and another black mark for the “new” officers.

Such little things help to step up the tempo of an otherwise drab existence and are a great help as material for doddering diarists.

While on the subject of the regiment and that strata encumbered by the “new men”, I’d like to say that if, when I get home, anyone mentions Jamaica, I’ll go stark raving mad! Morning, noon and night – stories of wine, women and good times in Jamaica ring through the air – always the same, each a tale of either a lust or taste satisfied. How many memories of seduced women and the amounts of liquor individually polished off, have I been forced to sit through? If only they could have been the same dashing courtiers under shell-fire.

Well, best I should shut up before I get mad again. -----

May 16 – Saturday

Another weekend in the offing, this one blessed with some sun and heat for a change. Another rainless day and, though the sun was not out all day, it did remain hot and humid. Clothes, shoes, etc., being moist and mouldy all the time. Evening finds me somewhat washed up due to the heat and the athletic ventures of the day. Last night too, I had trouble sleeping, having been made a living sacrifice to a bevy of mosquitoes. Maze and I share a mosquito bar originally intended for a bed somewhat smaller than ours and the result is, that after several turns and tosses, my nether regions are, in no small measure, exposed to the feastings of several generations of the pests.

The Nips, as a somewhat tardy propaganda project, today took motion pictures of themselves landing on and capturing the island. The actual landing took place a short distance from here and they sent word of the proposed effort that we might not be frightened by the sounds of gunfire, etc. Thoughtful what? I didn't see the show but I understand some of the boys did.

Last night, around 11:45, we heard two shots and found this morning that four Chinos, two men and two women, had been caught prowling around, probably in search of wood. The men, father and son, had managed to escape but the women were tied to a lamp post and there they stood – the whole day – in the hot sun. Tonight they were brought in and tied to a gate-post. What their ultimate fate will be, I have no idea.

The meals today favoured us with the usual mixture for breakfast with rice and gravy for lunch and sweet spuds and fried herrings for supper.

Tonight was our concert night but I found the efforts I had put in to two hours of volley and a game of baseball left me too tired to stay and watch.

May 17 – (Sunday)

This is one day I'm thankful for Sunday being kept as a day of rest. I awoke this morning not at all refreshed by a night's rest, although I seemed to have slept well. Too much energy burned yesterday I guess. Strangely enough we're experiencing another good day, just sufficient sun to dispel the moisture and enough breeze to keep things cool.

Breakfast consisted of pancakes but I still prefer my sweet rice.

I guess probably diet exerts a great amount of influence but I couldn't help notice that very little, if any, thought is given to women here. This astounding revelation occurred to me when I happened to notice this morning that all the gentler sex do their hair in such a way that their ears are in full view, lending

something of attractiveness to the younger members who, as mentioned elsewhere, have particularly attractive hair.

Well, another little morsel was tossed our way this evening by our friend the Adjutant. We Subalterns are required to attend a meeting every evening, ostensibly to talk over any questions arising from our daily duties, but in reality to obtain the latest dope on things momentous in other parts of the globe, the whole idea being to circumvent a Brigade order prohibiting this type of knowledge to be remitted by Subalterns. Tonight due to pressure of a volley ball game, yours truly and three other “new” officers were five minutes late for said meeting, the result being the Senior Subaltern was ordered to parade us to the Colonel. That, in itself, seemed fair enough but, talking the matter over with others, we found that, of a total of twelve Lieutenants, eight others were late for the same meeting – one of them, an “old” boy actually coming in about three minutes after my arrival. Maybe I’ve developed a persecution complex but this seems to my mind to be bordering on discrimination and I have been elected to present the case, after admission of guilt, to the Colonel – having received permission of the others, not pegged, to cite them in the case. Tomorrow at 1100 hours we mount the rostrum.

Another interesting sidelight in the “Struggle of the Subalterns” developed at lights out in our hut. The Camp Orderly Officer came into the hut about 11:03 (lights out at 11:00) and shouted for the cessation of all talking – at once! Evidently a couple of Rifle Lieutenants didn’t shut up quite quickly enough for, in the next breath, he placed them under open arrest. Such is life in a prison camp. It’s bad enough in most places being a junior but they seem to love to grind it in here.

Volley again played the large role in sports as we had seven games, again trimming “B” Company’s all-star aggregation. I’m afraid I shan’t be picking up much of my lost weight with the amount of perspiring and showering I do in a day.

May 18 – (Monday)

The day of our trial dawned dull, with a suggestion of rain. After breakfast, Black and I picked teams from our respective companies and engaged in a volley series, the result being a win for “B” Company.

Our “parade” turned out something of a flop, since the Adjutant evidently changed his mind and didn’t have us up before the C.O. The net result was a brief verbal battle between the Adjutant and myself which settled nothing. Administration of justice in the Rifles also went haywire as the Lieutenants were released from arrest and the charges were dropped. No fun at all today.

After our “Orders”, we played an all-star crew from the men that included four men of their championship team, and lost two games by very narrow margins. We hope for revenge tomorrow.

The afternoon Black and I spent losing 3,000 points in the bridge tourney to Bradley and Smith.

This evening we received news that, in the near future, arrangements would be completed for the transfer of mails, possibly in the next two weeks. Certainly hope so. We’ll only be able to write one page but it will be a source of information anyway.

Dinner consisted of fried fish, sweet spuds and what I understand to be the last of our date supply. The latter is one item we’ll miss in our diet.

Rain fell in torrents for a couple of hours this afternoon and has continued at intervals all evening. –30 –

May 19 – (Tuesday)

Very early this morning, around two, we were awakened by a terrific downpour of rain, a real super-duper cloudburst, that lasted for almost half an hour. Breakfast consisted of the rice-porridge mixture, almost the last of it I understand, due to a shortage of the latter. Further rain during the morning queered both sports and parade so I utilized the time sleeping.

After a lunch of bun and bully, I borrowed a map and spent the afternoon working on that. As a change from our recent hot spell the day turned cold and uncomfortable.

Dinner consisted of sweet spuds, fish cakes (sardines) and bread, with honey – very nice. A rather peculiar, if not stupid, line of reasoning is taken by our mess committee in the issue of sugar and milk for tea. For some obscure reason, a person desiring or rather preferring their sugar on rice instead of in tea, is out of luck. Either you takes it in your tea or you doesn't take it at all!

May 20 – (Wednesday)

Again we're plagued by rains this morning and as a result roll call is inside the huts. Breakfast brought another porridge mixture.

Around ten the rain let up for sufficient time to permit a short session of volley between "A" and "B" Companys, the result being a game apiece and cessation for parade with the score tied in the third.

After a lunch of rice and curried stew there was a great flurry of preparedness for an impending visit by the Prison Commandant. Unfortunately rain again interfered but only after we had been "standing to" for over an hour.

Some of our English lads brought out some cricket equipment later in the afternoon so I took a whack at bowling and

batting. I might be able to work the latter but my bowling is apt to be a little dangerous for fielders and spectators.

After a dinner of sardines on toast, we went to our usual subalterns meeting to find that our source of “ewsny” had been cut off, rendering future meetings unnecessary. Brigade has decided only unit commanders will be the recipients henceforth.

Black and I took on Blaver and “Boots” (Captain LeBoutillier) Rifle Adjutant, at bridge and managed to eke out a 2,000 point loss. Blaver, as probably mentioned before is the Rifle Officers’ pitcher and an excellent athlete. “Boots” is also a regular fellow. Our move into this hut has meant closer contact with some of the Rifle officers and we find some really fine chaps amongst them. We played a lot of volley with McDougall from Montreal, and Simons, a Jew from Quebec City, two fine chaps.

May 21 – (Thursday)

Rain again threatened to wash out our athletic program for the day but after breakfast we managed to get in some softball with Brigade Headquarters team, again absorbing a trimming.

I must see the M.O. about my arm, even grasping a pen hurts a bit.

Pete sits opposite me working on his “literary effort” on “Life in Hong Kong”. Someone suggest it’s too bad we haven’t someone sufficiently qualified to write a book on this particular phase of World War II. Admittedly, if one were to present the facts as we know them, in a serious book, a large percentage of the contents would be considered fiction by its readers, so fantastic would it seem. The errors of omission and commission made here would, to the outsider, seem fantastic in an army with the alleged organization supposedly possessed by the British. Even after our incarceration, the manner in which the “Brains” of British and Canadian armies handled things is most laughable. Yes, it’s too bad someone couldn’t get it all in. What a story could be told.

Meals for the day were very mediocre and don't merit any mention. I guess food doesn't just mean what it used to. Aside from the breakfast mixture, I don't look forward to any of them.

Had my arm looked at and the doctor is of the opinion there's pressure on a nerve somewhere. It is suggested that I should go to Bowen Road Hospital the first chance I get to have an x-ray.

The evening I spent attending a concert put on by our Company which, aside from being smutty, was not bad.

May 22 – (Friday)

Another dull day but I'm not particularly interested as I'm supposed to be out of sports for awhile.

The volley court is being repaired this morning as a league game between my team and that of Billings is postponed till this afternoon. I neglected to mention that the decision of the sports committee re volley was to form a seven team league – one team being fortunate enough to be captained by Corrigan.

Spent the morning reading Farnol's "Sir John Dering" a light novel which I enjoyed.

After a lunch of cucumbers, bun and bully and a short nap, I took on Parker and Banfield at bridge and had quite a struggle, finally winding up the game about 10 p.m. with a deficit of three hundred.

My team managed to eke out a three straight win session from Billing this afternoon.

May 23 – (Saturday)

And another week has slipped by. This week will mark our seventh month since embarkation from Canada. For some reason it still has an aura of unreality about it all. It actually seems difficult to imagine how things are, or could be, at home. Life in Canada

seems as much a part of the distant past as school days, first binges, etc. It's remarkable and a good thing, that we're as adaptable as we are. Last night I tried to visualize my arrival in Canada in, I hoped, the not too distant future and found, even in fantasy, that I was unable to produce a logical train of events. The one glimmer of light in the morass is the fact that at the end of this month, for example, ye old government will owe me \$600.00 – which isn't hay.

Rain fell almost all of last night and has continued, quite heavily, this morning, putting the kibosh on all parades. Having nothing to do, Black and I took on McGreavey and Breakey at bridge.

After a lunch of bully and bread, we resumed our bridge and again took it on the chin. Only 120 points down this time though.

About four o'clock, a Battalion parade was called and, with both the battalions drawn up in review order, we were faced by Colonel Toganga, the Prison Commandant for the island, who, through his interpreter, "ordered" us to sign an affidavit saying we would make no attempt to escape. The tone of voice used by the Colonel and his very exact wording of the order left no doubt in anyone's mind as to whether he was serious or not. It transpired that the Brigade and Unit commanders had been called out earlier in the afternoon for a conference having to do with this subject. When faced with the situation, the Brigadier rather put his foot in things by making the statement that the Canadians had not surrendered unconditionally, as alleged, but had been captured after the general surrender, and were therefore not obligated under international law, to sign any such oath. According to other members at the meeting, the honourable Colonel at this point hit the roof and made the Brigadier stand to attention for the remainder of the interview. Opinion of the "Juniors" in the matter is that the Brigadier should have taken the responsibility of signing or otherwise on his shoulders and instead of giving advice to us, should have given us an order one way or the other. As it stands now, the Nips have been unnecessarily aggravated by our attitude

since everyone signed anyway and we as officers have blackened ourselves as far as Canadian military law is concerned. During the course of the Unit Commander's conference, signatures of General Maltby and the Navy Commodore were produced as levers to influence our chiefs into signing. Somethings of a "Fox Pooey" occurred at the conclusion of the Jap Colonel's speech to the Battalions. The Nip Colonel and his interpreter stood on a large table in front of us and, at the conclusion of his talk, stood waiting for a salute of dismissal. Unfortunately the Brigadier evidently a bit confoused by preceding events, stood the party at ease, whereupon the Nip told him to salute, so he called the officers to attention and they saluted. It looked terrible....

The handicraft exhibition was held this afternoon and the general quality of the exhibits was amazing. A big majority of the entrants had not done any of the carving, etc. previous to imprisonment but the work turned out would put some professionals to shame.

Word has just come in that one man has refused to sign his affidavit and has been marched off by the Nips for court-martial. The Jap Colonel, in his speech, made it quite plain that the signing was an order of the Japanese Imperial Army and refusal to sign was to be dealt with by army court-martial. So – the man's fate – we know not. – Certainly he showed a great deal of courage, but, I'm afraid, little prudence.

Saturday night again finds us gathered on the square for our weekly concert. Tonight brought a re-appearance of the band, although a much smaller edition than formerly. As it stands now, the band includes two trombones, five trumpets, two clarinets and two alto saxes, but although handicapped in numbers they did very well. In the course of the concert a very clever "March of Time" skit was put on and was given a great hand.

CHAPTER NINE

May 24 – (Sunday)

The date recalls the accompaniment of dust that we always associated with, and considered part of, the celebration of Victoria Day at home – that and the trips to Gull Lake in days long past. How it galls me to see all these holidays slipping past and not being able to take advantage of them. This situation is as bad as the Post Office.

The day opened in true 24th fashion – i.e. – decidedly uncertain until almost noon, then the sun shone in all its glory – and then the heat.

Our breakfast still brings us the porridge-rice combination – long may it continue – but lunch brought pancakes and very poor bread. We are now using flour that was used during the war in place of barriers and the result is considerable gravel in everything. Dinner gave us beef, sweet spuds and lovely gravy. They tell me we're eating our allowance so we can expect a ration cut anytime.

What a shame to waste all this lovely weather and not be able to play volley.

Not having anything to do this evening, I went over to the Company office and played Mah Jong with the sergeants – managed to drop 2,000 points there too.

No news of any importance except that we get an opportunity to get a letter out before June 5th. What a treat it would be to get mail from home. It's so damned hard trying to visualize how things are going there. I wonder if Glad is in Regina – Swift Current? What about finances, furniture, stove, etc.? Has she been

having “in-law” trouble? -???? All I can do is hope and pray everyone is enjoying the best of health.

May 25 – (Monday)

The weather promised fair today so, after a breakfast of plain rice, we took steps necessary for a hut clean-up.

Our one man revolt against signing was taken away the following morning and we’ve heard nothing further.

Today has turned out to be perfect so Black and I take on the Roman Catholic and Anglican Padres at bridge and again managed to absorb a lovely trimming at the hands of the gents of the cloth. There must be a lousier pair of bridge artists in camp but we haven’t met them as yet.

Lunch consisted of bread and jam and dinner of sweet spuds and gravy. Sweet spuds have almost entered the staple food class here and, though I disliked them at first, I now find them, with gravy, most tasty. I’ve certainly varied my diet since I left Canada, but you can bet your hat it’s not going to be permanent.

May 26 – (Tuesday)

Another fair day in the offing which we properly initiated with the combination breakfast.

Once again I’m cursed with inactivity. I hope I wangle this hospital soon – I miss my volley. Our officers played the sergeants this morning and again took a drubbing. This regiment doesn’t seem to be able to do much besides talk with any degree of success.

The short time spent in the sun yesterday resulted in a bit of burn on my upper legs and thighs. I’ve constructed several loin-cloths, which must needs serve as underwear, and which expose portions of my anatomy hitherto modestly covered, to the sun. Some of the boys seem to be able to lap up wonderful tans here but

I get nowhere fast, every day. A point which we have begun to note of late, is the abundance of grey hairs amongst the comparatively young-uns. They tell me mine are quite beyond the counting stage. Guess I'll be ready for the chair, pipe and slippers when I get home.

Dinner tonight brings sweet spuds and sardines on toast. Rumour has it that the camp rations are due for a slice shortly. I wonder if it's a throwback to our actions over the escape signatures?

Another day has slipped by with less than usual to report. Even the remnant of my brain succumbs to the depression created by the heat. Makes me pessimistic too.

May 27 – (Wednesday)

Well, as Tennyson cried – “Another day, another buck-forty”. Again we were favoured with a lovely sunny day and, not being one to do things by halves, I succeeded in giving myself a lovely burn in the region of – shall I say my stomach, or better, lower stomach. A pair of belted trousers is anything but comforting.

Plain rice for breakfast, rice and gravy for lunch and sweet spuds, gravy and beef for supper. – A nice day - .

Since my arm gets no better sitting around, it looks as though the x-ray is something of the distant future anyway, so I decided I might just as well play volley and did so – managing to eke out a loss from Golden's thugs in a league match.

The grapevine has Mexico entering the war – well might you tremble, Hitler – her oil tanker fleet and those seized should be a help though. The latest latrinogram has Germany folding in the next fortnight, due to the increasing pressure of the Russian onslaught. Ain't we the cards though? Anything for a laugh.

The ration situation doesn't improve. Tea cut off, flour and rice cut by twenty per cent. Unfortunately, it's the men who suffer.
– We do okay. –

Nothing but Mah Jong tonight. I drop 2,000 to the company sergeants.

May 28 – (Thursday)

Another fair day in prospect and we start off properly with the rice-porridge combination for breakfast.

I spent most of the morning drawing up orders for the Provost so I missed a P.T. parade.

Lunch proved very light and consisted of tea, bread and jam.

After lunch I spent a delicious hour basking in the sun. Strangely enough, I find that I'm still quite unable to master relaxation. I find myself fitfull and indisposed to quietness just as I was in Canada. I had hoped that this enforced inactivity might unstring me just a bit.

Partook of a session of volley this afternoon but, after two games, things languished due to the extreme heat. In regards to heat, we have been quite fortunate so far since we have not experienced any degree of humidity with it. The last few nights we have been favoured by a full moon and it's quite delightful to shower, about midnight, and relax in a comfortable deck chair (of camp manufacture, price two decks) enjoying said moon and thinking of home. Would that I had sufficient coin of the realm to take mein frau on a little jaunt out this way after the war. Tropical moons and skies seem to have a different appeal here than at home, the moon losing its softness and its rays seeming to search rather than bathe.

Another incident occurred this morning early (about 3 a.m.). We were awakened by cries of pain and terror, accompanied by heavy thudding blows. Another Chino was being taught the advantages of living under the influence of the “Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere”. His crime? – Who knows!

Rather a nice supper of rice, gravy and sweet spuds tonight. Looks like there'll be no bridge so guess it's Mah Jong.

May 29 – (Friday)

And here's another weekend practically upon us. Again I marvel at the passage of time. I suppose it's all for the best, but it does seem to lengthen the time until our release – if you get what I mean.

The morning started more or less clear with a hot, sultry breeze in evidence. We commenced a new order in the matter of parades this morning. Battalion parade, followed by P.T. at 8:30, does away with the eleven o'clock parade. This will mean a clear day from 9 a.m. until 7:15 p.m. and will avoid holding parades in the heat of the day.

Our men are again slipping in the matter of health and dysentery is taking its toll. Unfortunately, the medical supplies in camp are hopelessly inadequate and our small hospital cannot hope to accommodate the numbers thrust upon it – the result being that the men, only partially cured, are back in their huts to make room for more serious cases – thereby producing a source of contagion in the crowded quarters. Pictures taken of the men, stripped, would resemble those taken of the Armenian during their famine after the last war. The disease wears them down to nothing but skin and bones from which they have no chance to build up on this diet.

Quite unexpectedly, we were called in last night about 8 p.m. for a pay parade, something that was most acceptable, since fags are again getting to be a problem. The buying of shoes, a chair and a cane has made serious inroads into my smoking allotment for this month. A further snag comes this month as we hear we are to

be assessed an additional five yen for the mess fund, leaving us about 12 yen on which to do business. In an effort to promote interest in volley in the company, and also to help myself part with smokes, I've had six volley teams made up in the company, to which I subscribe a fag to each member of a winning team. In addition to this, Captain Prendergast (Ax) and myself have our own teams, composed of the better players which compete for one package per game. I only mention these because – with the new assessment – financing is going to be something of a problem.

After a fair rain this morning, the afternoon turned out quite hot, so “Ax” and I played our first game, which – fortunately for my finances – I won. Immediately after we had a pick-up game with the officers, with the result that after five games of continuous perspiring and excessive usage of energy, I'm really fagged out tonight.

Blackwood, who has taken his chiropractic degree, has decided to try and relieve the pain in my arm by manipulations on the spine. Unfortunately, proper equipment is lacking but he thinks he may be able to help it some. I have told him of my neck and although he is sure of the cause of the trouble, claims it's too risky to tackle without the proper tables, etc.

Well, again little or nothing to do tonight – think I'll stir up some Mah Jong.

May 30 – (Saturday)

A beautiful day graces the passing of another week. This climate (as of the last few days) under different circumstances, would be wonderful, although in our usual civilized manner (?), we'd probably be utilizing any spare time we might have in lapping up tall drinks.

As usual, nothing of any consequence occurred today. Time not taken up in the usual sessions of volley was spent lying in the sun trying to absorb a tan. Rather nice, having nothing to do but bask in the sun with a refreshing shower every half hour or so.

Certainly our shower facilities are a god-send. We thought today of the inadequate bathing facilities we enjoyed (?) at Sham Shui Po and blessed the fates that chose this camp for us.

The meals continue in the usual vein with the combination breakfast, bread and tea lunch, rice and gravy dinner.

After dinner a mess meeting was held which confirmed our five yen assessment for grub. This, with our fag commitments and “give-aways”, points to a lean month.

May 31 – (Sunday)

Again our weather is perfect, though hot. Evidently our rainy season must be finished, certainly there's not much indication of it these days. Yesterday, according to our thermometer, it reached 90 degrees in the hut and today I believe it's hotter. In spite of the heat though, we still keep up our volley commitments, today's portion for me being six games.

Rations were very good today. The usual rice breakfast, lunch of dry rice and sardines and a dinner of roast beef and sweet spuds.

Clothing came in yesterday and included shorts, shirts, tunics and boots – formerly our own – but much needed and appreciated just the same. While watching our company check their supply, the Canadian Quarter Master noticed a Forsythe shirt and remarked that it must have belonged to one of our officers. Imagine my surprise to find “Corr” on the collar.

Gathering around outside the hut tonight to escape the heat, we had a little discussion on the possibilities of our position. Lacking official news, it's rather difficult to estimate probabilities, but many and varied were the theories advanced. General consensus of opinion seems to be that the battle now raging in Russia would place things in the position of being brought to a climax, one way or another, within the next six weeks or two

months. So – the big question is – are we here for years or just one year?

June 1 – (Monday)

And now we are on the threshold of another month of incarceration and with the new month comes the long awaited opportunity to communicate with the homeland. The question is now – what’s to say? Actually there’s so very much one could say and yet it’s hard to try and say anything at all in 200 words. The main thing, of course, is everyone’s health, however, with an answer improbable for some months I guess any questions will be quite unanswered by the time we receive the reply.

Another hot day today. They tell me it’s been particularly dry this year and that, if we don’t get considerably more rain, we’ll be faced with a very serious shortage of water. That’s in the future however. We’re faced with something of a problem in the matter of sleep. Our hut, due to an improvised ration cupboard that quite effectively blocks the end of the building, lacks proper ventilation and it gets damnably hot at night. One awakens in the morning with that “knot-hole” feeling.

Rations today consisted of the combination breakfast, bread, tea, jam and a doughnut for lunch, rice, sweet spuds, and stew for dinner. I still managed to eat like a young horse but I guess it’s the amount of energy I burn daily.

Athletic activities today included six games of volley so I’m at least sufficiently tired physically to warrant a good sleep.

The latest dope would seem to indicate that they’re commencing to get tough in Europe. We hear of a thousand planes equipped with five ton bombs being ready to go to work on the Hun. The Russian bear also seems to be holding his own in that country. My optimism has not flagged as yet and this bit, if true, serves to raise it just a mite higher.

June 2 – (Tuesday)

Our good weather still persists though the sun is obscured by clouds a good portion of the day.

Again nothing of consequence to report aside from the effort we put on our letter for home. We had them all finished this evening – after much counting of words and deletion of prohibited subjects in preparation to the handing in at noon tomorrow – only to find that changes in regulations brought out at the last moment – necessitated everyone re-writing the whole thing. It's a lot of hooey. Lights are on until midnight tonight so that everyone has a chance to finish before the deadline.

News is scarce again so I can't even squeeze a few lines out on that subject.

Volley commitments included six games again today, which will ensure our retaining our girlish figures.

The unit is now equipped throughout with wedge caps, shirts, shorts and shoes, and what a difference the clothes make. On parade tonight they once more resembled an army instead of a gang of bums in tattered clothing of all kinds.

Well it's almost "lights out" so I'll bring this most miserable of efforts to a close.

And so, in June of 1942, Leonard writes his first letter home since the fall of Hong Kong in December 1941.

June

My Dearest Glad,

Almost months of no correspondence I find, when at last given the opportunity, that the many questions and things I had thought to say have eluded me. My first concern is the health of you all, particularly

the children. I have been most fortunate in this regard and, aside from a little weight loss in the early stages, I've managed to keep very fit. We have facilities for softball and volley ball which we put to good use, particularly the latter.

I suppose the younger sister will have commenced her schooling by the time you will have received this. Do have both of them add a line to your replying letter, if any. Did you receive my Christmas mail? I had no word at this end prior to the outbreak. I hope Dad was able to overcome his ailment and trust Mother and the grandmothers and your folks are enjoying the best.

Must close, so, with best wishes to all and to yourself, Shelagh and Paddy I enclose

*All my love,
Len*

P.S. Cripes wot an effort.

*Prisoners of War Camp
"H" Camp*

L.B. Corrigan

The envelope carrying the letter was first sent to Ottawa and then to the address of Leonard's parents in Winnipeg before being sent to Swift Current. The Winnipeg address was the one given to the Army before Leonard was sent overseas.

Gladys then writes to Leonard –

Swift Current, Sask. – August 31, 1942

My Dearest Len,

You can't imagine the thrill in receiving your first letter after so many long months. Your Dad phoned me from Winnipeg when it arrived there and I received it here today. I was so glad to hear that you are well and that you can play softball etc. I was also hoping you'd be able to have some musical instruments to play. I think I answered some of your questions in my previous letters, however since I also found them so hard to write, I'll answer your questions now.

We are all well, aside from the mumps, Shelagh and Paddy haven't been sick. Paddy has been in Winnipeg all summer holidays and will be coming home tomorrow to start school. She is in grade four and is also taking music lessons. I'll have her add a note to my next letter. I received your Christmas card on Jan. 10 in Regina; also Mother received hers which I have framed and hanging on the wall as a picture. All my mail to you was returned to me. I sent three cables, two after the outbreak, which I hoped you had received.

Your Dad has been very well all summer and particularly enjoyed his holiday at Clear Lake. I've told you about that. I heard from Nina today. She wants to write to you also. She's still at Thornhill – very busy – lives with Hazel and Hubert in Toronto. Grandma Hart is well, I saw her on my way to Clear Lake. Mother came Sat. to stay with me (deleted). She brought her fridgidair and sewing machine, two welcome additions.

Our house is small but comfortable, it would be complete with you here.

June Murphy is still staying with me. Everyone in town has been so kind to me and so interested in your welfare and your first letter home. Ronnie White was as excited as I when your letter came; he has been so good to me – comes up and chops my wood and does any fixing I need around the house. He's been a real friend; says you would have done the same for him.

Must close, this is my limit. We think of you constantly and thank God you are well. May we hear from you again.

*All my love,
Glad.*

Gladys writes again that same day – probably not knowing if her letters would get through.

Swift Current, Sask. – August 31, 1942

My Dearest Len,

I hardly know where to begin after waiting so long, to be able at last to write to you. I rec'd word May 10th that you were a prisoner of war. I had felt somehow,

all along, that you were alright, but the news was wonderful to get.

In case you didn't get my first letter that we were allowed to write last April, we have a small house here in Swift Current. June Murphy is staying with me. Paddy right now is in Winnipeg for her holidays but will be coming back for school. Shelagh and I just came back from Clear Lake. Your Mother and Dad took a cottage and we went down and spent two weeks with them. While there I took part in a golf tournament and lost in the finals of the championships. It's a lovely spot. I hope you and I can go there some day.

Bob and Reg each got their call to the army – but transferred to the Air Force. Bob is now (deleted) Reg and Edie are married. I don't think Bob and Vi ever will get married. I spoke to Noreen Blackwood by telephone while in Regina – I met her last fall – also Anne Harper.

Shelagh is getting tall as also is Paddy. I am sending you some snaps of them in my next letter. Enclosed snap was taken last spring. I never did find your camera in Winnipeg so have to borrow one.

I miss you terribly and hope and pray that you are keeping well. Once I get your letter it will be easier to write – so much has happened and it's been so long – I really don't know what will interest you except that I'm just waiting for the time when we can be with you again.

God bless you and keep you well.

Lovingly

Always Yours

Glad

Swift Current – September 7, 1942

My Dearest Len,

I just heard the news last night that we could write once more to catch the ship, the sailing having been delayed, so here goes.

I haven't much more to say since I last wrote – a week ago. Everyone in town was very pleased that I heard from you – so many people stopped me and again asked about you and were so glad you were well.

The golf tournament is on today and I'm playing this afternoon. It brings back so many memories of the many Labour Day tournaments we played in. I miss you so when I think of things like that, however it's the same everyday.

Mother is still here staying, she may be here all winter until Father gets settled. Paddy came home from Winnipeg and we've been busy getting her back to school. Nina sent her some new music books to start her lessons with. You spoke of Shelagh, she's only three last May so she can't write yet. Had you forgotten, Len? I read Tom Blackwood's letter in the "Leader" but didn't see Harper's name or Maze's. I hope they are all well, also Black, give them my regards. Your mother is talking of selling the house here and buying a cottage at Clear Lake, it's a lovely spot to live.

Well, I really must close. Our days here are so much the same, there's not much to write about keeping house and minding the kiddies. I hope you are keeping well and may it not be so long before we hear from you again.

*All my love, always
Gladys*

*Swift Current – October 22, 1942
My Dearest Len,*

It's time I was writing another letter. I have been hoping I'd hear from you but I guess it will be a long time yet. I seem to find it so hard to write anything interesting unless purely personal. I am working for awhile at Sykes Piano Co. just while Mother is here...I don't intend to keep on working. Your mother is coming up from Wpeg this coming week...she is going to try and sell the house and straighten up her affairs; she hasn't been very well lately.

Paddy and Shelagh are fine as you can see from the enclosed snaps and are getting to be big girls. It won't be long before it's your birthday. I'll be thinking of you more than usual that day. I wonder if you'll get this before Xmas? We had such a lonely one last year without you...it isn't a happy time now and won't be until we're together again. It will be strange for you

without any snow. Paddy and Shelagh speak of you daily. I keep your picture where they can see it everyday.

Bob is down east now...Jack Rooney and Carlie are married. He works at Thompson's Auto Supplies and always asks for you. I see more lists have been published lately. Joe Hanel's name was there, also met Mrs. Noland from Tompkins, she asked me to ask you if you knew her brother Orville Hallquist, his name was in the latest official list. I hear from Noreen Blackwood, and I write to Ann Harper, we have so much in common now. I hope the boys and yourself are keeping well.

It's snowing here today and I guess we can expect winter anytime now. Time doesn't seem to matter...one day is like another...I guess it must be the same with you also. I can't say more, only I miss you terribly...I'm trying to keep my chin up and be a mother to your girls...God keep you well and safe.

*All my love,
Glad.*

Dear Daddy,

I hope you are well, Shelagh and I are having a good time. I am in Grade 4 now. I hope we hear from you soon.

Love Paddy

* * * * *

June 3 – (Wednesday)

Another day that must be recorded. What a task it's becoming. I find myself dreading the daily stint I have set for myself – however, what mus' be, mus' be.

Due no doubt to the setting back of "lights out" last night, I managed – along with several others – to be late for parade this morning, a circumstance that brought about a reminder as to hours of parade from the Colonel. Very brief and to the point he was too! – It's a tough life. –

Today again brought forth nothing new. We played our usual six games of volley and in the afternoon were given our weekly inspection by the Camp Commandant.

Whether due to heat, diet or too much sporting activities for the tropics I don't know, but I find I have broken out in a mass of small blister – like pimples.

Our news of a day or so ago has been confirmed and immediately everyone becomes a confirmed optimist.

Heavens – this bit is even worse than yesterday's. I'll have to start a rumour.

June 4 – (Wednesday)

After the feeble attempts of the last few days, I almost decided against continuance of this abominable epistle, that wouldn't be cricket though, so mustn't do that.

We still revel in our good weather. Today was bright but not too hot, a typical June day at home. Wonder how the crops are coming by the way? ---

We started the day with the combination breakfast, followed by a lunch of biscuits and rice cakes and a dinner of sweet spuds and gravy.

Athletic endeavours included the usual six games of volley and a strenuous evening of ping pong. It seems strange bouncing back into sport after a lapse of so many years. Makes me feel young again – almost – certainly it has brought the realization of what I've missed these ten or more years. I still retain the old crowd phobia though, that was the original cause of its discontinuance.

Yesterday several of the camp members went downtown to make the transcription for the radio previously alluded to. I don't know what's wrong with the Brigadier – some are of the opinion

that circumstances are slowly unbalancing his reasoning – but at any rate he is reported to have officially petitioned the Canadian government, in his broadcasts, to have us repatriated and sent to some neutral country like Chile. Can you beat it? If the Nips let that through, which I doubt, it will give the people of Canada some fine ideas about us as soldiers. Particularly in view of our rather stinky show here. From what I'm given to understand – maybe my informants are prejudiced – the Brigadier's idea seems to be to get us home regardless of how or why, so long as it's soon. It's told that he's not above hope we lose, providing it's soon and it means our freedom. Oh well, just one of those things. – We still keep up the old optimism.

Books worth reading are becoming increasingly hard to locate and I find time dragging a bit more than it used to. The days are usually warm enough that perspiration on the arms plays heck with endeavours of the pen, so there's little left but reading. Sometimes I miss the old days before pay – when all the spare time was utilized scrounging smokes. We humans do take some satisfying don't we?

June 5 – (Friday)

This day dawned with a nice juicy rumour – Germany has folded up once again. They certainly have their ups and downs in that country. The Jap paper of yesterday characterizes recent British raids on Germany as barbarous, claiming they were directed at women and children, as well as other un-military objectives. The same page of the same paper quotes a dispatch describing a German air raid on the “Cathedral City” of Canterbury. Probably looking for militant churchmen. “Life” Magazine is quoted as having stated it would take at least seven years for the United States to clear up the Pacific situation. What a lousy way to save \$10,000. Come on you Russians! ---

A beautiful day afforded us the opportunity for considerable sport and we added a game of soft ball to the usual six games of volley. It's a good thing everyone doesn't indulge in sports to the extent that a few of us do or we'd eat them out of

house and home. Speaking of eats – today’s menu was the same, word for word, as that of yesterday.

This afternoon I commenced my official war diary, and what a task. It’s quite bad enough writing for so-called fun, but it’s quite different again when one “has” to do it.

I was over in “A” Company hut listening to the trumpet trio practice tonight and they’re pretty fair. I’ve been toying with the idea of taking up the trumpet as a means of whiling away the hours since, due to my reed problems, I don’t bother with the sax. – Depends on my fag situation.

Have often wondered just how much difference plowing around on wooden shoes most of the time will make in the size of shoes we’ll require when we reach civilization. I’m afraid some arches will have taken quite a beating.

Listening to the music tonight brought the pleasant thought that we are spared the listening to of the many new tunes that one was formerly subjected to by the radio. Wonder whether the dances will have changed much. Guess it won’t cramp my particular style of corn-treading.

June 6 – (Saturday)

Again a week of captivity slips by and leaves us that much closer to “Home”. Speaking of captivity, our one man rebellion arrived back this morning – allegedly looking somewhat the worse for his efforts. According to his story, the Nips – in their endeavour to make him see the error of his ways – and sign, had him kneel from 9 a.m. till noon, facing a wall, then, from noon on – at intervals of one hour through the day and night – “persuaded” him by means of kicks and slaps that “best he should sign”. This accompanied by cut rations and lack of sleep, resulted after nine days, in a change of mind on his part. Admirable, but I’m afraid a little pointless.

Meals again followed the exact pattern of those of yesterday except that a doughnut added and cocoa substituted at lunch, pepped that meal up considerably.

No general news the last day or so and we're wondering how the Russians are faring. It would seem to us that almost everything depends on their stand. A wonderful new rumour reared up tonight. Germany sent – or is planning to send – a delegation to England, presumably to seek peace. Someone claims to have read it in today's paper.

Saturday night again brings us our weekly concert. Tonight something entirely new and different was the stellar attraction. Somewhere or other someone produced two pairs of boxing gloves so we had several short bouts at intervals through the show. A comedy bout, starring Mulvaney of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, was a wow.

Well, must cut it short and grab a shower before lights out.

June 7 – (Sunday)

Began this Sunday as is usual, with Mass. I just happened to think this morning what a fine chap our Padre is. It occurred to me that I had not heard anyone criticize him for anything since we hit camp. That fact alone, in a hot-spot of petty jealousies and eternal bickering such as this place has become, is something of a recommendation. I've asked several Rifle officers how he acted during the show and apparently he was okay. The other two Padres have long lurid tales of their own great roles (haven't we all), but of his, he says nothing. The Padre attached to us was a most abject coward (at least while he was at Wan Chai - I hear he did a good job with some wounded at Wong Nai Chong), and spent most of his time cringing under tables, etc. in shelters. Most pathetic.

The meal parade gave us breakfast of plain rice, lunch of bread, jam and tea. Dinner provided beefsteak, sweet spuds, beans, gravy, suet pudding and date sauce. What a repast! It does burn one to eat a meal like that and then have to inspect a measly mess

like the men eat. I still can't see us getting the same ratio of rations as the men. It would seem to me that the minute quantities of meat the men get in their stews is somewhat out of proportion to our steaks.

The usual two sessions of volley left me rather on the washed-up side, so me thinks I'll lay off for a day or so.

News that filtered in last night was more or less encouraging. Evidently the Nips tried to re-take Wake Island but were beaten off with heavy losses. Comparative inactivity on the Libyan, Russian fronts sounds fair too.

The band dished up a pretty fair band concert tonight before church and we spent the remainder of the evening discussing rumours.

June 8 – (Wednesday)

For a change, the weather is dull this morning and everyone hoped rain would come up in time to spoil the P.T. parade. It did – just in the nick of time. We were just able to make the huts when the rain came down in earnest and until 10:30 we were subjected to a near cloudburst. Considerable electricity accompanied the rain and a bolt of lightening hit the hill across the road.

More news re the Wake sea battle trickled in last evening. It seems we managed to pick off three aircraft carriers and damage three battleships seriously. We can stand lots like that.

Well – best I should get on with my war diary.

My good intentions re the war diary went by the boards. My tongue started to unlace and I found myself embroiled in a gossip session that lasted all afternoon.

The meals today included the combination breakfast, suet pudding for lunch and dry rice, gravy, buns and dates for dinner.

After parade, Sweeney, the three trumpeters, myself and Bardal had a bit of a session in the hut which I enjoyed thoroughly.

Again our news filter lets in a few gems. According to Yank claims, the Wake Island episode counted a fourteen or fifteen warship loss to the Nips. This is total, of course, including those losses mentioned earlier. Our losses were one carrier damaged by bombs, one destroyer sunk. Yanks claim the victory will swing the tide of battle in the Pacific. We hope so. News of the presence on the Russian front of both Hitler and Ribbentrop and the rubbing out of Himmler, would seem to indicate that things might not be any too rosy there.

June 9 – (Tuesday)

This day looks more promising from a weather standpoint. Having missed my volley session yesterday, I experienced difficulty sleeping last night.

After a breakfast that brought us only bread and jam, due to a shortage of milk, we played a couple of games of volley. Whether due to the lay-off or not, our team played the lousiest game of its career. Most fortunately for us, our opponents were just as bad.

The remaining meals were a trifle on the lean side, lunch being a repetition of breakfast and dinner bringing us bread, bully and sweet spuds.

Nothing of import to narrate today except that I attended a concert in “A” Company hut and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The strain of having to put up with “some” of our fellow (?) officers is beginning to tell and I fear, ere long, something is going to give. There are one or two in particular that absolutely nauseate us. About the only degree of satisfaction I derive is the fact that feelings are probably mutual.

June 10 – (Wednesday)

Another beautiful day in the offing, hot and sunny but not too humid. Certainly if this year's weather can be classed as the usual, there's not much wrong with this climate, Days or nights that are clear are really beautiful too.

I'm getting restless again. My feet the last few days have had a definite itch, so I do the next best thing – travel in fantasy. I was just thinking tonight how delightful a motor bike trip around Europe would be after this is finished, presuming of course that we get an opportunity to look the East over while we are here. I can imagine how Mrs. C. would appreciate that idea. – By gad, maybe she would at that. These wars have produced many varieties of situations. I wonder how things are going on the home front now? This experience should prove a good testing ground. I think I've held my end up – of course I'm prejudiced.

The good weather brought a resumption of volley and my day's efforts included four games.

Meals, still lacking milk, seemed a little thin today, breakfast consisting of pancakes and syrup, a combination I can't condone in the mornings. Lunch brought bread and jam and dinner, sweet spuds, meat pie and bread.

This afternoon we had our usual Wednesday inspection by Lieutenant Wada, the Camp Commandant. I must say we are most fortunate having a man somewhat sympathetically inclined over us. He has cooperated no end in satisfying our needs when doing so lay within his power. The interpreter, his right hand man, was educated in the States and has some understanding of our mode of living and reasoning, so that in him too we have a somewhat sympathetic ally.

Nothing to read or do so I think I'll retire early this evening.

June 11 – (Thursday)

Again the weather man smiles on us. What a lovely day to have spent at some quiet bathing beach with a couple of “tall ones” – (no I don’t mean blondes!) Methinks, after this enforced celibacy, blondes and their counter-parts, the brunettes, will hold little for most of us – or will they? – How wonderful to be able to go through life as completely independent of the fair sex (or hex) as we are here. – More wishful thinking. –

One of the other “juvenile” officers has just learned that the Colonel has made the statement that “no diaries, notes or the like may be taken with us from this camp”. It wouldn’t be that some truths about the regiment might leak out??? I’m afraid there’s so much of the truth seared into peoples’ skulls that they’d be able to quote it backwards. It will be curious to note just how much attitudes will change and how much will be forgiven and forgotten of the numerous small acts that feed the fires of our resentment here. So many – many – useless small, almost childish, activities are indulged in here that it almost brings one to tears to think of them. The Junior officers, particularly those new to the Winnipeg Grenadiers, have more or less been brought together by the attitude of those higher up. Fortunately, we Subs are still able to view things through the innocent eyes of youth, in such a manner as to still detect the humour of the situation. Our only worry is that someone, someday, will be unable to see the joke and there will be trouble.

My, what a lot of lather one little statement raises. – Human nature again?

I managed to borrow some milk from the Rifles this morning. So we again enjoyed the combination breakfast. Lunch provided some kind of canned fish and bread and dinner – the usual sweet spuds, gravy, etc.

Company concert tonight so I’ll have to bring this to a close.

June 12 – (Friday)

And so – we come to the end of this miserable effort. I have decided, in view of what was mentioned about diaries, to bring this one to a close before I become too rash and put down libelous material. There are so many stupid things coming out of the effort to “organize the camp” that contemplation of them almost makes one ill. We may not have been good soldiers when the bullets flew, but we’re certainly the men of the hour in a situation of this kind.

The latest tid-bit is an order prohibiting the playing of musical instruments in the huts after 7 p.m. unless it be done as a part of an organized effort by the A.S.O. This will knock out jam sessions of an impromptu nature, also any practices such as the trumpet trio used to have in the evening.

And – again – so – hoping this effort has not been entirely wasted and that it will provide a means, in later years, of refreshing my memories of the weary days and months spent as a prisoner of war. Certainly it has helped the passage of numerous otherwise fruitless hours.

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CHAPTER TEN

A gap of nearly a year happens in Leonard's diary. It's not clear whether he stopped writing - as he suggests in his entry of June 12, 1942 - or whether whatever might have been written was lost after the camp was liberated. Apparently several of his friends knew of the existence of the diary and helped him recover pieces that had been hidden throughout the years of imprisonment. But in July, 1943 the diary continues...

July 3 – (Friday)

Events of the past fortnight seem worthy of mention, so once again I'll take pen in fist and record them.

Item #1 – is of rather a minor nature but since it's a trifle unusual, I'll give it a line or two. For a short time, up until a week or so ago, we experienced something of a petty crime wave, mostly thievery. Unfortunately for one chap, who was suspected of having converted ¥10 to his own use, the men decided that existing methods of justice were inadequate and took matters into their own hands. The method chosen to teach this chap the error of his ways was a good old-fashioned tarring. Considering the difficulty experienced removing said tar from the body with the means at hand, it's quite likely the gent in question will probably think twice the next time temptation gives him a nudge.

Item #2 – concerns working parties. All able-bodied men in camp now go out to work, in gangs of approximately 250 men per day. The work now being utilized is the enlargement of Kai Tak Airdrome. For a day's work, each man receives the magnificent sum of 10 sen per day, plus a ration of fags while on the job, varying from two to six cigarettes, depending on the whims of the guards. The work consists of removing sod, hauling crushed rock

and gravel and the making and laying of cement for new runways. Extra rations in the form of buns and meat, plus a portion of barley water or broth, are served at the noon meal. The men work hard, but the joy of getting out of camp (it's a twenty minute ride across the harbour) plus the fags and rations seems to be ample compensation. Certainly it has lifted the men out of their mental ruts tremendously.

Item #3 – concerns our celebration of “Dominion Day”. A full program of sports had been lined up, to include baseball, volleyball, baseball throw and horseshoe pitching. All Star teams for volleyball were chosen to represent the following – Winnipeg Grenadier Officers, Winnipeg Grenadier Men, Winnipeg Grenadier Headquarters, and the Dutch Navy. In the baseball field, an all-star team representing the RRC's was to tackle a similar team from the Grenadiers in an exhibition game. Eliminations in volleyball, run a day or so previous, brought the Grenadiers' Officers and Men together in the finals, the Officers winning in three very close games. Unfortunately, the weather man intervened and a regular cloudburst, from noon on, washed out the remainder of the sports events.

The feature attraction of the day, a Minstrel Show, complete in every detail, managed to squeeze itself in – between showers – and was very well received. The whole show was, to everyone's mind, a masterpiece, the costumes were good, the chorus excellent and the individual artists put their stuff across with all the aplomb of experienced troupers. A stage, complete with curtains, frills and backdrops, was erected – no mean task, as the cast included a chorus of thirty, a five-piece orchestra, four end-men and a half dozen performers turned up, from heaven only knows where. Certainly old mother necessity has the tricks up her sleeve. The whole show went on without a hitch, which in itself is remarkable, since through lack of space, the usual rehearsal as a group, was denied them.

The All Star ball game, played a few days later resulted in a healthy defeat of the Winnipeg Grenadiers by a score of 14 to 3.

Item #4 – is one which has the whole camp agog. Lieutenant Wada came down a couple of days ago with the statement that the Canadians were to be exchanged or repatriated, possibly by the next trip of the “Assama Maru”, which left here a day or so ago with U.S. and Canadian nationals on board, bound for Laurence Marques. How true it is remains to be seen but it’s certainly started a buzz around camp. A visit this morning by Colonel Tagonaka, accompanied by two supposed Red Cross officials further stepped up the tempo of things so that we are now practically ascending the gang plank.

July 23 – (Thursday)

I think perhaps that, instead of cutting these lines altogether, I’ll add from time to time anything that might seem momentous enough to report.

Since the last writing the only item that rates any space is the weather. It seems to me that, somewhere in my diary, I mentioned the fact that the rainy season was finished and we now hoped for clear weather. Unfortunately it seems we were a trifle optimistic. Commencing on July 1st, a heavy rain set in and, with the exception of two days, July 3 and July 18th, it has rained continuously day and night, up until this morning. I’ve seen more rain here in the last three weeks than we get at home in three years.

There is another subject, that of the current rumour crop, for which I’ll spare a line or two. Lieutenant Wada’s statement, as mentioned earlier, really put our rumour mongers on their toes. For example, one of last night’s late editions presents the following gem. A Ration Sergeant (Japanese) came into camp on a truck yesterday and spoke to a group of men of “C” Company, RRC. In the course of his remarks, he held up his hand – with three fingers extended – and said, “Canadians – Home”. The boys then asked what the three fingers were meant to indicate – years, months, etc., and the reply was “weeks”. Therefore, by this time next month we fully expect to be breasting the ocean waves. The remarkable part of this story is that the circumstances are true, though the substance may be false.

July 24 – (Friday)

Another rumour comes in this morning that, since it is a confirmation of yesterday's, deserves mention. While in the garden this morning, Harper was accosted by one of the guards who, quite unsolicited, volunteered the information that the Canadians were to be exchanged on a two-to-one basis for Japanese in Canada, and the approximate date of our leaving was to be August 18. In order to have this verified, Harper called Dunderdale over and he too heard the statement. – Can you beat it? -

July 26 – (Sunday)

It would seem that I'm unable to abide by my decision to cease my weak efforts as a chronicler but it's Sunday and I find time a bit heavy so I decided to add a few lines.

Since it's almost a year and seven months to the day since we started prison camp life, I'll try and record the effects, or results of this first stage of an existence which, we hope, will not prove too lengthy.

The first subject with which I'll try to deal is morale. If you will remember, I was quite wroth at the sad condition the war and surrender had left our boys. Conditions at Sham Shui Po didn't help their frame of mind at all, and it was not until we were moved to North Point that anything like a resurgence of spirit could be detected. The realization that there were possibilities of eating something other than their fare of plain rice on the mainland no doubt played a major role in any evident change, however, some measures of renewed hope that rose in each breast can be laid to the camp itself. Perhaps because this was "new territory", I don't know, but somehow Sham Shui Po seemed steeped with the atmosphere of a poorly organized graveyard. Everything there was a reminder of the life which we must put behind us – the parade squares and playing fields, while offering us leg room for exercise, seemed more a mockery in the new life we were forced to lead.

As mentioned, the new and better scale of rations proved the major restorative and later, when rations were cut, we were to witness an ebb in the general spirit of the camp. But there were other points as well that contributed in no small measure to the rejuvenation. The one man who can lay claim to the honours in this respect is George Porteous, the YMCA Associated Sports Officer attached to our regiment. Through his untiring efforts, a library, sports, concerts, contests of various sorts and educational classes were started and, what is more remarkable, kept going. Later rations were cut and the men's spirits slumped accordingly and it was in the depressing times that George's real energy was called upon. To get men out to participate in sports that only served to emphasize their body wants was an almost super-human task, but be it to his credit that the thing was done and now survives – enthusiastically supported as the reward of his efforts.

With the commencement of work parties, a new era dawned that was to find the men in the best mental phase since our capture. Men going out with the first parties returned exhibiting such effusiveness that one might suspect they had been out picnicking. Immediately, those who had missed the first party were struck by the enthusiasm shown and, sensing that they might be missing something – those who had for months been using various disorders, real or fancied to escape parades – suddenly made miraculous recoveries and reported for work. Naturally, the first exuberance gradually eased down to normal but, since the work was not too regular, due to the weather and the number of men required, as a whole it is still very popular. Of course, the big attraction is that for about eleven hours, the men are away from the unexciting monotony of camp life.

Another feature that plays no small part in the state of our morale is our old friend the rumour. In the main, rumours are accepted as “one of those things” and as such are not given too much credence. Taken in such a manner, they are invaluable as topics of conversation and subjects of humour. Lately, however, the rumour of our supposed repatriation has managed to implant itself fairly solidly in the minds of us all, and it's quite possible that harmful effects may be the result if the dream is unequivocally

shattered. However, only the future holds the answer so, to pass the time, we listen to and hand on little stories, always of betterment for us – until time again proves us wrong.

July 28 – (Wednesday)

In the light of ordinary routine events attendant to camp life, this day must certainly attain the “Class 1 Extraordinary” degree. Firstly, we were thrilled last evening by the visit paid us by some twelve or more aircraft of the Allied Fleet. At approximately 5:30 p.m., six bombers and six or more attendant fighters appeared over the Colony, flying extremely high. Due to the confusing patter of ack-ack fire, we were unable to judge the amount of bombing indulged in by the raiders, but some camp members say they heard or saw, bombing activity over the north-east sector of the island. According to eye witnesses, small bombs were dropped by the escorting craft on Stone Cutters Island, which is directly opposite the camp and about three-quarters of a mile away – at least two of which hit the island, raising a huge cloud of dust and one landing in the water between the island and our camp. Quite naturally, this bit of diversion has resulted in a complete blackout, but strangely enough, we don’t mind. Item #2 consisted of a repeat order of yesterday’s raid, except that our visitation took place immediately after muster this morning. In this raid, some inmates claim to have heard and felt the concussion of very heavy bombs but, being in the M.I. room at the time, I heard and saw nothing. Though the sky was clear and the heavy drone quite audible, most of us were unable to spot the raiders so they must have come and gone at a terrific height. Item #3 presented itself in the form of news from Europe. The paper announced that on July 24th, Mussolini had resigned and King Victor appointing Badoglio as his successor. The paper quoted the new Premier as saying the war would be continued, but we feel that – due partly to the internal flare-ups which were admitted in the news – it will only be a matter of time until the collapse of Italy as an Axis partner will have been accomplished. The anti-Axis forces seem to be slowly forcing the defenders of Sicily into the Messina sector, so we imagine that there too, it remains a matter of time. The last item and certainly not the least, interests us even more personally. It was announced

on parade tonight that the sum of 24 yen per man was in camp and would be distributed tomorrow. Though canteen prices necessarily limit the men's purchases, it does mean they smoke for a while. A late order shows postponement of the distribution of said money but the boys aren't disheartened much because of its presence in the camp office. Well, as I said, it's been a very productive twenty-four hours and needless to say, we don't feel much the worse for it.

July 31 – (Saturday)

This date, marking the 7th anniversary of my joining the ranks of the Benedicts, I feel calls for a commemorative entry. I shall refrain from any facetious remarks concerning my straight-forward manner of living in the very recent past and its relationship to the expected fidelity of the happily married couple. Surely this deletion in itself is a sign that, by such small tokens as the subjugation of my alleged sense of humour, I am gradually coming to learn the ways of matrimony. Guita celebrated a birthday yesterday so this evening we had something of a joint ceremony, in which he provided lunch and I provided the drinks (coffee). Incidentally, a piece of lovely cake and a couple of slices of fresh pineapple – received from Guita's friends outside – went down exceedingly well. Our friends of the Yank Air Force paid us another visit on Thursday afternoon and gave us a thrill by dropping a few "eggs" rather close to us. The bombers, of a very heavy type and numbering about twenty, are alleged to have dropped quite a number of bombs on such objectives as shipyards, etc. downtown, one claim being that eleven hits were registered on Taikoo docks. Judging by their efforts at an oil depot across the bay from us, we decided the Yanks either had tremendous faith in their accuracy or they didn't give a damn for we poor prisoners, because from their great height, a very small margin of error would have made a nice mess of the camp. However, aside from putting a bit of wind up in some with the whistle of bombs, it was a very successful demonstration. The different war fronts seem to be marking time as far as we can see and, though heavy losses are claimed for the anti-Axis, particularly in Russia, we feel we must be doing all right, certainly we'd be hearing about it if we weren't. We hope August will prove as uplifting as July has been.

August 6 – (Friday)

One or two developments of a minor nature are the incentives behind this entry. The general war situation remains much the same on all fronts with the possible exception of the political aspect, which is marked by the granting to the Burmese – by the Japs – of their independence following which the country immediately declared war on Britain and the United States. This move, as we see it, paves the way for a remarkable bit of face-saving, which we believe will become apparent when the expected Allied drive in Burma gets under way...as well as giving the Nips something concrete to boast of in their greater East Asia political aspirations. Italy, by their decision to keep up the fight, is something of a disappointment to us, but we believe that they will be effectively “influenced” to alter their policy in the near future. A paragraph in yesterday’s paper gives rise to much speculation. Whether by accident or design, a paragraph which quotes a German major as saying the Luftwaffe, by their harassing tactics, were forcing Americans to resort to night movement of troops and supplies, appears under the caption of activities in the Balkan area. Mention is made of heavy Yank air raids on Romanian oil fields yesterday and the day previous but up to now, no mention has been made of any land operation. We are at a loss as to whether the paragraph has through some error of the typesetter, become incorporated in a column dealing with some other front or whether the Allies have made a landing in Greece or adjacent Balkan territory. Today’s paper may provide a clue. – Tuesday morning the Canadians were called out on parade and, after a cursory inspection which weeded out approximately 150 permanent cripples and obviously unfit men, the remainder – some four hundred - learned that they were to form a draft scheduled to leave next week sometime. The total draft number is in the neighbourhood of five hundred and fifty and includes besides Canadians, R.A.’s, R.A.F.’s and R.A.M.C.’s but only three officers. Captain Bardal (Winnipeg Grenadiers) and Gordie Gray are the lucky Canucks. This leaves, including hospital, approximately three hundred and fifty Canadians, plus officers in camp. She’ll be a dead old hole for awhile.

August 15 – (Sunday)

With the departure of the draft this morning we enter a new phase of our monotonous camp life. Nothing has come about as yet to indicate what changes we will have to undergo, but movement of drafts and subsequent re-allocation of living quarters are usually synonymous. The draft evidently is not to travel deluxe as the last did, for, according to those who landed rations, the boat is very small with a tonnage of approximately 1200 tons. Rather grim for 500 men in weather like this. The men comprising this draft were in far better physical shape than the last so, if they're fortunate enough to get good grub in their new habitation, it wouldn't be too long before they put on a bit of flesh. Rumours of another draft circulate already but again we hear "no officers going". Incidentally, Bardal and Gray were taken off at the last moment. – The past week, as far as I'm concerned anyway, has been rather on the hectic side, due to a money issue and the fact that I'm Winnipeg Grenadier hospital canteen man. Not only did the previously mentioned 24 yen materialize, but an additional 30 yen per man for all Canadians was also forthcoming, giving Canucks a great gob of money to get rid of. Two special canteens and the regular weekly one meant that I helped the boys part company with about 3,000 yen. The limitations imposed by the outlandish prices can be seen in the following figures. Syrup (2 lbs) – 5.75 yen; dripping (1 lb) – 9.00 yen; jam (8 oz) – 2.55 yen; canned mutton (12 oz. tin) – 7.50 yen; margarine (1 lb. tin) – 12.50 yen; sugar – 3.00 yen per pound; salt (1 lb) – 1.70 yen; pepper (1 lb) – 4.70 yen. I think we'll have to get Safeway Stores in to stabilize prices.

News from the war fronts remains in most cases unchanged. Vague references to the re-shuffling of the Germans' Soviet line lends some authority to the rumour of the Germans "shortening" their lines, in the Orel sector and authenticity to the rumour of two Russian "break throughs". So, we assume the Russians are giving them a bit of "What For". Though the paper each day stresses the huge losses being suffered by the Soviets, we note that despite this fact, the Russians still continue to launch attack after attack. A statement that the Italians intend to

accomplish their intention of delaying the enemy in Sicily, coupled with the news that the Allies are within 35 miles of Messina, seems to indicate the finale in that area. We hope that F.D.R. and Churchill, in their present conference in Canada, are discussing the strategy for a last big push that will terminate this business.

My rustling around last week left me somewhat puffed up due to this infernal beri-beri, so I must needs do a lot of sitting around for awhile. It would be amusing to an outsider to see Mac, Black and myself in the mornings, particularly Black, with our eyes partially closed due to the puffiness of cheeks etc. and looking like we had been on a month's drinking bout.

A rumour circulated late last night that the Russians had accomplished three break-throughs in the German lines. This gem was followed closely by another saying the Germans were seeking terms. The rumour to end all rumours came at lights out and we were greatly relieved to hear that the Germans had capitulated at 7 a.m. yesterday morning. Tsk, tsk, I still may have Christmas shopping to worry about this year.

Letters from Home

Swift Current, Sask. - August 22, 1943

My Dearest Len,

Once again we have been told that we can write to you – so I really do not know where to begin.

We moved back into the house and we are in the same place – seems now that we have never been away, except that you are not with us.

Paddy and Shelagh are well. Hubert has joined up (deleted). We were terribly sorry to hear of Blake's death.

Things go on the same here. We miss you terribly and pray you are well. This is all the space I'm allotted, so will close.

Hoping we hear from you,

*All my love,
Gladys*

P.S. I never could print decently.

Swift Current, Sask. – August 25, 1943

My dearest Len,

I wrote one letter the other day but as I did not have the proper address, I thought I had better write again.

I hope you are well, we are all fine here. Your girls are growing like weeds. Paddy will soon be as big as I am. She is in grade five this year.

Your Dad and Mother seem to be keeping quite well also. We are back in the house again, same suite – seemed so much like home – as if we had never left.

Bob and Vi were married last Monday. He is home on leave just now – always asks for you.

Must close. I do hope we hear from you. We miss you so much.

*All our love,
Glad*

The dates on the letters indicate a whole year has passed without communication since Leonard's first letter of June, 1942.

August 19 – (Thursday)

When our "hosts" make up their minds to do things they waste a minimum of time. This morning, with no warning whatever, the word came around that all Majors and up, and six Captains of the two Canadian regiments were to have all the baggage packed and ready to move by 10:30 - their destination – Argyle Street Camp. The actual departure was delayed until around six this evening, but the whole move was a distinct surprise. Just how our new set up, which leaves approximately 15 Subalterns and three or four Captains per unit, will work remains to be seen, but those of us staying have as yet displayed little sign of any great emotional strain.

August 25 – (Wednesday)

Something in the way of extra fare was served up this morning in the form of a bombing raid, at about 9:30 a.m. No

rumours of the damage done have come in as yet, but we hope to glean something from one or other of the work parties out. Eight heavy bombers accompanied by an escort of four fighters lazily flew across the island in our general direction, dropping their loads in the vicinity of the docks on the mainland.

The work parties mentioned above include one group to Aberdeen, on the south side of the island, employed in shifting aviation oil from one dump to another, the other party to Kai Tak Airport, where grass on the runways is being cut. The airport project is actually immense. When one sees how much has been already accomplished and is able to visualize just what is still to be completed it almost staggers one. I was out Monday and was treated with a visit of two P.40 recce planes which rather stirred things up for awhile. I broke off for supper and had no more than seated myself when the drone of planes was heard. Rising to the windows we saw the seven bombers but to our knowledge no bombs were dropped. Word from the airport party is that at least six hits were registered on the Kowloon dock and shipyard and four or five hits on an ack-ack battery just behind the dock. Further good news comes in the paper with word that the Germans have evacuated Kharkov. Ironically enough, today's paper carries a special bulletin from Canton which states that a large formation of Jap bombers carried out a devastating raid on Kweilin, the airbase of the American airfield. It must be presumed that the planes used in today's raid on Hong Kong have been flying around since Kweilin was damaged yesterday and have no place to land. Strange as it may seem, on the day of our last heavy raid, the paper had a similar item which disclosed the fact that Kweilin had been rendered useless by a raid the previous day. A rumour circulating tonight alleged to have come from the Chinese paper, says the Germans have suffered the biggest set-back since the beginning of the war, on the Soviet front. Keep pushing Joe!

Two deaths, one on Monday and one this morning, serve as a reminder that ours still is a struggle for survival. The first death which, so we hear, had worms as the first contributory cause, brought to light through autopsy, the fact that though the victim was of the robust type with an exceptional physique, his internal

organs such as the heart, liver and kidneys were in a very poor state. Makes one wonder just what the after-effects of this will be on some of us in later years. The death this a.m. was the result of malignant malaria which we hope will not become widespread. Evidently since our troubles last year commenced about this time, this must be a crucial point as regards health. The general health standard though is much better than that of a year ago. Since the departure of the seniors, the Captains and Subalterns have devised a new monetary scheme which pools all pay and gives everyone a small allowance for personal things such as fags, the rest going to a general amenities fund and messing (? if any – we lost our officers' kitchen). Plans almost went through that would have established something of a precedent in the Canadian army. All watches, jewellery or anything of saleable value was to be put in the common pot, thereby we hoped, assuring a sizeable amount of money to buy much needed medicines, etc. Unfortunately no means at present exist for obtaining said supplies "over the fence" so our communistic venture came to naught. It would have been interesting to watch.

August 27 – (Friday)

The cruel hand of destiny dispenses some terrible blows and today the camp sorrows at the thought of one which – to us who are used to fate's buffetings – seems to be as cruel and harsh as we've experienced. This morning while engaged in cleaning the camp area, a young Frenchman, Matthew by name, touched the electric wire surrounding the camp and, despite almost four hours of artificial respiration and other methods of resuscitation, all efforts were decided useless around two o'clock. This chap was physically and mentally probably the most fit man in camp and was one of those cheery, bubbling Frenchies that make themselves immensely popular wherever they go. Being something over a six-footer and proportionally well-developed, it was hoped that his physique would pull him through. These circumstances, by themselves, seem sufficiently sad when one looks back at the obstacles we've had to surmount in the last twenty months, but in this case our sorrow is felt for Matthew's wife. Only last night he was in playing bridge with Blackie and "Boots" and was excited –

as only a Frenchman can be – because he had seen his wife for the first time since his incarceration while returning by truck from Kai Tak with the work party. He could hardly contain himself, particularly since today was his fourth wedding anniversary and it was remarked on afterwards that it was a treat to see a man so genuinely happy. Again at muster parade this morning (9:00) his wife took her chances and came close enough to the camp for him to get another glimpse. Less than forty minutes later the anniversary which meant so much to both of them was to be turned in to the brutal tragedy related above, by the thoughtlessness of some sentry who neglected to turn off the “juice”. As though to mock us for our helplessness, the fates ordained that she come again at evening muster but, of course, this time she was to go away unanswered. Maybe I’m getting soft but to me the whole affair is the saddest, cruelest thing I’ve witnessed for years. How maddening to those loved ones outside within a half mile of us, thinking of the sufferings and privations of their men in here and being able to do nothing about it. Thank heaven that if I should be called, time and distance will have dispelled any untoward grief that might be felt by my family.

August 28 – (Saturday)

The work party returning from the airport reports seeing Matthew’s wife this evening, looking very cheerful and searching each truck for a glimpse of her husband. Matthew was buried at three o’clock this afternoon.

September 2 – (Thursday)

This is being written amidst the posh comforts of the hospital area, spring bed, window and all the trimmings. After a somewhat lengthy lay-off in things athletic, I allowed myself to be persuaded to play ball on Sunday, with the result that – due to an amateurish slide into second base that removed some skin from my foot – I suffer (?) from a spot of blood poisoning. This is a wonderful country in that respect, almost any kind of a cut or bruise turning septic without a moment’s notice.

News these days is, more than ever before, a veritable fountain of hope. Even the smattering of items which ----- pardon me ----- At this point I was disturbed by the air raid siren so I moseyed to the door to see if I could spot the planes. We finally managed to see ten aircraft, eight twin motored bombers and two fighters flying high and coming in directly across the camp. When the planes were almost directly overhead we heard, and felt, a terrific concussion and brought our eyes earthward just in time to see five direct hits on the Standard Oil installations across the bay from us (roughly half a mile away). I've heard of the accuracy credited to the Yank bomb-sights, but not having seen I would never have believed the feat we witnessed was possible from the height of today's machines. The Standard plant is fairly large with perhaps a dozen tanks plus loading docks, warehouses, etc. But even so I think it remarkable that not one bomb hit outside the installation area. Needless to say, huge billows of smoke and flame were soon pouring skyward and as I write, the fire rages unabated, punctuated by minor explosions as smaller tanks go up. Some of the burning fragments are causing hurried precautions to be taken in camp lest the wind shift and send them our way. As the two fighters circled and dove down, presumably to estimate the damage and discourage the firemen, their m.g.'s churning up the bay as they came down to within twenty or thirty feet of the water then rose and disappeared behind the hills. Wotta Day!

Now to get back to the news, whose importance seems to have flagged somehow. The Russian situation seems rather obscure but the fragments we have been given seem to indicate a very heavy offensive which, in some areas at least, has resulted in substantial gains for the Russians. Reports in yesterday's paper admit the evacuation of a city, 50 miles west of Rostov, by the Germans and also state that the German lines are being shortened to facilitate etc. etc. The general unrest in Occupied countries is gleaned from Denmark, Sweden and we surmise even Germany, and leads us to believe these people must feel the opportune moment has arrived.

Raids:

Monday, August 23	12 p.m.	2 P.40's Recce
Tuesday, August 24	1:30 p.m.	2 Recce planes
Wednesday, August 25	9:30 a.m.	8 bombers (heavy)
	6:00 p.m.	7 bombers
Reported hits on Tai Koo and Kowloon docks		
Thursday, August 26	2 p.m.	2 Recce planes
	2:45 p.m.	14 bombers (heavy)
Numerous hits on		
Kowloon dock area		
	4:45 p.m.	1 Recce plane
	5:15 p.m.	2 Recce planes
Saturday, August 27	2:15 p.m.	4 Recce planes
	5 p.m.	? planes
Distant concussions heard and felt		
Sunday, August 28	2 p.m.	? planes
Siren blown downtown		
	5 p.m.	4 planes
Tuesday, August 31	3:30 p.m.	7 planes
No bombing		
	4 p.m.	? planes
Small tanker burned and sank after one attack of two planes, also m.g.'s not far from camp		
Wednesday, September 1	2:45 p.m.	? planes
Oil depot or refinery in mouth of river set afire		
	4:45 p.m.	5 planes
Concussions heard, possibly on the island		
Thursday, September 2	1:45 p.m.	10 planes
Standard installations <u>completely</u> demolished		

September 4 – (Saturday)

The local paper covered the raid with a small paragraph tucked away in the interior of the paper and it read as follows:

“Yesterday about ten enemy planes appeared over Hong Kong dropping some bombs. A fire was started but no casualties have been reported. Our ack-ack fire drove off the raiders.”

As a matter of interest, the installation is still a mass of smoke and flame. Rumour places the casualties at around a thousand, but I think that’s a bit steep. Something in the way of opposition appeared yesterday with the arrival of four fairly new Jap fighters. Should see some fun next raid. The Yanks are giving us a rest after the excitement of the previous days.

Some points in Churchill’s Quebec speech, some of which appeared for the first time in yesterday’s news, helped clarify one or two points for us. The death of Boris, according to Winnie, wasn’t as natural as it might have been. He also mentions significant political development in the Balkans. Evidently the strategy decided on includes an intensification of the battle of the Pacific.

September 8 – (Wednesday)

Not much of further interest except the landing on the Italian mainland and the general withdrawal all along the Soviet front of German forces. Coherent reports are lacking so we have no idea whether the retreat is being well executed or whether it’s the result of some smashing break-through. Today’s paper should shed some light. Despite almost four days of rain, the fire across the bay still smokes away. Bus service in Kowloon has been abandoned as a result of gas shortages. The siren blew today around 2:30 but we heard no planes.

September 15 – (Wednesday)

This date finds me still in dry-dock although the foot is back to normal. Guess I'll be turned out tomorrow. Yesterday I thanked my lucky stars for such blessings as infected feet since my ailment served as an excuse to avoid an inspection parade that lasted nine and a half hours. At 8:30 a.m., fall-in blew for everyone except bed patients in hospital and all were herded onto Jubilee Square where they stayed until 6 p.m. – without food, water and from noon on, smokes, under a boiling sun. Needless to say, they were thoroughly washed up by evening. The reason for all this was a thorough search of the camp by the Gendarmerie in an effort to locate a radio alleged to be in the area. The net result was a vast collection of heaters, tools, bits of iron, etc. Our local newspaper has been stopped and, of course, we all assume the reason to be adverse (for the Nips) reports on the war. The last issue we saw admitted a landing in Italy but mentioned nothing about Russia. I guess we're destined to finish up without being able to follow the trend of events. Rumours naturally fly back and forth but we've bitten so many, many times that we're inclined to be skeptical.

Sunday the work party at Kai Tak were given a thrill when seven P.38's swooped in over the bay and gave an exhibition of machine gunning on a freighter and on the Kowloon dockyard. They said it was beautiful to watch. Five planes, flying high, appeared over here yesterday afternoon but they merely circled the Colony and disappeared. Lovely clear days and equally lovely nights enhanced by a full moon revive my "live in Hong Kong" trend of thought.

October 9 – (Saturday)

In the last entry I mentioned the probabilities of my being parted from my nice spring bed and my pleasant surroundings and my return to the lines. Such was certainly the case and the next day found me "ready for duty". My stay proved a short one though as a sudden fever, developed on my second day out, found me once again hospitalized. I had no sooner re-settled in my former soft bed when symptoms of dysentery began to manifest themselves, with

the result that, next morning, I found myself transferred to dysentery hospital where I've languished these past three weeks. Fortunately, I have had no great degree of physical discomfort to go through, but I find that, in picking my complaint, I have chosen Amoebic Dysentery instead of the ordinary, and the cure is by comparison somewhat complicated. Evidently the only cure is a drug name "Emetine" which is usually administered by injection. Unfortunately, this drug existed – in very limited quantities – only in capsule form and after four doses, during which I was unable to hold it down for sufficient time to complete it's work, the M.O. gave up. He is at present trying some kind of Japanese pill course which Mac was able to procure from one of the volunteers, but evidently he doesn't put too much faith in them as he has me slated for Bowen Road on the next draft. Oh well, anything for a change.

The day after my hitting this place, McKinnon opened his new show "Shooting High", which from all sides is claimed to be the "best yet". As a member of the show orchestra, I was very disappointed to miss the presentation but very tickled to hear it so widely acclaimed. The show of the musical revue type, replete with chorus girls et al, didn't allow an idle moment from beginning to end and this, with snappy tunes and music and superb settings and lighting effects, combined to make the show the most popular of the series. The new winter season promises a Portuguese show on the 20th of this month, a Christmas Panto and New Year Frolic, as well as three other shows which budding producers await the opportunity to exhibit. We've certainly been most fortunate in the entertainment field. Lieutenant Bardal and the HKVDC presented a classical concert by the camp orchestra last Saturday and Monday which was very well received. The public was saved the agonies of a solo by yours truly by the timely intervention of the malady which at present keeps me an active member of that exclusive organization known as the "Knights Of The Bed-Pan".

What an enchantingly beautiful place this colony is at this time of the year. Lovely clear days and nights, not too hot, not too cool, make it an ideal vacation ground. My "Live in Hong Kong" ideas received a jolt in a conversation with a fellow inmate who has spent some twenty years out here, when he declared that the

climate is very hard on the opposite sex, particularly for reasons unknown, the blonde type. According to my informant who has raised two daughters, girls seem to thrive and flourish up to the point of development into womanhood, at which time they seem to wilt visibly, under the rigors of the excessive heat. In the case of this chap, domestic life for the past ten years has been almost non-existent since his daughters and wife have spent the big portion of their time in the old country, where the girls are being educated. Yes, he too married a blonde.

Optimism still surges through the camp over the war news from distant fronts. Stalin seems to be quite capable of clearing Russia of all Germans before many more weeks pass, unless the Huns bring up something startling in the way of reserves – but how this will affect a rapid conclusion to the European war is hard to say. Militarily, my personal opinion is that the establishment of a continental second front of some magnitude is essential if we are to hope for an early victory, and it would seem that the time in which that could be accomplished is almost past. Our only other solution lies then in the internal condition of Europe – particularly Germany. If the general unrest in the Occupied countries is sufficient and if Germany has been suffering sufficiently in regards to manpower and equipment in Russia and deterioration of war industries, through bombing at home, then I can see a possibility of internal collapse and suing for peace. These later points I must admit, are mostly supposition on our part or perhaps wishful thinking would be the more appropriate term since our news isn't calculated to cause us to believe the Anti-Axis unbeatable. However, we do see, or believe we see, items from time to time, that lead us to conclude that things can't last very much longer. On the eastern stage, the settings seem to be almost ready for the opening of the promised offensive against Japan. Steady inroads are being made in the south Pacific which step by step, shorten our lines between bases and the expected fronts. News concerning the Pacific area is very sporadic but since the monsoon season has just concluded in the south and good weather is in full swing generally throughout the East, it is felt that the next four months should see definite action which will prove decisive in the Asiatic sphere of the war. Whatever happens you can be sure that we'll be sitting

around making wild predictions on how it will end and when we'll be free.

As a side note, an R.A.M.C. Sergeant has just moved into the next bed suffering from the same complaint as I and here are a few points of interest on the disease. The disease manifests itself in the form of tiny amoeba which attach themselves to the walls of the intestine and then start developing in a sort of growth which, if unchecked, finally perforates the intestinal wall. If the growth is checked by Emetine, a scar forms in its place, leaving that part of the intestine unable to perform its proper function of absorption of foods. A danger arising from this parasite is its entry into the liver where it is impossible to apply the cure and, as a result, the liver ultimately collapses. As mentioned previously, Emetine is the only remedy and for complete cure a course of thirty needles is necessary, requiring approximately four months. One course of ten needles, however, is what we'll probably receive, which effectively checks the malady for six months.

October 12 – (Tuesday)

This last bit has been written while waiting to go to Bowen Road Hospital. I'm eagerly looking forward to the trip now as it will bring about a change that should help pass the next few weeks more rapidly.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Bowen Road Hospital Interlude

With profuse thanks to the kind fates that ordained the change, I find myself settling comfortably to a new life at Bowen Road Hospital. The completeness of the transformation from Sham Shui Po, where every aspect reminds one of captivity, to this is almost unbelievable. Situated halfway up the peak and affording a magnificent view of the harbour and mainland, the hospital tends to impart a feeling of convalescence rather than one of restriction. A very helpful feature in this regard is the fact that the surrounding wire is, in most cases, almost invisible due to screening trees and shrubs; something that is a most welcome contrast after our bleak wire-encircled expanse of sand on the mainland. Of course all is not perfect here, as we have found out in the matter of food. For some reason or other, supplies are not forthcoming in anything approaching the Sham Shui Po manner so we find that little things like having to get used to rice dust for dinner every evening, must be taken in stride. The men here are, generally speaking, looking very fit indeed due, I think, to the healthy combination of spring beds, mattresses, white sheets, the pleasant surrounding and the cool-bracing air. Extras in the way of thiamin and yeast daily and vitamin "A" caramels every second day no doubt contribute their share but I'm convinced the determining factor is psychological. Since my arrival here my system has refused to co-operate with the result that – though I'm continually racked with cramps – tests taken all register negative. I'm rather hoping the disease will manifest itself shortly as I should hate to have anyone think I "swung the lead" as an officer to get a Bowen Road berth. I look forward to some good reading as the library is supposed to be quite good. I've already completed my first book and today embarked on a second – Lawrence's "Seven Pillars of Wisdom".

A further snag came to light when the air raid sirens blew yesterday afternoon. During all raids, patients must remain in their

wards till the “all clear” goes. Unfortunately, shutters are closed so we miss any excitement that comes.

October 21 – (Thursday)

My first week of hospitalization has become a thing of the past and I find that, instead of losing my enthusiasm, I am becoming more convinced than ever that my future destinies should be linked with those of Hong Kong. No doubt the beauties available in these new surroundings are swaying my judgement, but I feel that, however it is to be worked, I must contrive to get out here after all this is over. I’m fairly satisfied that if I can get my “better-half” over here for a look-see, she too will fall in love with the place. I miss no opportunities to quiz the “natives” and the consensus of my efforts is that I don’t think I’d be making a mistake in having a “go” at it. The climate, which is one of the main drawbacks, would not, I think seriously affect us as the family should be in pretty fair shape. I can visualize one possible source of dissatisfaction with the question of “What does friend wife do to fill the long hours of the day?” Cheapness of labour usually results in the lady of the house having little or nothing to do in the way of work, with the result that boredom and its attendant evils is something of a problem. Sport may be the answer as I understand all ages and sexes have their games. Admirable bathing beaches abound to say nothing of the pools available at the private clubs. Boating is very cheap and numerous islands and bays of great beauty are within easy reach. The island has two golf courses, nine holes, one of which is very flat and looks most uninviting. However, a super-duper course situated some twenty miles out in the territories is available, if one has the money and position. Softball, football, rugger, hockey (field), volleyball, tennis, bowls and fishing are also available to those so inclined. Taken all in all, it lacks very little and looks like a good set-up – but then, so did the “Garden of Eden”. I’m still quite determined to explore all the possibilities.

I’ve been undergoing treatment for five days in the form of entero-vioform tablets (six daily) and daily washouts and enemas, the latter not serving to diminish one’s appetite. I am getting a

good rest however, and though my weight is down to 151 pounds, I'm still feeling damned fit. I'm bunking in a semi-private ward which I share with a Naval chap, Reg Wood by name, quite a decent chap too, so that I'm really quite comfortable. Reg has been plagued with "amoebic" for some eighteen months and, though he has just completed a course like mine, he still seems to be "unsettled".

We've had a couple of deaths since my arrival, one Canadian and two Imperials, one of the latter who had the room next to us was a full Colonel in the R.A.M.C. One or two of our chaps are on the D.I. list but it is hoped they'll pull through. I am personally interested in one chap, an Indian and formerly of my platoon. Poor Sandy has just about everything wrong with him that there is available and, through a sickness that has lasted months, he has maintained a cheerfulness that puts to shame anything I've seen yet. Sheer "guts" is evidently about all that's kept Sandy going for the past month or so. On arriving here, I sent word down to him that, though I was to be isolated for two weeks, I'd be down to see him as soon as the treatments were finished. Sandy promptly sent up word that he'd probably be able to get up to see me first, this from a person bloated to some sixty pounds overweight who, even though some 38 ounces of fluid are drained from him daily, has sores break out on his body which allow the liquid to ooze out. Talking to the ward master of Sandy's ward he tells me that the orderlies all claim he's the most cheerful bed patient in the hospital. Hats off to you, Sandy!

The hospital is particularly fortunate in having some remarkable and efficient men on its staff. The O.C., Colonel Bowie is a King's Physician and has done some remarkable work here that his colleagues claim will merit considerable attention in medical circles after the war. The results of his works are evident in the next ward where a Major Carter, suffering from a contraction of the esophagus – which prevents food from entering the stomach – has, for months, been fed through a tube through the stomach wall and is able to be up and about, to all intents and purposes perfectly normal. Major Harrison too is alleged to be very capable and is considered one of the best M.O.'s in the British

Army. Major Anderson, a surgeon, has some remarkable operations to his credit and is claimed to have done almost miraculous work. Too bad people of such capabilities are handicapped by lack of proper facilities.

I recall reading the book, “Yang and Yin” in North Point and the meaning of the two symbols was given – though in vague fashion. Today, reading “Test Tubes and Dragon Scales”, I came across a more comprehensive interpretation which I quote. “Permeating all Chinese beliefs and creeds was the old animistic religion that bestowed a spirit on each and every element of nature; sky, wind, rain, thunder, earth, rivers, trees, plants, animals and man. The spirit of man was composed of a positive and a negative influence call YANG and YIN. Yang was the male principle – active, creative, progressive, its symbols are the heavens, sun light, warmth, youth and strength. Yin, the female, was passive and at the same time, destructive, symbolized by earth, moon, shade, winter, cold, old age and weakness. The action of each of these on the other explained the diversities in human beings and influenced individuals and fates and fortunes.” I believe this oriental business is getting me. My tastes in reading seem to be veering to those works dealing with things Eastern. Certainly there’s something that possesses a terrible fascination for me, either in the people and their queer customs or in the country and climate itself. I wonder if it will pass off when I again come in contact with civilization? So much remains to be worked out, dependant on how I find things at the conclusion of this war business, that I’m almost consumed with impatience waiting for termination of it and the opportunity to get “cracking”. Maybe these two years have given me a spot of “wire fever”?? I was just wondering last night how this enforced estrangement is going to affect the future equilibrium of the Corrigan household. If my memory serves me, I believe most of us have the tendency in separations involving those very close to us to be very leniently disposed when it comes to weighing the good or evil qualities of the persons affected. Unfortunately, this somewhat biased “judgement” will sometimes have the effect of endowing the departed with virtues rather in excessive proportions to those possessed by the poor individual. Human nature being what it is, the first contacts – after reunion – are liable to be a bit unsettling. I

can envision the shock awaiting my children when they discover their “old man”, whom the wife’s propaganda efforts have labeled “an officer and a gent”, turns out to be a crabby old “so and so” who raises Cain when noises are made in the house and who refuses them money for candy and shows in order to have his daily “whiskey and soda”. Oh well, no doubt post-war planning boards have already discussed this important aspect and have a solution ready.

My unkind remarks about the food seem to lack substantiation as the scales record an increase in weight of four and a half pounds in the week just passed. These days I have an intense craving for thick, juicy onion sandwiches. Munching boiled rice day in and day out has its bad points and one periodically experiences the desire to sink their teeth into something crisp and juicy. Guess the day will come though.

October 26 – (Tuesday)

Strangely enough on this day in which I made the above entry re my domestic affairs, I am the lucky recipient of my first letter from my wife which, though dated May 1st of last year, is none the less most welcome. I think if my better-half could see the joy occasioned by the sight of her handwriting she’d be demanding an increase in her allowance. It is grand though to see the family settled in a house and that “elder sister” is pursuing her musical studies. I had hoped some photos of the family might be enclosed but – maybe they’ll be in the next one. --- My cup is full. ---

October 27 – (Wednesday)

What a toll Mrs. C’s letter took on my mental processes last night. I emerged this morning a mental wreck after having spent hours and hours at home, in spirit, having accomplished during my short stay the amazing feats of first – building a new house, second – completely repairing and renovating mother’s house, and lastly – completely reorganizing the postal service of Swift Current. I was still resisting Morpheus when faint streaks of grey were becoming apparent in the eastern sky.

Another death occurred today, a chap name Haines who, by the way, has a son in Sham Shui Po.

November 3 – (Wednesday)

Once again, as these things have a habit of doing, this birth date of mine thrusts its way into the present. Thirty-two years of age (?) and, once again, I suppose it is the inevitable response to the admission of the passing of time, I am confronted with the yearly urge to weigh the evidences of my stewardship to determine whether or not I have made the most of those years granted to me. This task, if I am to maintain any degree of indifferent frankness, seldom affords me any great pleasure, since I must admit that any accomplishments which I believe should merit an entry on the credit side of the ledger are, more often than not, overshadowed by negative entries on the other. Continued tests of this kind and their adverse results aren't at all conducive to over-confidence in one's self, but I placate myself with the thought that it's largely a matter of the valuation one places on things. Perhaps other kind souls may be more kindly in their judgement of me. I hope so. So – for want of something better to do I embark herewith. I suppose one should, for reasons of clarity, subdivide an all-embracing subject like this, so we'll start our retrospective effort with the mental side:

Unfortunately, no amount of wishful thinking will serve to gloss over the fact that mentally I'm woefully underdeveloped. Never more than in my present unenviable predicament has this fact been brought home. Due to the peculiar circumstances attendant to our little war out here, we are constantly in contact with men of very high educational standard - a thing which accentuates our mental shortcomings. My ideas, speech and general knowledge are so obviously juvenile by comparison that I'm afraid to make observations of any kind. I have lived to regret, as have thousands before me, that I didn't take advantage of the educational facilities placed before me in earlier life. I regret also not having profited, in the years after these facilities were beyond my reach, by intelligent reading as a means of improving my mind. Now to my regret, I find that, though I plow through material

which I believe my limited development will absorb, I find that the abstinence of years has dulled my powers of concentration and retention. I insert here the hope that on reading this poor effort some five years hence, I may console myself with the thought that I have worked, and am still working, in the effort to bring my mind up if not to par, then at least to bogey.

Physically speaking, I suppose I can consider myself more fortunate. Having been endowed, through no effort of mine, with what might be loosely termed a better than average physique, I can be truly thankful that, with one or two very minor exceptions, it has served me faithfully and well through the years. One might wonder just where the physical side enters a discussion of this kind and, under normal circumstances, I would share this wonder. Events of the past two years, however, have somewhat altered the position it would formerly have allotted to things physical. At such times as we have experienced, when good health was the exception rather than the rule, I have had cause to be most thankful that my body was sufficiently robust to take things as they came. In addition to that, I modestly insert claims on my fellow man for services which could not have been rendered had I not enjoyed a certain degree of physical fitness. Another angle that must not be neglected in connection with the physical side is that of the satisfaction and its mental effect that can be obtained from a decently coordinated physique. Certain degrees of prowess in fields of sport, etc. in which one indulges have a compensating effect and this no doubt has a great deal to do in creating a stability which would be impossible under circumstances of this kind, where the mental deficiencies are so painfully evident. I have no doubt that I will derive more satisfaction from the knowledge that, at a time when life and death hung in the balance, my body responded in such a manner as to enable me to write much like this, than I could ever obtain from the results of any real mental effort.

The next division of this noble treatise might embrace the social and financial aspects – inasmuch as they're almost synonymous, at least in the eyes of most people. Judgement in this particular field is apt to be a trifle difficult due to the fact that

individual senses of values seem to be at great variance. Taking first the financial side, I must admit that though I've managed to keep my family reasonably well-fed and clothed and contrived to collect a few of the minor luxuries such as a car, radio and the necessary quota of unpaid bills, I still haven't much to offer them in the way of security. Of course we can't all be Henry Fords, but after having spent some fifteen years working, one should have things sufficiently under control to have enabled them to look forward to a future at least comparatively secure. This is something which present circumstances do not offer, hence my desire to change my "locale". The passage of time doesn't exactly facilitate my chances of improving my employment so one can see the added desire to see this thing all done with. I must digress a bit here and set down for posterity an almost fool-proof thrift plan which I recommend for weak-minded people like myself, having participated in the benefits of this remarkable scheme for some two years. This plan, the success of which can be vouched for by thousands of participants in this colony alone, will enable anyone desirous of putting aside a certain amount of their income to do so, providing of course that they are ready to exercise a sufficient degree of will-power – which may be necessary at times to abide by the rules. Judged from afar, this Scotchman's Utopia might be, at first glance, considered something on the harsh side, but, when one reviews the benefits derived, the methods used seem of minor consideration. Not only is the "co-operator" enabled to put aside some money, but he is also presented with a hitherto unthought of valuation of numerous minor items which used to raise his cost of living. The rules of this enlightened society are simple and, under proper supervision, such as we enjoy here, we find that having once committed ourselves, every effort is made to assist our determination to avoid the pitfalls and scenes of that "other life". Some trepidation might be felt by those who may believe themselves to be insufficiently strong-willed to put themselves off the use of such needless luxuries as liquor, rich foods, tobacco, etc. in one fell swoop. Let me assure the victim – I mean the patient – who doubts that, providing he enters quite cheerfully into the spirit of things and firmly resolves to put behind him the temptations of the flesh, he will have no difficulty adhering to the general rules which govern the plan. Of utmost importance in the new venture is

the choosing of the location for the proposed retreat and the acquiring of proper attendants, who must be in full sympathy with the plan, to attend to one's daily needs. Having done all this, nothing remains but the final step and in this the intended must steel his mind, firmly resolving that – once having made the plunge – no amount of persuasion will swerve him from this task. Next comes the matter of diet. As a staple, any coarse grain that will lend itself to easy cooking and handling may be recommended, nutritional values are of secondary importance and need play no part in the choice. After giving the food question much thought, our little group decided on rice but any of the other grains such as wheat, oats, etc., will suffice since the main idea is to provide bulk with no particular regard to taste. I may state here that tastes are satisfied (?) by the addition – when cooking – of the greens of any weeds, plants or grasses which may abound in the locality. Cooking utensils may be obtained at practically no cost by mobilizing any gas drums, boilers or old bath tubs that may be lying about. The manner of cooking is simplicity in itself and an all-embracing recipe can be given in a few words. Merely take a moderate portion of the grain, mix with a sufficient quantity of water to ensure sloppiness and then bring to a boil. Greens may be boiled separately or with the grain, but care must be taken that they be boiled sufficiently to remove any vestiges of taste or flavour. Due to the usual economy of eating utensils, tin cans of adequate dimensions are usually scarce, it has been found that the issue can be cut to a very meager quantity per person – a point which is a great help from an economical point of view. It was our experience that if, when first commencing the course, no food at all be given for the first day or so, tremendous enthusiasm can be aroused for the new diet and, by serving only twice daily for the few following weeks, its popularity may be definitely assured. It can be easily seen – after this brief outline – that rigid observance of the diet and the discouragement by proper supervision, of efforts to obtain forbidden luxuries may strongly influence anyone so minded, to set aside almost any portion of their income, particularly if people at the other end have had the foresight to stop said income. Now – let me see, where was I before that last wide and wild splurge crept in? Ah yes. That rather stuffy “true confession” business. I think, having achieved my original intention of passing a bit of time, that

the rest of the painful nonsense that I've put to paper since my incarceration, I wonder sometimes whether in later years I'll have the stomach to wade through such trash. (?) Who knows?

November 11 – (Thursday)

And so we come to another anniversary of the termination of that other Great War. Thoughts of the seeds of hate sown by the announcement of the treaty articles at its conclusion makes one wonder what kind of a mess the politicians will make of things when they try to unravel the maze of complications that are bound to follow this present struggle. Having noted how deep-seated individual greed can be, in some of the wretched experiences we've undergone, I'm inclined to be somewhat pessimistic when I see the degree of magnanimity and good common sense that will be required of those unfortunate gentlemen upon whose shoulders will fall the task of drawing up terms of settlement. Poor human nature – in spite of the marvels of our science and the much vaunted advancement of our civilization – we still remain subject to our instincts. I'm afraid our next armistice will attract its crowd of human vultures just as did the last. Funny the moods one falls into. My present one is the result of a very mild argument of early this afternoon into which the breach between the English and the Canadian first crept, then boldly strode forth. Putting the date over this entry, I couldn't help wondering how statesmen – though they had the most noble intentions – can deal, as they will have to deal after this war, with the lives and lands of millions, whose thought and speech are beyond their understanding, when there exists now within our own family of nations – all of the mother tongue – such a degree of ignorance and misunderstanding. Even without having to consider the political side, it would seem a pretty grim task. Oh well – I suppose if I had sufficient brains to evolve the proper solutions, I wouldn't be here.

I had hoped by this date to be out in the clear again but fate, in the form of a slight relapse, decreed otherwise. My innards really went to work with a vengeance shortly after the conclusion of my first course, with the result that I start a second on Tuesday. For some reason this attack seems much heftier than the last two –

at least in regard to physical discomfort – and I feel that I've established a sympathetic bond, through something of a mutual suffering, with a woman in the initial throes of labour pains. I have changed the manner of treatment for this session and am now taking E.B.I. capsules instead of the enemas, a policy which has my wholehearted endorsement. One does become tender and inclined to be touchy even with the most gentle of care. One of the chaps who came over in the same draft with me and who was a fellow sufferer at Sham Shui Po, Mr. Burns, died yesterday morning. Poor chap, he should never have been mixed up in this thing at all. Such a thing is war.

Something of a surprise draft was called Tuesday which resulted in twenty-nine patients going out and approximately fifteen coming in. Major Brown, R.A.M.C., who was my M.O. when I had malaria in camp, was the only officer to arrive.

Reports from camp indicate life much as usual and McCarthy sends word that I must be back by Christmas, as he has a couple of bottles of saki lined up. I guess a couple of slugs of that would give these old dysentery bugs something to think about.

Nothing of any importance has developed around here except that it has turned quite chilly today. The developments of the moon are once again bringing those beautiful nights that I've mentioned.

Reg just related that signs of B. & M., the catch words of our little fraternity, are again appearing, so it would seem that he too is due for another course. In spite of the beds and scenery, I'm just a little homesick for the cheery companionship of the camp, and of course the grub there. Hope I can make it by Christmas.

Just as a point of interest – or is it – Wendy Barry the film star – was born in one of the houses situated on the summit of the hill directly behind the hospital and overlooking the area. Not that it makes much difference, but I thought I'd mention it.

November 18 – (Thursday)

Another week slides by and takes with it some of that lovely weather of which I boasted about earlier. The thermometer registers a mere 56 degrees above, but I'm sure that the Canadian equivalent of the cold I'm feeling would have the mercury well below zero. What price living in Hong Kong now? Still just as enthusiastic as ever strangely enough! Reg and I had further speech on this subject this afternoon from the warm sanctuary of our beds and I'm quite convinced – unless some mechanical feature makes them unsuitable – that our Canadian system of hot air heating is the answer to the inconvenience of both cold and damp periods here. As near as I can gather, January, February and March are about the only periods of the year when the combination of both cold and damp would necessitate a system such as ours, but I have found, from bitter experience, that there are countless other days through November and December in which a little dry heat wouldn't be entirely out of place. We spoke also this afternoon on the social problem which newcomers like myself would have to face. Assuming the Corrigan's to be average (?) in this connection, Reg assures me that, through the medium of golf and various sports in which Mrs. C. and I would naturally indulge, we would be in a good position to look over and choose friends whom we would regard as intimate if we so desired. Evidently everyone here indulges in sport and almost everyone also indulges in the club life that goes with it. We assumed that I might land something in the Post Office and, working on that assumption, figured what clubs etc. I would become a member of. As you can imagine, being British, the place fairly stinks with class consciousness, but of course, all that would be high enough over us to give us little concern. If Reg's representation can be taken as a true picture, I'm reasonably certain that – as a family – we could have a grand time of it here. "Start packin' there Mrs. C. Your old man's headin' East." Again as with all my dreams, I must await developments. No wonder I get impatient.

November 22 – (Monday)

I commence this week filled with the hope that my second course of treatment just completed, will have succeeded in quieting, temporarily at least, my arch-enemy – the amoeba. The cold spell mentioned in the last entry still persists, though I must admit avoiding most of it through a rather rough session with my “complaint”, which necessitated my staying in bed. Today being weighing-in day, I checked my avoirdupois this morning and found myself to be 147 ½ pounds. Not too good, though I still feel fine. This latest figure makes almost an even fifty pounds that Hong Kong has cost me to date, which indicates a lot of overtime work in the future to make it up. I’m still not complaining, physically though, there’s plenty left on the old frame yet. I’m still consumed with the terrible impatience and, to us here, the march of world events seems a snail’s pace. I’m rather perturbed when I contemplate the harmful effects which the incessant day-dreaming and the fruitless, unfulfilled planning in which we indulge, is liable to have. Surely it must do something to one’s mental processes when the same series of frustrated plans and half-formed ideas continually come and go through the mind. Every night, prior to sleep, I find myself transported home mentally, there to do and undo thousands of situations, always different yet always the same, and because they lack anything solid that can be used as a foundation, I’m inevitably left in a confused state of mental exhaustion. Unfortunately, present physical deficiencies prevent the normal emotional outlet, athletics, so that I’m looking forward most eagerly to the day when I’m considered fit for exercise. Maybe the term “wire-fever” isn’t quite the gag I pretended it was. Perhaps a good binge of saki might not be as stupid as it looks about now.

We lost another of our lads this morning, chap named LaPlante of Indian-French extraction. He too came over in the same draft as I from the dysentery hospital at camp. I seem to be something of a jinx for these fellows.

November 30 – (Tuesday)

Again we stand on the thresh-hold of the Christmas month. Strangely enough we think this one also will be the last. I commenced another course of treatment last night, for reasons of precaution more than anything else, I think, so any hopes I entertained for making the next draft to camp are shattered. Life remains pleasant, if at times a bit monotonous, but then one can't expect too much. I've been indulging in considerable day-dreaming about home lately, and I presume the cold here has been responsible. I find myself thinking rather wistfully of the comforts of a Canadian living room in wintertime. Immense living rooms, whose only means of warmth is a fireplace, somehow lack the homey appeal of our overheated, comfortable, though smaller quarters at home. Try as I may, I can't seem able to picture myself getting used to spending a nice quiet evening at home during the cold months, under the circumstances as they exist here. Maybe that explains the necessity for the Englishman's whiskey and soda.

I've been reading – and enjoying – Pierre Von Paassens, "Days of Our Years", and I must say that it's illuminating if nothing else. I haven't finished yet so I can't definitely tell just where the author's religious statements are leading to, but I must say he's particularly anti-Catholic and most particularly anti-Jesuit in his view points. As yet, he has done little more than attack the established system and has not committed himself on his personal doctrines, if any. After reading several of his outbursts against religion, a night or two ago, I wondered within myself just how I might answer any of my children if suddenly asked by them to give an honest opinion of my religious viewpoints. Assuming my questioner to be wholly sincere in her query and that it was prompted by something more than plain curiosity I must admit I would have considerable difficulty in coherently satisfying a question of that nature, chiefly because I'm not just sure how I should be classified in a religious sense. Nominally, of course, I'm Roman Catholic, but I'm afraid that I hold the heretical viewpoint that the R.C. church as it exists today, and the R.C. doctrine as laid down by the founders of our church are not one and the same thing. Such a vague, illogical-appearing statement as that certainly

needs a bit of explanation and, though I doubt that I can at the moment produce evidences that cause me to think such a thing, I will nevertheless have a go at it. In the first place, the big disparity between the doctrine of the R.C.'s and the church itself is that, as I see it, the latter does not practice what she preaches. Admitting that all those histories which the average Canadian student is liable to have studied are liable to be biased against Catholicism, we must admit a certain percentage of truth in their statements of the part played by the church in world affairs, since such a time as it was sufficiently strong to be counted on as a factor in world politics. There seems no question that, in the past, the history of the church has been associated too much with oppression, suppression and intrigues, both internal and external for an organization whose duty it was to spread the word of God. Of course, all this might be said to have been of the past and therefore not applicable to the present body of the church. I would agree with this view if there did not exist what to me are quite definite policies which are a result of, and in some cases the continuation of, those practices which finally resulted in the Reformation. To mention one or two points I might bring in the "fear" method in which the ignorance of the people, the peasant class particularly, was capitalized on in the propagation of faith. To me, the "Hell's fire and brimstone" theory has been pounced on by the church and used in ways and for far different purposes than that intended by Christ in His teachings. Even admitting that a certain amount of "persuasion" of this type was needed in the earlier troubled times, I cannot see the justification of a continuance of the method in these comparatively enlightened times – yet Italy and other European countries as well as our own French Quebec are almost medieval in their religion, with the church continually bemoaning the loss of her "territory" in regions that have refused to remain stagnant. Surely Christ's religion ought to be able to withstand the onslaught of learning? I think it can. Would it not be better to lose the "faith" of those whose religion is dominated by a personal fear of the hereafter and gain, by a change of tactics, the faith of those who have seen the reasonableness of Christ's teachings? I am firmly convinced also that the Church has used this fear complex of the ignorant classes to further herself in matters other than spiritual. I refer to the material gains as represented by the enormous wealth

of churches, real estate, etc. which the church controls throughout the world. Naturally an organization of the size and scope of the Roman church is bound to possess immense wealth, religion is like that, however it seems to me too much of a coincidence when I note that the material affluence of the church seems more pronounced in countries where an illiterate peasantry predominates. Again I cite Italy, Quebec and Spain as examples. Is it coincidence that, to mention one country specifically, a country like Italy, where the population is almost solidly Catholic and where there are more churches per square foot than anywhere else, also possesses a poorer, more ignorant class of peasantry than most European countries? Somewhere along the way, the Italian church seems to have dropped Christ's exhortation to take care of the poor. Granted that some of these conditions arise from economical problems such as most European countries have to face, still to me there seems no justification for an environment which permits richly ornamented churches and well-fed clergy to be surrounded by evidences of poverty and squalor amongst the less fortunate. As a tourist in some of the European countries I was enabled to get a rather hasty, and therefore sketchy, impression of conditions in some of those countries, but I must admit that as a nominal Catholic, I was ashamed to note that Italy was quite outstanding in regard to the numbers of its poor and the great gap separating them from their more fortunate brethren in a country like Canada. Another item in the same vein, closer to home, can be noted in some of our different parishes. Take any parish in the West and compare its church with the church of any Irish or English dominated parish in the same numerical strength and I'll wager the farmer will have a church building far richer and gaudier than his English or Irish counterpart. Is it because the former are better Catholics? I don't think so. I might even go so far as to venture the suggestion that there is more true faith and less hypocrisy amongst the latter than amongst the former. Reading back over the above I see that I've actually done nothing as far as answering the original question put to me is concerned. I can see too that my efforts to portray my feelings regarding the church seem beclouded by somewhat unproved generalizations. This latter fault is, I suppose, the result of having to fall back on evidence seen, heard or read, which has given me a hazy mental picture upon which I base my

deductions, rather than concrete examples which in themselves would be more explanatory. I have, no doubt, been building up subconscious prejudice through the years which, though intelligible enough in my mind, is rather difficult to express. One might ask, since I seem to think the governing body of the church to be at fault, how I might suggest remedying the situation. In the first place, a good clean-up amongst the clergy might be in order. I believe that the domination of the Vatican by Italian, French and Spanish cliques in its church positions, should be abolished. I do not say that these men are corrupt, but I do think that the fact that they have risen to power in a system that has permitted what I might term “vices” to flourish, should preclude them from “control” of such an international body as the Universal Church. A tolerant, wide-awake administration that would brook no infractions from its junior clergy and which would take as its religious standard the example set by Christ would, I believe, bring about a spiritual revolution which would shake all Christendom. I confess that Beverley Nicols, in his book “The Fool Hath Said”, expresses an opinion with which I agree wholeheartedly. His contention is that Christianity, as a group, should abandon the type of religion which they practice today and substitute instead a religious philosophy based on the “examples” practiced by Christ himself – rather than the somewhat muddled interpretations of Christ’s teachings which have been handed down and distorted to suit the needs of the various churches and which serve as their doctrinal founts. What better medium for the propagandizing of this modern Renaissance than the universal church? And now – to revert to that innocent question that started this wandering epistle. Assuming the questioner to believe in a Supreme Being, I would ask him or her to look the religions over and see which of them is going to give the maximum spiritual consolation. Personally, Catholic doctrine seems to me to contain more substance than the doctrines of any other religions. If a doctrine is decided upon, then I would suggest that considerable thought be given to those things which one would be asked to believe. The Catholic Church insists that its doctrine be “swallowed whole” as it were, but here I disagree. Granted that there are some articles in Catholic doctrine which must ever remain a mystery and therefore must be either accepted or denied, I don’t believe that because the laws of the

Catholic Church state definitely that we must accept all articles of faith as laid down by that body, were our incredulity to be strained we should believe blindly. If one should entertain any doubts at all would it not be better to openly doubt than to encourage any degree of hypocrisy? The very fact that the church itself is forced periodically to alter portions of its doctrines to suit a world that becomes more enlightened and progressive in thought would seem to indicate that “blind acceptance” is a fallacy. Of course, one must guard against the possibility of allowing personal weaknesses of character to sway one’s judgement of what is going to be accepted. I quite realize that some of the laws of the Catholic Church are made almost severe because it was recognized that it was most necessary when dealing with such a complicated piece of machinery as human nature. And so, if my advice were asked, I would suggest to my youngster that he, or she, embrace the Catholic faith because I believe, in spite of the organizational faults, that the faith has more to offer than that of any other. I would suggest that, rather than make a point of obeying the laws of the church as laws, that he or she pattern their ideas after those of some of our westernized religious organizations such as the Jesuits, with special attention and emphasis on tolerance. Of course, whatever religion as such one wishes to embrace is of little importance after all – most of us are sufficiently acquainted with Christ’s life on earth to be able to fashion – from the example He set us - a moral and social code which if lived up to would allow us to reach the same goal. Summed up, my advice might read like this. Study the religions and extract from them the best they have to offer, read the life of Christ and from this combination evolve a set of ideals. Then – live up to them.

December 12 – (Sunday)

The fact that it’s Sunday night and I haven’t much to do to kill time, prompts this effort. Life goes on much the same, seemingly quite oblivious to the fact that I search fruitlessly for something of interest to pep up this dull effort. I have finished my third course of treatment for my little complaint but whether this last has been successful remains to be seen. Strangely enough, as with the first two, this course was marked near its conclusion by a

sudden spurt of renewed activity which may or may not indicate failure. I hope it to be nothing more serious than a slight chill.

Alarcon, who came over with a case of suspected stomach ulcers, was permitted to give us an hour's piano recital last evening, which was much appreciated by the patients. He spent the early part of the evening tonight in the room here, discussing the possibilities of earning a livelihood in Canada after the war. After pointing out all the advantages which he might enjoy if he decided to make his abode there, I found myself wondering why – if we have so much to offer - I should be contemplating the Far East as a possible field of endeavour for myself. Such are the powers of salesmanship. While I have been making grandiose, if futile, plans for a future here, I have not abandoned the idea of exploiting any and all possibilities of a job at home. I quite intend to explore every opportunity possible to change my occupation and still remain in Canada because I realize that – though this colony has much to offer in the matter of beauty, comfort and entertainment, still there remains that unsettled, unsatisfied feeling of non-permanence – something which is lacking, just beyond our grasp. In other words, the complete fulfillment of our simple pleasures such as I've experienced at home. I may be wrong in this regard, but so it seems to me. Maybe the ever-present chill in the atmosphere is having the effect of swaying my judgement, however, as I say, I'm looking at all angles before taking any steps.

I'm enjoying a book by Taylor Caldwell titled "Dynasty of Death" which deals with the foundation and subsequent building up of a munitions-making dynasty through the years from the expansion period of American industry, around 1850s, to the present. From the little that I've read on the subject previously, it would seem to me that the book presents an almost parallel history to that of an American family, whose name I can't for the life of me recall, which at present flourishes in the States. In spite of the difficulty of keeping track of the numberless brothers and sisters, fathers, sons and mothers, aunts, uncles and cousins of the two prolific families around which the story winds, I find it most interesting. – I think I am gradually beginning to get something of real enjoyment out of reading, though I must admit my powers of

retention don't seem to have sharpened any. Perhaps a change of diet will assist later on. I certainly mean to utilize spare time to better advantage in the future with a reasonably sensible program of reading.

It's rather a shame that I am unable to send a photo of myself home about now. Last week, by general order throughout the hospital, everyone had their hair clipped off. A group photo would make a "crime gallery" line-up look like a "Promising Film Stars of the Future" assembly. Nature certainly had her wits about her when she decided to array our pates in soft garments. I'm not sure as yet whether my profile most resembles Donald Duck or Ferdinand the Bull. That gag about "taking me home to scare the children" actually has some substance in it.

Another of the chaps who came over in my draft succumbed to T.B. a couple of days ago. How I wish this would all finish.

December 13 – (Monday)

My weekly weight check-up reveals another pound and a half gone west. My fighting trim is now 146. Before sleep last night, I was pestered with thoughts of eating huge breakfasts, consisting chiefly of delicious sandwiches of tender liver and bacon. When I think of my former lackadaisical manner of eating, I could scream.

December 18 – (Saturday)

Just a week today and we'll be celebrating another Christmas. This particular feast is going to mean much more to me in the future than it ever did in the past. I believe a subconscious desire to find some new employment that doesn't rob me of the opportunity to properly celebrate this event is one of the prime reasons for my desire of a change. Extra hours entailed during the Christmas season were never, in themselves, a hardship, but I always begrudged any time spent at the office on Christmas and New Year's Day. I've made up my mind that – regardless of future

developments – I'm going to have one really free, happy Christmas! Next year??

I've received another set-back in my struggle with the demon amoeba. A stool test taken day before yesterday reveals things to be still in a positive state, with the result that last night saw me commencing my fourth course of treatment, this time consisting of entero-vioform tablets, wash-outs and yatren enemas. Any hopes I entertained of getting back to camp in the near future have been shelved – indefinitely.

Today is Alla's birthday, but circumstances forbade anything of a celebration. He's more or less made up his mind to see Canada after this so we spent the morning figuring costs of living, etc.

While Christmas celebrations for the hospital seem to be out of the question this year, we will – if rumours are correct – at least eat well on that date. Prices prevailing on the outside prevent any sumptuous repast but a few extras such as coffee, meat patties and Christmas pudding are reputed to be on the bill of fare. Heaven knows we can stand it.

My reading material for the week indicates a trend towards leftish political thought as I gallantly plow through Joseph Freeman's, "An American Testament", in which he describes his evolution through socialism, Marxism, communism, etc. I can be expected to break out at any moment in vicious condemnation of the exploitation of the proletariat by the wicked, imperialistic capitalist bourgeoisie. The result so far has not been too entertaining but it does present the other side of the picture.

December 25 – (Saturday)

The big day has arrived at last and we all fervently pray that it will be the last in our present circumstances. For some reason or other, the real Christmas spirit is not as apparent to me this year as it was last. Perhaps last year set too high a standard upon which to base my judgements, I don't know. Certainly that "something" is missing. In reality, we have much more cause to be

optimistic this year and, generally speaking, we are not surrounded by the generalized pain and suffering such as we were experiencing a year ago. I think perhaps my disappointment in this year's celebrations may be due to the fact that last Christmas I felt that I was a contributor to the general feeling of good will that prevailed, due to my musical efforts, while this year I must sit back and do nothing. How true is the saying that "It is better to give than to receive." I popped out early this morning and sneaked down to have a moment with "Sandy" before the M.O.'s were likely to appear on the scene. What an amazing example of pure grit and determination this fellow displays. It was a treat to see how happy and cheerful he could be after what he has come through. Christmas naturally brings to our minds – more than ordinarily – the children to whom the day means so much. Last night I tried to visualize the preparations and general excitement which would be evident amongst my family as the tree was being trimmed for the big day. How stupid I was not to have taken more advantage of opportunities to enjoy my children more in the past, opportunities which, unfortunately will not come my way again. I will feel these years have not been wasted if I will have learned on my return to master my patience and become a more successful father. However, I do hope that Gladys, Paddy and Shelagh are enjoying the best of everything today. Next year? – Who knows? –

Our main source of satisfaction must necessarily be derived from our old friend food and we look forward to being filled for two meals, at least. Breakfast was the usual ground rice with an issue of a spoonful of sugar to help it down – but we hear of big things to come for dinner and supper. Having partaken of little else but ground rice, a half issue of plain rice and the juice of greens since my arrival two and a half months ago, it can be imagined that something in the way of a stew will be much appreciated. I will set out the menu in detail at the close of the day.

I just found out today that a young chap who sleeps on the verandah just outside our door, Corbett by name, is distantly related to Glen Corbett at home. Formerly of Welwyn, Sask., he now calls Winnipeg home.

I wonder how Mac, Johnnie, Black and company are making out over in camp today. My thoughts also wander homeward as I conjecture on the doings of Bob, Rooney, George Dunlop, Frank Allen and the Post Office staff, etc. One of the biggest curses of this existence is the lack of news of parents, families and friends.

December 26 – (Sunday) – Boxing Day

And so we pass another Christmas. In one respect, at least I must admit it was a success. I managed to get filled with food. Dinner at noon brought us fried fish, rice and meat and vegetable stew with a six ounce bun (instead of the usual four ounces) plus two ounces of apple butter, to round off the corners. Supper proved a tasty meal with a meat patty and rice pudding, with milk and sugar. As I say, for once I was filled. It was amusing to discover how little over and above our usual quota of food we were able to assimilate. Believe it or not, at both meals I had the greatest difficulty putting away my full portion. Most of us who have been entertaining ourselves the last year or so with visions of the mounds of food we would attack on our release, now realize we'll have to go into quite serious training before we'll be in condition to attack a full course meal.

December 31 – (Saturday)

Once again, we stand on the threshold of a New Year, one which we hope will see an end to this unproductive method of putting in time. Without seeming unduly optimistic, I think it is almost safe to predict that the coming year will bring the finale of this orgy of death and destruction in which we're embroiled. Local newspaper reports indicate the imminence of crucial stages in both eastern and western theatres of war and to us it would seem that, when the decisive phases are actually entered into, the forces unleashed will be so powerful as to preclude – because of economic exhaustion – the possibility of their lasting for any great length of time. In the west, the Russians, though slowed down considerably, seem able to extend their front in their relentless drive against the German invaders. Eventually, if news reports of

colossal losses of men and material are correct, the natural economic and manpower reserves of Russia are bound to manifest themselves as the decisive factors. Germany, in the meantime, has been and is being subjected to such aerial destruction as the world has never before seen, and though the leaders claim its effect on morale and industry to be negligible, I'm inclined to believe that something of the opposite view must be almost inevitable. Added to this pressure on the Russian and home-fronts is the much spoken of projected second front in Europe. Germany's outlook for next year must be dark indeed with the bulk of anti-Axis power poised on the Balkan spring-board and signs of unrest and discontent becoming evident in the Occupied countries. In the Pacific area, the paper records the gradual extension of the Yank front as a result of the recent landings in New Guinea and New Britain sector. The day is getting closer when a decisive naval battle involving the grand fleets of both sides is inevitable, probably in the north Pacific sector. All these factors would seem to indicate that the stage is being set for the last titanic effort to bring things to their conclusion.

Aside from the actual war, I must say that this past year has been one of great improvement over 1942 for we prisoners. Health in general showed noticeable improvement as our systems adapted themselves to their new fare and we were particularly fortunate that no disease of epidemic proportions had to be overcome. Having settled themselves both physically and mentally into their new environment, the majority of the men emerge from 1943 with high hopes of freedom and all that it means being – “just around the corner”.

I have just finished my quarterly postcard home, this time to Grandma Hart. I wonder how many – if any – I've clicked on so far. Some of the lads received mail from home a couple of weeks ago that was written as recently as November, 1942.

The hour of bed draws nigh and with it the last of my enema course. I do hope my “bug” takes its leave with old “43”. My last mental effort of the year is a silent prayer that 1944 will

indeed prove a happy and prosperous New Year, not only for us here but for the world in general.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

1944 – Still in Bowen Road Hospital

January 1 – (Saturday)

I feel I must start the year off with an entry of some sort so here we are. The New Year began somewhat inauspiciously, blanketed by a heavy dismal fog that lends an atmosphere of isolation to our little world apart. The paper has not come around yet but those who have seen it report considerable progress in Russia with the Soviets taking back three strategic towns. Marked advances in Italy are also mentioned and some type of action is reported in Burma. Either Berlin or Germany in general have been the recipients of two thousand tons of allied bombs in the past day or so, indicating that the tempo of things is being stepped up all around.

The noon meal brought a bully stew which means just as much to us here as the turkey being enjoyed by the people at home and resulted in my deciding to give this a rest and crawl under the blankets for a little after-dinner nap. --- Not such a bad start for '44' at that. ----

January 15 – (Tuesday)

Little of local import has occurred in the first fortnight of 1944, in fact it is lack of movement in one quarter that has caused most of the conjecture recently. I refer to the draft situation. The draft which was scheduled to leave here the first week in December didn't manage to get away until today although they had been warned to be ready several times. This fact coupled with the news that a draft of 500, mostly Canadians, had left Sham Shui Po for Japan has everyone making wild surmises as to the reasons behind the moves. Most popular theory seems to be that the hospital is being evacuated and the colony cleared of prisoners. Basis for the assumption re the hospital is the fact that, though the

original draft was to number only twenty, the Japs have asked for forty, with some staff to be included. Twenty went out today with no admissions and another twenty are scheduled to leave Tuesday. I have asked to leave Tuesday for, though no officers are said to have been taken from camp with the last bunch, I'm rather inclined to agree with the theory that the colony is being cleared and I want to make sure I get out with "our" gang. Everything depends on a stool test Monday morning. Assumed reason for the movement of prisoners to Japan is the ever-increasing difficulty of food supplies and the imminence of possible action by the Chinese Army in this area. Our grub situation has actually shown a marked improvement in the last couple of weeks, with the exception of the last few days. Our rations have not improved in quantity but I must admit the quality of the greens to have been decidedly superior. The injection of chrysanthemum "greens" into our diet, on one or two occasions quite recently, however, is something which does not meet with my approval.

I have just finished a book titled "The Hows and Whys of Human Behaviour", by George A. Dorsey, PhD. (Blue Ribbon Books Inc., New York City), which leaves me fairly bristling with good intentions and resolutions which I intend to apply on my return. A light psychological study, the book seems to have stirred me more in regards to personal problems, etc. than any that I've read and has served as a spur for me in the period of readjustment which awaits me on my return. I shall miss the library and the opportunities of undisturbed reading which the hospital affords.

Rather an unexpected disclosure was made in the news of a few days ago with the announcement that the Soviets were operating west of Sarny, a town well inside the Polish border. We had no indication that their drive had penetrated to such depths. Today's paper tells of a raid over Germany on Tuesday which employed some 1,400 planes and quotes a German admission that one of the new reserve squadrons of fighters was employed against it. The same issue quotes Roosevelt as saying, "1944 marks the entry of the war in to the final stage, the offensive stage". How we seize on such statements to bolster our hopes that the end is in sight.

My weight took a terrific jump in the last fortnight and I registered two gains of 4 ½ pounds each, leaving my tonnage at the new high of 155 pounds. Evidently “ole man dysentery” has been given the runaround. I hope!

In reading “A Short History of the English People”, by John Richard Green last night, I chanced on some remarks concerning religion by John Colet, one of the main intellects with Thomas More and Erasmus, behind the Renaissance in England. Strangely enough, our religious ideas seem to coincide and because of his clarity I quote some of his statements in the hope that some light may be cast on the muddle I made of my treatise of a few entries ago. To quote Green – “It was the resolve of Colet to fling aside the traditional dogmas of his day and to discover a rational and practical religion in the gospels themselves, which gave its peculiar stamp to the theology of the Renaissance. His faith stood simply on a vivid realization of the person of Christ. In the preeminence which such a view gave to the moral life, in his free criticism of the earlier Scriptures, in his tendency to simple forms of doctrine and confessions of faith, Colet struck the key note of a mode of religious thought as strongly in contrast with that of later Reformation times as with that of Catholicism itself. The great fabric of belief built by the medieval doctors seemed to him simply the “Corruptions of the schoolmen”. In the Life and Sayings of its Founder, he found a simple and rational Christianity, whose fittest expression was the Apostles Creed. “About the rest,” he said with characteristic impatience, “let divines dispute as they will.” Of his attitude towards the coarser aspects of the current religion, his behaviour at a later time before the famous shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury gives us a rough indication. As the blaze of its jewels, its costly sculptures, its elaborate metal work burst into Colet’s view, he suggested with bitter irony that a saint so lavish to the poor in his lifetime would certainly prefer that they should possess the wealth heaped around him since his death.” And again in his undertakings to reform the Church I quote Colet in an address to the convocation of the clergy at the commission of Bishop Warham. “Would that for once you would remember your name and profession and take thought for the reformation of the church!

Never was it more necessary and never did the state of the church need more vigorous endeavors.” “We are troubled with heretics”, he went on, “but no heresy of theirs is so fatal to us and to the people at large as the vicious and depraved lives of the clergy. That is the worst heresy of all”. Colet’s idea of religious reform was, to again quote Green, “It was the reform of the bishops that must precede that of the clergy, the reform of the clergy that would lead to a general revival of religion to the people at large. The accumulation of benefits, the luxury and worldliness of the priesthood must be abandoned. Care should be taken for the ordination and promotion of worthier ministers and the low standard of clerical morality should be raised. It is plain that Colet looked forward, not to a reform of doctrines, but to a reform of life – not to a revolution which should sweep away the older superstitions which he despised, but to regeneration of spiritual feeling before which they would inevitably vanish”. Another quotation, this from one of Colet’s colleagues expresses still further the need of change. “Synods and decrees, and even councils”, wrote Erasmus, “are by no means in my judgement the fittest modes of repressing error unless truth depends simply on authority. But on the contrary, the more dogmas there are, the more fruitful is the ground in producing heresies. Never was the Christian faith purer or more undefiled than when the world was content with a single creed, and that the shortest creed we have”. Erasmus incidentally, pressed for the enlightenment of the poor and held that the undogmatized teachings of Christ should be available for them. Green says, “Erasmus desired to set Christ himself in the place of the Church, to recall men from the teachings of Christian theologians to the teachings of the Founder of Christianity”. Though the above was intended to apply to a background of some four hundred years past, it would seem that time has not completely eradicated the circumstances which motivated the need for reform. I might add that Colet, Erasmus and company had as supporters such ecclesiastics as the Bishops of Warham, Rochester and Winchester, so that it would seem that foundation for the need of reform was not lacking.

January 18 – (Wednesday)

Our Tuesday has passed without any indication of the departure of the draft. I'm afraid now that we're destined to remain here at least until the end of the month.

My test on Monday indicates a lack of yee olde germe so I've evidently nothing to worry about from that quarter for awhile. My weight of the same day is rather disconcerting as I registered a loss of six pounds for the week. I'm inclined to suspect a degree of fickleness in the scales after my alleged four and a half pound gain of last week. At any rate, my weight now stands at 149, which represents a gain of three pounds in the last month.

Ugly rumours of a small draft having left Sham Shui Po still float around. I'm afraid if true, that Mac, Black and company will have been included. News, views and stews are lacking these days so I imagine this entry will just about wind up "Bowen Road Hospital Interlude."

January 21 – (Saturday)

Just how much faith can one bestow on the old adage that "no news is good news"? That old saw, accompanied by an almost reverent hope, is on everyone's lips and mind today. The reason? Wednesday's paper headlined the news that Britain was endeavouring to negotiate a separate peace with Germany. Quoting the Soviet newspaper Pravda, the paper went on to say that Von Ribbentrop had effected a meeting somewhere on the Iberian Peninsula with two English representatives to discuss terms of a separate peace. It added that the meeting was not without some results. Subsequent paragraphs gave the views of various governments, the U.S. expressing surprise at its origin in the semi-official government organ, Pravda, and Britain merely announcing that the policies of the anti-Axis were already determined and remained that way. No comment was forthcoming from Germany or Russia. Immediately, we seized on the loophole that no country had actually come out with a denial of the article which, by the way, was dated January 12th. Thursday's paper brought protests of

indignation from anti-Axis quarters with allegations that Germany was using subtle means to effect a rift in the British-United States-Russia front. Again we sifted through reports and could find no denial of the meeting actually taking place. Friday was going to clarify matters we hoped but, unfortunately, no issue of Friday's paper was delivered...nor Saturday's...and we understand that no English or Vernacular papers either came up or were printed. I'm not sure which it is on those days. Anyway, there is the situation. Is there some big news in the offing and if so, is it Germany's capitulation, (English seeking terms doesn't seem to be justified at the moment) or the starting of the second front, or just coincidence? We reason that if suppression of news is behind it, that the first query would be the likely one since so much publicity has been given the remainder that it can be said to be something of which we expected to hear from day to day. Time alone will provide the solution, so we can do nothing but sit back and wait, and hope.

January 25 – (Tuesday)

I have chosen this day to answer, after a fashion, the conundrum presented by our news of last week, chiefly because the date marks the beginning of the New Year for the Chinese. As for the news – well, it just seemed to have evaporated. Sunday's paper made no mention of the incident at all and any chance we might have had to see if we could ferret out anything significant in subsequent editions, went by the boards with the suspension of the paper until January 28th because of the New Year holiday. However, being an optimist of the super-duper class, I'm still inclined to believe it was a portent of a trend that, I hope, will manifest itself in the near future.

Our weather has been particularly outstanding these last few days. Warm, with bags of sunshine, it makes one feel grand just to be alive. Our local weather prophets are all crossed up as I understand from them that we should be on the verge of the cold, damp, dismal cycle of weather.

As can be seen, our draft has not materialized yet and it now looks as though we'll see the end of January in here.

My latest excursion into the printed world is an excellent book by H.G. Wells titled "The Holy Terror", which is not – as the title might indicate – a book on boxing or gangsterism, but a story of a wonderful new political movement embracing the people of a united England – United States sphere in particular and the world in general. At least so I gather from the first quarter of the book as read. Maybe his "Utopia" is the answer to our somewhat muddled scheme of things. We'll see.

January 31 – (Monday)

This entry is being penned from the old stomping ground at Sham Shui Po, I having finally managed my get-away from the hospital with a draft on Saturday. Arriving here, I was able to set my mind at ease, inasmuch as those hideous rumours of subsequent drafts out of here proved false. It's strange how one becomes reconciled to environments. I felt I was arriving back home when we landed here. The camp shows little change since my departure with the possible exception of the garden plots. Agriculture has branched out to such an extent that almost every available foot of ground is now being utilized as a food provider. Some administrative changes too are in evidence chief among which is the P.T. period twice daily, the morning one – compulsory for everyone – being accompanied by the camp band. Under the guiding hand of a new camp Sergeant Major who is said to be an exceptionally clever and likeable chap, the place fairly bristles with system and efficiency, a condition which brings out too clearly the muddled, though well-meant administration at the hospital. We have some three hundred Canucks, out of a total camp strength of around a thousand, so there was little foundation for our wild camp clearance rumour of Bowen Road. Rumours of another draft within a month are now circulating and are generally considered as an actual possibility. Personally, I care little when or where I go as long as I remain with the gang, although I have no desire to get mixed up with the senior officers again. The food situation is a definite improvement over the existing conditions at the hospital

and I'm doing a lot of catching up these days. Generally speaking though, the food situation in the Colony is far from good and local food supplies become increasingly more difficult to procure. As far as we are concerned, Red Cross supplies seem to be on the verge of giving out so that, unless further shipments arrive, difficult times are in the offing. Latest word is that at present consumption rates, the atta will be finished and sugar has been a thing of the past for the last two months.

I arrived in camp just in time to catch the last night of the latest show and found it very good. I understand I've missed about three really good shows since my departure but will have an opportunity to see some of the better numbers in a show titled "Cavalcade of '43" which comes up shortly.

March 11 – (Saturday)

Once again, I'm enjoying (?) the comforts of the camp hospital. It would seem that, having once partaken, hospitalization tends to become something of a recurring habit. At any rate, we're here again. My stay this trip should prove a short one for, though I'm in the dysentery ward, tests so far show no indication of the presence of the bug. My stomach seems to be upset about something, a condition which I'm afraid I brought on myself. A week ago or so I had the opportunity of joining the permanent wood-chopping staff of the hospital kitchen and, hoping that I might rebuild the old body with a bit of strenuous exercise, I jumped at the chance. Unfortunately, not only was it a mite too strenuous, but I found master's body just couldn't take things anymore, with the result that, after going off my feed for a week, my system finally openly rebelled at my efforts to over-ride my better judgement, resulting in my admittance Thursday night. Oh well! I'll learn.

News around camp is conspicuous by its absence with the possible exception of the ever-present draft rumours. Information from several reliable sources seems to concur on the possibilities of our leaving by the month's end. Some insist that the camp is to be cleared entirely by the middle of next month, others that the

draft will be comprised of all the officers, plus some from Argyle Camp and a sufficient number of O.R.'s to act as batmen. Whatever its ultimate composition, a draft will be most welcome anytime. Food conditions in the Colony are fast approaching a stage which promises to be anything but amusing. Last week our rice ration was cut by one-third and the fact that we are near the end of our Red Cross reserves isn't exactly encouraging. For reasons beyond our ken, we hear that M. & V. and bully rations will be increased next week from four to eight ounces per man per week for the former. This bit of news, coupled with the absence of flour and decrease of atta leads some to the conclusion that it is the intention to use up the small remaining Red Cross stores before the draft goes. Some idea of the difficulties being faced by people outside may be gleaned from current prices downtown, some of which I quote; rice – five yen per catty (1 ½ lb), pork – 18.50 per lb, beans – 2.60 (8 ounce tin), margarine – 12.00 per pound, salt – 3.10 per pound, onions (bulb variety) – 3.50 per pound, cooking oil – 25.00 per pound, local syrup – 10.80 (2 lb tin), soy sauce – 3.70 (pint), cigarettes (cheapest) – 45 sen for ten. Wood is 25.00 per picul (133 pounds) and like rice, sugar and oil is rationed. I might mention that a log of wood approximately two foot long by a diameter of one foot will weigh around 50 pounds. Our best buy in here is corned mutton at 10.50 per 12 ounce tin. Considering the probable earning capacity of the average individual outside, one can visualize just what they have to contend with, so it is not without reason that I say we are fortunate in here – nevertheless, malnutritional defects are again beginning to manifest themselves amongst the men so we welcome the possibility of any change.

Mail has been coming into camp for the past week almost daily, at the average of 30 to 40 letters per day, but so far I haven't clicked. I'm still hoping for photos.

By co-incidence, less than six hours after penning the above re mail, I am the recipient of some myself. – Not "The" letter, but very acceptable none the less. A card expressing Christmas and New Year's greetings, plus a prayer for my safe return home comes from Addie Seaver. Strange how friendships bridge the years. A note-worthy feature of today's batch of mail is

the inclusion of six letters for Harry White, his first since capture. Reports from the hut indicate that Harry is staggering around, still somewhat punch drunk not knowing where to start first. Mac says he's so excited he doesn't know whether he's coming or going. What a thrill after these months of disappointment. Is it strange that we wonder how we're going to react to different situations when we get out? I can visualize people excusing our actions with a shake of the head and a sad smile with the knowing assertion, "Really a shame my dear, but you know he was a prisoner of war for years." Ah well! Maybe my creditors will adopt the same attitude.

March 17 – (Friday)

And so passes another 17th of Ireland, and with it the deflation of a rumour that has been most persistent for the past couple of weeks. From literally dozens of sources we have been hearing that the 17th was the date on which the draft figures would be given out and all waited impatiently for news as to who was going etc. etc. An orderly sergeant's call this morning announcing distribution of caps to some of the inmates and requesting information as to who possessed, or rather, did not possess two serviceable shirts, served to strengthen our convictions. Instead I hear tonight of a proposal for the construction of air raid shelters as a precaution against "all-out" bombing. That doesn't sound like we're moving out.

One bit of local news has come out since the last entry which might possibly have some interesting reverberations. I refer to the action of local government in removing rice from the ration list downtown. This action is tantamount to an official admission by government that they are unable to keep the Colony supplied and they now place the onus on the local Chinese merchants to see what they can do. It means simply that whatever stocks of rice do enter the Colony will be placed on the open market where those having sufficient money will be able to procure what they want, while those less fortunate --- well --- The price of rice jumped from 5 yen to 15 yen per catty on the black market the day the announcement was made, although the measure is not effective

until April 15. Despite official admonition against profiteering, it would look to me as though someone is going to go hungry. What then?

General war news, while none too plentiful, is definitely favourable to us. A late "Bamboo telegraph" report informs us of the Russian penetration into Poland as far as Lemburg. If true, it would indicate everything is under control in the Eastern Front sector. The local paper still records the ever-approaching advance of the Yanks in the south and it now looks as though the Burma campaign has finally got under way.

March 19 – (Sunday)

I continue on Sunday in order to have an entry on Paddy's birthday. Many happy returns Pat. Once again, I'm hoping to celebrate the next one with you. I can hardly picture you in your present state. Surely you must be as big as your mother by this time. I hope you still retain an interest in the piano and that your mother has been instructing you in the finer points of golf. By the time of my return we should be able to make up a pretty fair family foursome. – Maybe next summer.

I'm still hospitalized although I've changed my residence from Dysentery ward to Convalescent. The M.O. has me on a nice mushy diet of ground rice, aided and abetted by a course of ten needles of nicotinic acid. – So – I've little to do but sit around and rest, a thing I find easy enough to do with my stomach in its present condition. Some of us have life pretty easy.

March 27 - (Monday)

At long last I am able to record receipt of the much-hoped for letters and snaps from Glad. Yours of August 15/42 duly received and in the process of digestion. I can't say offhand whether the receipt of the family likeness has had an uplifting or depressing effect. Certainly it does make one wonder what in hell we're wasting time on this side of the globe for. – Oh well! I also received a newsy letter from Nina last week, dated July 29, 1942.

(It would seem as though we're a mite off the beaten path when it comes to getting mail). Nina mentions receiving a typewritten letter from Paddy. I hope the latter is going in for it seriously.

Once again I'm back in the lines, the reason being that some rather significant moves have taken place in camp – moves that would seem to point to only one thing, a draft. Friday a camp muster on the square resulted in the registration of all the fit men in camp and further steps, taken Sunday and Monday, which seems to be resulting in the setting out of segregation areas, leaves us with little doubt concerning the imminence of a draft. Having no knowledge of just who might be included in the draft personnel and fearing that a “quickie” might be pulled which might catch me hospitalized, I asked for, and received, my release. Actually I do feel much improved though I am at present plagued by a type of scabies which finds me with a dozen or so very healthy sores, all nicely septic. What condition my blood must be in!

Bamboo telegraph, which at one time or another has served us up some pretty fair rumours, comes to bat now with a really “colossal” set, some of which have been verified, leaving us wondering whether to “bite”, as we have done with former “super-dupers” or to disregard the whole lot as hokum. Anyway, for what they're worth here they are: Operations commenced by March 3rd by States forces against areas on Luzon Island (P.I.) resulted in the establishment of a Yank bridgehead after twelve days of bitter fighting. American forces are now reported to be forcing their way towards Manila in the face of fierce enemy opposition. Item #2 – Anti-Axis troops in considerable number are reported to have effected a landing on the Dalmation Coast. Item #3 – It is also reported that U.S. troops operating in the D.E.I. area effected a landing on Sumatra. Item #4 – News from the Eastern front indicates that the Russians, in their drive westward, have succeeded in crossing Bessarabia and are now operating in Romania proper. Of this stock, I'm afraid the last mentioned item can be the only one which we can hope to really contain any germ of truth. However, “if” some credence could be given the others, our chances of liberation this year would be considerably enhanced. I must admit most of us to be, after our two years plus,

just selfish enough to gauge the importance of most of our news by the bearing it has on our ultimate release. Regardless of the veracity of rumour, the “bona fide” paper news received continues to buoy us up. The Ruskies continue their marvelous work and a small item in yesterday’s paper, telling of Churchill making a short “before the battle” speech to troops in England lends us the hope that work will soon commence on another front which will bring that climax, which we all await, to affairs in the west. – Roll on lads! This mode of living threatens to become monotonous.

Another squint at my letters and pictures makes me more impatient than ever.

April 1 – (Saturday)

As I enter this effort in my book, I hear snatches of news from tonight’s paper. Evidently, the Germans have evacuated a town in northern Romania, situated on the Pruth River, which is situated on the main railway line to the south areas and can therefore be considered important strategically. News of invasion preparations in Holland, which include flooding of some of the Low Countries is also a hopeful sign.

No further news on draft developments but we hear tomorrow is the day.

April 7 – (Good Friday)

This would seem to be my lucky day, at least as far as mail is concerned. Tonight I am the lucky recipient of four letters, two from Gladys, one from Nina and one from Frank Allen, all of them very newsy. I feel something of a pig, getting four in one bunch while others have still to hear from wives and mothers but I guess that’s the luck of the draw. I’m glad to see Paddy still retains her musical interest and I note, with some apprehension, my wife’s evident improvement in the field of golf. I humbly submit also, to the administration of the wrist-slap over the matter of Shelagh’s age. To be quite frank, I had thought her to be three and a half years of age when I left. Now that I’ve firmly established the years

of one member of the family, all I need is a hint as to Paddy's and your own and I'll be all set. I'm still able, after complex calculations, to accurately establish my own age. I still can't get used to the satisfaction derived from receipt of the written word from home. It's amazing -----

Events in camp remain at the well-known standstill, even the draft rumours seeming to have evaporated. I imagine the draft is still a fact but either lack of ships or blockade seems to have put the kibosh on it for the present. A blessing in the form of some supplies from the Chinese Red Cross has been received in camp and, though I'm not sure of the quantities, the following items are rumoured to have been brought in. Peanut butter (70 lbs), shark oil, bran (1,800 lbs), sugar (brown) and soybean milk powder. Regardless of the quantities entailed, we accept with grateful thanks and thank heaven for such humanitarian organizations as the Red Cross. I don't think there's any doubt that most of us owe our lives to the earlier efforts of this group in providing us with food. We have, by a freak of circumstances, profited in still another way due to the scarcity of food. It may be remembered that, approximately a year ago, some twenty-five pigs were purchased from outside with money from the camp amenities fund, the object being to provide a modest meat supply for future days when Red Cross supplies were no longer available. The number of pigs having increased from the original twenty-five to some ninety-odd presented an additional problem in the matter of fodder, slops and left-over rice from camp proving inadequate. According to rumour, the ration officer took it upon himself to issue, unofficially of course, rice from the rations which was cooked up for the pigs. Somehow, news of this reached the Japs, who were somewhat annoyed and their suggestion was that the pigs be sold at the original purchase price of 1.50 yen per pound (present price downtown ~34 yen), the money to be used to buy rice to replace that used for fodder. By some adroit means, an agreement was come to which calls for the slaughter of all pigs, except five, over a three month period so that we now enjoy pork stews twice a week. Needless to say – that suits us!

My letters came along at a most opportune time. Physically, I've been at a low ebb all day – due to efforts to cleanse my system and rid myself of these septic sores. I've taken a course of streptocide pills throughout the day and I may say that the physical reaction to “strep” is a most glorious “hang-over” consisting of terrific headaches, nausea and a very unsettled stomach. After feeling sorry for myself all day, the letters proved just the stimulant I needed.

I have just finished Douglas Reed's “Insanity Fair” and found it most entertaining and enlightening. He certainly foretells the events leading up to this war and gives a remarkably clear picture of the current trends. Reed's picture is somewhat different to that portrayed by Gibbs, particularly in their conception of the subsequent effects, however, this is due, I think, to the different strata in which each worked. I also read a few chapters of his “Disgrace Abounding” and was particularly struck with two chapters in which he deals with the Jewish problem. He is certainly anti-Semitic but I must admit his arguments against them seemed well-founded and sound. – I hope to make several books of this type, which I have read here, the nucleus of a small library that will assist me in after-years in my endeavour to keep abreast of the times.

Just in passing I want to mention an editorial, aimed at profiteering, which appeared in last night's paper and which mentions one or two items affected by our local ‘inflation’. One of the examples given was “caustic soda”, an article used in the manufacture of soap and which, according to the article, sold for \$100 (Hong Kong) per tub before the war. The paper went on to state that although stocks still existing were brought in before the commencement of hostilities, the price of caustic soda soared as high as 120,000 yen per tub, the present price being 40,000 yen. Towels too were mentioned and the editor could not reconcile himself to the price of a small thin towel being 35 yen and rice being sold at 7.50 per pound. Seems screwy, doesn't it? I only hope that when deductions are made from our pay for board and lodging etc. enjoyed here, they are made on the exchange basis represented in the first example. Thus – Hong Kong \$100 - \$33.50

(Canadian) – 120,000 therefore equals damned little. I fear I'm going to begrudge paying out for lodging and pay while in here.

April 22 – (Saturday)

A series of developments in connection with the much-rumoured draft has served to occupy our minds with the usual questions of destination, disposition, etc., and serves also as an excuse for this entry. The machinery was set in motion on Wednesday when the camp R.E.'s received orders to construct a kitchen bake-shop and ration stores in "E" and "F" lines which, with the exception of our hut, had previously been segregated by wire from the rest of the camp. This move, of course, started the usual flurry of rumours and conjectures. Thursday, a draft of medical people, ten from Bowen Road and ten from Argyle, arrived in camp and were immediately herded behind the wire where they were somewhat incommunicable by an order which promised that anyone trying to establish contact with them would risk being shot. Friday forenoon brought an orderly sergeant's call which resulted in some two hundred of the camp personnel being called up and also placed behind the wire. Today rumour has it that a party of officers, alleged to be 150, were put aboard ship at Cosmopolitan docks this afternoon so it would seem that Argyle too is being denuded. All we'd like to know is – does the set-up include officers from here, and if so, who? – Unfortunately we lose Johnnie, Joe and Guita but we hope for a reunion in the not-too-distant future. Pending the draft's departure, we are occupying temporary quarters a little more removed from the segregation area.

I'm back on the wood-chopping gang again and my weight is doing a remarkable come-back job. A check-up a couple of days ago reveals a topping, by two pounds, of my pre-dysentery weight of 161. How much of the new weight can be attributed to beri-beri is a matter of conjecture, but on the whole I feel rather fit. My legs have given me a spot of bother recently but this and a "pellagra mouth" are my only physical complaints. I do hope the old body hangs out sufficiently to allow me to continue working. Whatever else it does, it's certainly perked up my appetite.

April 24 – (Monday)

Another letter from Gladys – this one dated August 25, 1943. Things are speeding up. Glad to note the consummation of the Dahl-Leavesly nuptials. I'll have me a bottle of rum on the strength of that – someday.

April 30, 1944 – Swift Current, Sask.

My dearest Len,

All are well here and at Winnipeg. Still no mail from you. Hope and pray that you are well. Snaps taken recently. Aren't the girls big?

*All my love,
Glad*

May 6 – (Saturday)

The yearly commemorative effort in honour of the combined birthdays of Shelagh, Grandma Hart, Nina, etc. being due tomorrow and no work today due to wood shortage, I'll just combine circumstances and rattle off a few lines. First, my very best wishes for many more anniversaries for those concerned. McCarthy recalls that May 7th is also the birthdate of several members of his clan so we feel that momentous things must result (particularly in Europe, we hope) from such favourable portents. Indications given us by our local papers lead us to expect the opening of the second front momentarily and, of course, we have every confidence in it being prosecuted to a successful conclusion. Whether the action, when finally undertaken, will be decisive enough to encourage our hopes of being released this year, remains to be seen but – we still hope.

The departure of the draft last Saturday was marked by more than the usual feeling of loss generally accompanying these occasions. The loss of so many of our Portuguese friends seemed somehow to be more poignant than that experienced in other drafts. It was almost as though these chaps were life-long friends rather than mere acquaintances of two short years. We have much

to thank these friends of ours for, particularly through some of our most difficult times, when acts of comradeship entailed the personal sacrifice of truly essential things which they cheerfully shared with friends whose circumstances prevented the procurement of foodstuffs, etc. I shall recall too with much pleasure, the hours of sport enjoyed with this fine group of athletes and count myself fortunate in having met and competed against such good sportsmen as the Leonard brothers – Terry, Dave, Norm and Stan; the Gosana brothers – Jerry, Luigi, and Zinho; “Spotty” Perara, “Rerry” Noronha, Tony Alves, Georgie White and a host of others, all gentlemen, both on and off the playing field. Yes, we Canadians owe much to the lads of Hong Kong’s Portuguese colony. Their contribution to our drab camp existence can not be extolled enough. Mac, Blackie and myself experienced a more personal loss with the departure of Johnnie, Joe, Guita, “Uncle” (E.M. Franco) and “Rickie” (Ricardo Silva). We sincerely hope our friends are enjoying their new habitation and we look forward to a happy reunion in the not-too-distant future.

Camp life remains as dull and monotonous as ever with nothing to vary the normal run of work parties, camp fatigues, etc. Since my arrival from Bowen Road, I find my mental processes have gone into another flat spin, with the result that I have the greatest difficulty in undertaking the reading of a book or any sort of writing. I seem unable to recapture the feeling of ambition that prevailed for a short time at Bowen Road.

Generally speaking, our domestic state has improved somewhat in these last few months so that I think a résumé of an average camp day might not be amiss. Firstly, in the matter of quarters, I find our present accommodation leaving something to be desired. We understand, and are cheered by the thought that, the present set-up is of a temporary nature, which is just as well since we find ourselves squeezed, some forty of us, into one hut. The ever important question of food promises – unless some unexpected new source is tapped, to be one which will probably be uppermost in our minds for the next few months. The bulk of our Red Cross supplies have been used up, together with those furnished by the local Red Cross, a month or so ago and our

position is now one in which we find ourselves dependant, with the exception of a very small quantity of bully and M. & V. still remaining, on local markets for a supplementary food to go with our rice. Unfortunately, from a purely personal standpoint, the mainstay of this auxiliary supply lately has been melons and cucumbers, neither of which I have any love for. I'll be glad when seasonal changes force a commodity change. Beri-beri and pellagra are again making inroads into general camp health but I believe we'll not be too badly off if our present diet can be maintained.

I believe I've mentioned the improvement shown in interior administration in the camp of late. Fortunately, those days seem to have gone when people were, for no evident reason, the recipients of slaps, poundings and the prodding of rifle-butts, and I do think that very few, if any, of the camp inmates have anything but good to say for our local Japanese administration. We do, however, harbour a great deal of resentment for the English officer who acts in the capacity of camp liaison officer. Whether this man is so frightened of our hosts as to let his judgement become warped or whether it's just another "Limey" trait, I can't say, but certainly his attitude and methods have promoted a feeling of revulsion throughout the whole camp. Imagine – if you can – a "Regular" British officer in a British POW camp using his own countrymen as stool-pigeons and stooges amongst their own compatriots to report minor infractions and petty breaches of camp discipline to him, this by the way, was carried on to the extent of placing men in the latrines in an endeavour to report anything which might be included in casual conversation. Things of this nature, if we are to believe our propaganda machines at home, might be expected from some of our enemies, who we are led to believe are not quite as "enlightened" as we more "Fortunates", but it just doesn't seem "cricket" to find such measures being practiced by officers and men of the armed forces of the "Mother" country. It is generally conceded that one might expect more justice and consideration in direct dealings with the Japs than can be obtained from the office of the liaison officer. To get on with a résumé of our "day" – Reveille at seven followed by a breakfast of ground rice and tea at half past seven officially commences our day. Morning muster at

8:45 is followed by a half-hour of the musical P.T. which I mentioned earlier, after which the daily camp fatigues such as sanitary, drawing or ration cleaning of areas, drains and huts undertaken by those not permanently employed. "Permanent" employment refers to kitchen staff, wood-choppers, gardeners, ordinance people, etc. The gardens, incidentally, are being run these days almost wholly by officers and have proved a boon to the camp diet question – to say nothing of the profit derived by those employed there. Lunch at 12:15 usually brings rice, tea and a thin vegetable stew which suffices us until the main meal at 5:30. A second P.T. parade at 3 p.m. for those not "employed" serves to discourage too much lying around the huts. Dinner follows immediately after the 4:45 muster parade and it usually consists of the usual rice and tea augmented by a somewhat thicker stew than at tiffin and, twice or three times a week, fish (usually fried – if size permits). Lights out at eleven brings each monotonous day to a close and we repair to our "couches" to contemplate the possibilities of our release this year and the good things it would entail.

In regard to sports, we find that disease and successive drafts seem to have virtually eliminated this form of time-killer from our routine, however with the coming of warm weather, volleyball is in the revival stages – in fact, a small league is in the offing – made up of members of the kitchen and wood-chopping gangs. Generally speaking, it would seem that the days of really good competitive sport are gone.

The weather man has been particularly kind to us this year as we were not subjected to more than two or three weeks of cold weather – a fact for which we are indeed thankful since it is quite likely that in our present condition, inclemency of weather might have seriously affected the health of the camp.

The first mail for some days brought a most welcome letter from George Dunlop. Yes, the main theme was golf. Rather makes one homesick for the old fairways and sand greens.

A group of some hundred and fifty-odd officers arrived from Argyle Camp and took up residence in the “segregation area” mentioned earlier. Rumour has another two hundred and fifty joining them soon as a prelude to an officers’ draft. We have been expecting the order to move in with them but as yet it has not been forthcoming. Colonel Price and Charles Price, Major McCauley and Father Deloughrie are the only newcomers I’ve recognized so far.

May 6th, 1944 – Shelagh...

My fifth birthday tomorrow. A shared birthday with my Great Grandmother Mary Hart – who was born in the year of Confederation – and my Aunt Nina, Dad’s older sister. But still no recollection on my part of what was going on around me in terms of daily activities. I remember living in the little house on Third West that my mother mentions in her letters – and I know from the pictures of Paddy and I taken in that home that life carried on – without word from my father and what was happening to him. Hard to imagine that we had no idea about his state of health or circumstances as a prisoner of war.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

May 28 – (Sunday)

I'll utilize my "day of rest" to add the odd thought to the "journal". The only event of any importance since the last entry is the receipt of mail which included a Father's Day card from Paddy and a letter from Dad. It's good to hear that things were in good shape at home as recently as August of last year. Indications of an increase in tempo in the war situation and the ever impending second front leaves us optimistic about our freedom chances this year.

I'm still on the wood gang and my weight increases with a rapidity that is almost embarrassing. Our monthly weigh-in for the Japs found my tonnage increased from either 147 or 149, at the last official weigh-in, to 172 this time. Not bad on rice!

An indication of the difficulty experienced in trying to put thoughts to paper in this environment may be understood when I say that the date is now June 4th, a week after the three or four line endeavour that was started as last week's contribution. In the matter of local news, I've missed nothing newsworthy in spite of the week's lapse. Directly or indirectly the wood-chopping job is proving a great time killer. The work itself actually occupies only the mornings but I find that I'm able to spend the afternoon sleeping without jeopardizing my night's effort to any extent. I may have mentioned previously the extreme hardness and all-around toughness of the wood we handle, particularly camphor, eucalyptus and a type we call Singapore hardwood. With the somewhat make-shift type of tools we use, we find that a morning's work expends just about as much physical effort as one cares to give.

Between working and sleeping I've managed to get in a spot of reading having just concluded Douglas Reed's third and last volume, "A Prophet At Home". Reed indulges in a bitter denunciation of English politics and politicians in "The Prophet" and flays them unmercifully for the deterioration of the parliamentary system to the apathetic state which allowed them to be caught in the terrible state of unpreparedness evident at the outbreak of this war. Another book in the same vein, "Guilty Men" by Cato is also a scathing indictment of the politicians whose responsibility the aforementioned conditions was claimed to be.

Our rainy season has descended upon us since the last entry and seems to be determined to make up for lost time.

The Chinese Red Cross again comes to bat with another installment of bran, sugar, peanut butter and shark oil. We may thank God that organizations of this kind are allowed to perform at least some of their functions in wartime.

June 11 – (Sunday)

At long last we hear tidings from the western front which raise our hopes to a new high. The long-awaited second front has finally been launched. News of the momentous event was contained in Thursday's paper and from it we learned that landing operations had begun on June 5th and 6th in the area between La Havre and Cherbourg. Subsequent news in Friday's edition mentions further landings in the same area and, though they state that all paratroops that effected landing have been annihilated, we feel that such a statement is a bit of wishful thinking and we have every confidence in the ultimate success of the venture. Great excitement prevailed in camp in receipt of the news and people immediately cast caution to the winds and issued predictions on Germany's collapse in periods ranging from two weeks to two months. Whatever other vices we as a group possess, pessimism does not seem to be included. Yesterday's paper (Vernacular) presents a more detailed picture and from it we learn that Eisenhower and Montgomery are both in France directing operations, so it would seem that things are under some measure of

control. Mention is also made of a reserve force of eighty divisions poised in readiness in Scotland. The use of three Divisions from Canada in the initial landing will bring the inevitable casualty list for those at home and, though I hope to be in error, I'm afraid these will be quite heavy. I suppose Hubert, Bob and many of our friends will be in the thick of things. We – in here – pause to reflect on what useless pieces of furniture we have become.

The local situation remains as unproductive as usual, except that yesterday's paper mentions the round-up and capture of some one hundred and twenty persons, plus arms and ammunition, on Lantau Island, about six miles distant – with the claim that they were Communists. We have hopes that something will break in the not-to-distant future which will give us some indication of how things are shaping up in this area.

We enjoyed our first soft-ball game of the year when the hospital kitchen defeated #1 kitchen by a 6 to 2 score this morning. Our wood-chopper volley ball team begins to shape up nicely and we now share top league honours with the bakery sextet so perhaps from a sports viewpoint the summer season may not be entirely unproductive after all.

Another trip to the scales today finds me still piling it on. I tipped the beam at 178, an approximate gain of thirty pounds since dysentery days, unfortunately some of it is beri-beri and I hope to start a thiamin course tomorrow. Another bit of annoyance I'm currently enjoying is prickly heat brought on – I imagine – by my super secretions of perspiration these days.

June 12 – (Monday)

A further invasion report alleged to have come from the Vernacular and circulating tonight quotes Eisenhower as having expressed complete satisfaction with the initial stage of the landing and announcing that the second stage is under way. Neutral shipping was warned to remain in port for the period from June 8th to 15th evidently for its own protection. Complete optimism

prevails in camp with the belief that “44” is the year being almost unanimous.

June 25 – (Sunday)

The passing of another week brings little change in the general war situation in the west, at least by what we can judge from our news sources. Further developments in the Pacific sphere appeared with the announcement that an American task force had effected landing on Saipon Island, one of the Marianna group and a most strategic base, on June 17th. Yesterday’s paper also mentions that on June 19th and 20th a combined Japanese fleet encountered three groups of an American task force west of the Mariannas. Something a little new and revealing in the way of covering statements appeared in the report of losses in this encounter. Our losses are given as five carriers and one battleship sunk or damaged, plus one hundred planes shot down. Jap losses include one carrier, two oil tankers sunk, fifty aircraft shot down and the article concludes with the rather significant statement, “However our side did not deal a decisive blow against the enemy.” - ? – This after two years of the type of propaganda to which we’ve been subjected, we consider a most heartening admission. Further news last week of the bombing of Kyushu, one of the islands of the main Japanese group, indicates possibilities that the air offensive against Japan proper – promised by Chennault last year – may have begun. Details received here were somewhat skimpy due to local censorship but mention is made of the use of B.29’s, “Super Flying Fortresses”. An unverified rumour credited to the Vernacular claims Saipan has been evacuated due to “overwhelming superiority of the enemy”.

The week past brought a terrific fall of rain with every day featured by very heavy showers every few minutes. Colony oldsters are of the belief that something in the way of a seasonal record for rainfall will be established this year.

Friday next marks the passing of another birthday for Mrs. C. Once again my apologies for not knowing how many have slipped by. But at least I can claim some measure of credit for

having remembered the occasion. I'm quite proud of the manner in which I have kept track of birthdays and anniversaries since my incarceration. Somehow dates seem of greater significance here than at home. Anyway – all the best and many more Mrs. C.

As if continuous rain by itself were not sufficiently dismal and dreary, we have the added annoyance of having to do without fags, a situation we hope to be of a temporary nature only. Evidently some supply difficulty downtown is responsible.

McCarthy, Prendy (Captain Prendergast) and Bob Nicol are laid low at present with an attack of some type of “flu” which is going the rounds. Bob and Prendy are members of the hospital wood-chopper crew so that the balance of us should have sufficient exercise to do us. I believe the ailment has been brought on by a rather stiff anti-cholera inoculation received earlier in the week.

June 30 – (Friday)

Mrs. C's birthday is being celebrated on one of the most pleasant days we've yet experienced. A warm, clear day with a lovely cooling breeze gives one that “glad to be alive” feeling. Fairly low banks of fleecy clouds serve as back drops for hills which are beginning to take on their mid-year coat of green. Whatever else may be said for or against Hong Kong, it cannot be denied that few localities surpass it in the matter of natural beauty. I hope I am fortunate enough to enjoy its beauty more thoroughly in peace time. A family celebration of your birthday in these parts wouldn't be a bad idea Mrs. C.

July 1 – (Saturday)

Just a note to record the Canadian observance of Dominion Day in Sham Shui Po. A baseball game with the Taiwanese guards resulted in a 15 to 1 victory for the Canucks. I didn't play due to my having to attend a rehearsal for the evening show, but I understand the game was enjoyed by all – in spite of the rather lopsided score. One of the humorous features of the game was the performance of our North Point interpreter, Mr. Kochi, who served

as umpire. From all accounts, the Canucks just couldn't make a mistake while the poor guards had everything called on them. In the evening, a show along the lines of "Wrigley's Treasure Trail" with skits and numbers by a five-piece band, helped to round out the entertainment. A cup of sweet tea with the compliments of the officers put the finishing touch to what we hope was our last Dominion Day celebration away from Canada.

I neglected to mention that I made June 30th something of a double celebration by martialing my courage and visiting the dentist. Much to my satisfaction I found one filling all that was necessary to tide me over for a few more months.

July 9 – (Sunday)

The general war situation has accelerated in tempo considerably on all fronts in the week past, according to our news sources here. The situation in France remains a trifle obscure but, as nearly as we can judge, things seem to be going according to plan. On the eastern Front, tremendous gains are recorded for the Russians, particularly in the central and Finnish sectors. With the evacuation of Kovel and Minsk, the situation would seem anything but encouraging for the Germans since, by our calculation, Kovel lies only 450 miles (approximately) from Berlin and Minsk about 150 miles from the borders of East Prussia. Handling of the news at this end leaves us in some doubt as to whether these gains have been made quite recently, as reported, or whether delay in publishing dispatches lends the advance more of the appearance of a rout than it really deserves. If we are to take our news at face value then the swiftness of the advance is almost incredible. The Yanks are by no means leaving all the spectacular to the Russians. Mention is made Thursday of waves of hundreds of carrier-based aircraft raiding the Bonin Islands, a most strategic Pacific base situated some six hundred miles from the Japanese mainland. Somehow I can't visualize excessive exuberance on the part of the Japanese people at the thought of American Task Forces racing around the Pacific almost at will. Establishment of Yank bases in the Bonins might do away with the necessity of footholds on the China coast and in the Philippines. It depends of course on whether

aerial and naval warfare against Japan might be considered sufficient to force a decision, particularly if the European front does a convenient collapse for us.

Even our local news contains a bit more colour than usual. Fighting is reported some forty kilometers northwest of Canton, which puts us within ninety miles of fighting as the crow flies. (Unfortunately crows are just one of the things we can't fly like.)

July 15 – (Saturday)

Entries seem to have evolved to a weekly basis so I'll polish off this week's a day ahead of schedule, owing to the likelihood of our having to draw wood this afternoon. General scarcity of wood in the colony and consequent curtailment of our ration has resulted in a new meal schedule commencing next week. A piece of rice-bran bread is to be substituted for our present ground rice dish. Actual rations remain unchanged for the two remaining meals. Evidently the fighting in the Canton area is manifesting itself in the matter of the colony's food supply for we have received very little in the way of vegetable produce of late. Melons, a local product, have been the mainstay for quite some time. Beans supplies by the local Red Cross have been almost a staple item in our diet lately with at least one bean meal daily. How the poorer classes make out downtown is quite beyond us. Wood, food and cooking oil prices have soared to fantastic heights and we read in the local paper of rents being increased five and six hundred per cent. One case listed by the paper told of a coolie who had been paying a monthly rental of 18 Yen, receiving notification that his rent had been increased to 120 yen. News of that nature must play hell with the family budget. Listed in the same paper was an ad offering a Parker pen and pencil set for 1,400 Yen. Watches, gold, jewellery and other valuables considered of the non-fluctuating type, find a ready market at the most fantastic prices.

Last Thursday brought a welcome letter from Mother dated August of last year, my first for some time. What a difference a

monthly quota of up-to-date mail would make in our miserable existence.

Weather for the week has been very unsettled and featured by a dozen or so “cloud-bursts” accompanied by quite heavy winds. July and August being typhoon months, we’ve been on the alert and ready to tie things down at the first sign of a big blow. Typhoon warnings up this afternoon has so far brought nothing worse than the usual windy showers. Doors and windows of tin sheeting would constitute a big danger if a typhoon were to strike.

I’ve just finished Shirer’s “Berlin Diary” and thoroughly enjoyed it. What a life chaps like Shirer, Reed, Gunther et al have lived. Why couldn’t I have exhibited journalistic tendencies in my youth?

Little change of note in news from the various war fronts with the possible exception of Burma. After a complete cessation of news for some time, mention is made Thursday of the Allies having managed to make contact with paratroops which landed in the Katha sector some weeks ago. Further reports of Jap air raids indicate our control in several key positions. Despite almost obvious attempts to be-cloud the issue as far as our news is concerned, it does seem as though things are progressing favourably for us. Evacuation of some 30,000 children from Tokyo was announced in last night’s paper.

Several feverish days, the aftermath I think of our last inoculation, resulted in a rather depressing wave of pessimism from which I am barely recovered. Even the thoughts of another six, eight or twelve month stretch in this place can be most disheartening. Sometimes, when one’s spirits are in eclipse like that, a person feels that he must get out soon or go off his rocker. I imagine even at this stage outsiders might consider some of us very close to the “jump the rails” stage. I feel lately that I’ve been most unsocial but I just don’t seem to have the push necessary to change. More than ever the need of a holiday trip, after this is all finished becomes evident – not as a luxury – but as a necessity.

Incidentally, my few days “off-colour” cost me six pounds of my hard (?) earned weight.

July 16 – (Sunday)

Fighting is reported at Olita, just fifty-odd miles from the border of East Prussia, by last night’s paper. Vernacular reports claim extensive sabotage activity in France and this source also mentions the landing of parachutists in Central France and the capture of a small number of them. Evidently guerilla work was the object as we take the numbers landed to have been small. No mention of any kind has been made of the Pacific sector for three days so we assume Saipan is finished.

July 17 – (Monday)

Something of moment has occurred in the officers’ camp adjoining. On the way to work this morning we noticed they were still lined up on muster parade. An hour later, muster parade “on the double” sounded for us and we assembled on the square where, after some delay, we were carefully counted. After a further delay of perhaps half an hour, we were allowed to return to our huts and instructed to close all doors and windows and under no consideration were we to endeavour to observe what was going on “across the wire”, the penalty of infraction – arrest by the gendarmerie. Everything points to an “escape” but as yet we can only conjecture.

Later – reliable (?) sources inform us that two persons made a get-away. No further details except that three men occupying adjacent beds to the “escapees” and the leader of the group to which they belong have been taken out of camp. A search party consisting of three truck-loads of guards, equipped with flash lights, rolled out of camp tonight. – Hope the lads make it through

I have just finished reading Nora Waln’s “The House of Exile” and found it very good. It’s an interesting disclosure of the family life of well-to-do Chinese.

Feeble rumours of a draft (officers) out of here on July 27th have been heard.

July 25 – (Monday)

“Pressure of business” prevented the observance of Sunday as “entry” day. An inspection of high-ranking Japanese supply officials held up our wood issue for two or three days so that Sunday was utilized to “catch up”. Something of a bizarre situation exists in connection with the supplying of our wood. Normal procedure is to have a large supply of wood brought into this camp and piled in the yard of our ration depot – since we are apparently used as a distributing point for other camps and military establishments. Distribution of wood with the camp is the responsibility of one Captain Graham Crewe, (R.A.S.C.) a twerp of the “school-tie” public school system and the manner of delivery to us is, to say the least, at times very annoying. The usual practice is to allow us to draw one day’s ration at a time until the Japs come in for their portion which consists – naturally enough – of all pieces that appear fairly easy to saw or chop - after which we are allowed to draw a three or four day supply of culls. This routine permits Crewe to endear himself to the Japs concerned and apparently results in a few personal “gifts” etc. for him – but hell’s bells – fair play is fair play, particularly when our tools are considered. Prior to inspection, both kitchens were practically out of wood for four days, although a huge pile of “untouchable” wood was stacked in the depot compound, and cooking was maintained by scrounging bits of lumber etc. around the camp. This of course is typical “army” strategy the world over so we don’t really mind it so much... Another demonstrative incident which illustrates the cooperation the Japs can achieve in our supply officer, occurred in the course of the inspection. Officially, we receive a most minute ration of sugar from the Japs but unfortunately of late, it has not been forthcoming. Inspection day a sample of a camp meal was called for and the usual rice, tea and whatever else went with it, was tendered to Crewe for delivery to the officials. Believe it or not – I do – the tea was found to have been sweetened when it arrived at the Jap guard house. One can almost see the party

commenting on how lucky we prisoners are to be enjoying such luxuries. During the inspection of the hospital, a sample of our rice bread was given to one of the party to taste and Crewe volunteered the information that it also contained sugar. Our cook, a Russian named Potaloff – who detests Crewe – innocently (?) corrected the statement by saying, “But Captain Crewe, you know we put no sugar in this bread”. Crewe then suggested to the officials that the daily ration was probably saved for a Sunday treat of sweet rice-flour cake, but again “Pop” spiked Crewe’s guns with the statement that only sugar supplied by the local Red Cross was used in the cake. Naturally, one can hardly blame ration conditions in camp on the Japanese when our own supply officer goes out of his way to cover either his own ravaging or someone else’s by handing out hokum to people who could better our conditions and probably would, if they knew. How we’ve come to love the “old school tie” type of Englishman.

A near typhoon on Friday gave us a bit of a thrill and wrought considerable damage on gardens, and banana and papaya trees people have been carefully nurturing for months. My bed is along the end wall of the hut and, because of my length, I find that my head actually juts out into the passage to the door. Early in the morning, one of my fellow officers, answering nature’s call, foolishly opened the door and, since the force of the typhoon came from that direction, I was very nearly blown from my bed by the blast of wind and rain that rushed in. The result was the cleaning of our table of everything, including our dishes box, the loss of my window and my belongings scattered the length of the hut – to say nothing of soaked bedding and bed. Strangely enough, two blankets folded and put under my mattress to raise my pillow, were blown completely out from under my head as I slept.

July 26 – (Tuesday)

I was called away from last night’s entry to witness the most peculiar sky-scape we’ve seen here to date. The sky to the west was a mass of pale, yellowish-orange which as it spread out to meet the eastern horizon, gradually became transformed to a beautiful purple. The resultant glow presented everything in an

eerie light and reminded one of pre-cyclone moments in Canada. Gradually developing rain clouds and a vivid electric display prompted some rapid repair movements on the window that was a casualty in the other night's storm. Fortunately, nothing more than a mild visit this morning of Saturday's typhoon was experienced, although we are still having squalls of rain every few moments.

No papers have come into camp since Friday and of course the result is a crop of fantastic rumours, The last pukka news gave us great hopes. Admission on the part of the Japs of Saipan's loss and a statement by Montgomery to the effect that things were progressing beyond his hopes in Europe sound pretty good to us. An article, written by a Japanese Admiral, which sets out the almost unbelievable strength of the American Pacific fleet will hardly do much to bolster the morale of the people of Nippon. Most persistent rumour in camp now concerns Premier Tojo. Several different stories from as many sources only serve to becloud the issue, but the general consensus indicates something of a radical change of key positions in the Japanese cabinet formerly in Tojo's hands.

I've availed myself of the opportunity to borrow a typewriter and whale away at it for a few moments in the afternoons. I may get something constructive from this exile after all – if we're here long enough.

July 31 – (Tuesday)

Today I commemorate the 7th anniversary of my wedding day. A splurge of food, consisting of bully beef and canned fish served to make the day an event for Mac, Prendy and myself. As is natural in a position such as I enjoy (?) at present, considerable thought has been given to the possibilities of changes in our domestic relationships due to our separation and the general disquieting effects of war. Unquestionably things cannot be expected to be resumed on the same basis as before, due to mental and emotional changes which are bound to manifest themselves in both parties. Not a pleasant outlook but --- just another post-war problem to be solved.

We are now completely out on a limb in regards news. The local paper has been discontinued – permanently – we understand and we must now content ourselves with any gleanings we might get from our rumour crop. For my part I'm quite happy with the new arrangement, as I feel that the lack of good news should alleviate, to some extent, this terrible impatience which seems to have us all in its grip. Our last news received gives me great hopes of an early cessation of hostilities so I guess I can contain myself for a few months.

Another move involving Canuck officers finds us enjoying considerable more hut space than formerly since we now have one and a half huts for our forty-nine. We have Handa (Honda?), the Jap Sergeant-Major, to thank for the move, since he noticed the hut congestion when making a count during our recent storm period and approached the Commander-in-Chief for re-allotment. Under the previous arrangement, the hot weather would have rendered our hut most uncomfortable since all mosquito-nets are down shortly after supper, thereby preventing what little draft we get from circulating.

Our hospital kitchen volleyball team finished on top of the league and we soon embark on a new series termed the International League, with representative teams from Russia, Portugal, Great Britain, Eastern Canada and Western Canada. I captain the Western Canada entry and we open the league series tomorrow night with a game against Russia.

August 2 – (Thursday)

“Albert” was over shortly after midnight last night and dropped a bit of “stuff” close enough to camp to give us a few thrills and a light shower of debris. Cosmo docks were evidently the objective but damage was not believed to have been heavy.

August 7 – (Monday)

Another week passes, a week of daily rains of the cloudburst type that curtailed all sports and made for a generally depressed atmosphere throughout the camp. One bright spot pierced the gloom with the resumption yesterday of our local news. It seems that when the paper was cut off, no adjustment was made for subscriptions which had been paid and for which no paper had been received. A complaint laid, with this oversight in mind, caused reconsideration of the original decision and we are again to enjoy our “news”.

My oft-repeated statement that time means nothing in this environment is perhaps born out to some extent by the fact that I complete (I hope) this entry on Sunday, August 13, a mere week’s diversion from the initial commencement. To get back to the matter of news – Events of great significance have occurred during the period of our news stoppage. In the Pacific area we find that task forces have been active of late and learn that Saipan, Guam, and possibly two of the Bonin group (these latter unconfirmed) have been occupied by the Yanks. The first bombing of the Philippines occurred last week when planes appeared over Davao, on Mindinao. The resignation, en bloc, of Premier Tojo and his entire cabinet attests to the fact that the pressure of continued reverses and the ever-tightening encirclement ring around Japan is at last having its effect on the government and people of Japan. Locally, we note considerable military activity being manifested in South China, not a great distance from here, but we find the situation hard to follow and can only hazard hopeful opinions on what is actually happening. Around camp we believe we can see signs of increasing tension in the behaviour of our hosts. Perhaps the fact that “Albert” has been over almost every night this past week contributes a little uneasiness to their peace of mind.

Thousands of empty five gallon oil cans are being stored in Jubilee Buildings and it is generally believed that their purpose is to prevent, if possible, the failure of the local water supply from hindering their efforts in the event of a siege, a fault which is alleged to have been contributory to the fall of several Jap island

garrisons. The Russian situation has developed sufficiently to be termed the outstanding achievement during our news lapse. We now find Joe's boys in the Warsaw area and giving every indication that they're going to be hard to stop. Confusion arising from similarity of names makes it difficult to determine exact positions but, if our interpretation is correct, their present thrust rests some fifty-odd miles from the border of Germany proper. The situation in France seems to be progressing satisfactorily but in the light of the news we've had so far, it does look as though the Second Front is being used for just the purpose its name indicates; the Russians seem to be the ball-carriers this time. News of the severance of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Germany leads us to believe that Europe is almost ready for the coup-de-grace. Rumours that last night's paper contained word of the Turkish Army marching into Bulgaria remain unconfirmed because of non-delivery (so far) of said paper. Optimism runs high throughout camp with everything pointing (we believe) to possible release in, at most, a matter of months.

"Albert" went over at noon today. Perhaps we're due for some excitement tonight.

Our wet spell seems to have broken and we can now look forward to some real heat.

August 11, 1944 – Swift Current, Sask.

Dearest Len,

So happy to get a card from you after two years silence. Am saving Digests. Will collect others if possible. All is well at home.

*All our love,
Glad*

Card from Paddy – no date

Dear Daddy,

I am in grade six. I have just come back from Winnipeg. Grandma sold the house but we are still living in it. Miss you.

*Love
Paddy*

August 20 – (Sunday)

This weekend finds us riding the crest, a result of news concerning the Russian and French fronts received last night – after a slight delay. Thursday and Friday’s papers were withheld until Saturday night and the resultant gains since our last release of coherent news sent everyone’s spirits soaring. In the French front we hear of a three pronged thrust into southern France from the sea, as well as substantial gains in the northern invasion area. At present the line seems to lie through Drieux, Chartres and Orleans and, at the northern end, some undetermined point in the middle of the Seine River. This, by our calculations, puts us something like thirty-five to fifty miles from Paris. We note with pride that the 1st Canadian Army is operating in the vanguard of one of the thrusts supported by one thousand tanks. Meanwhile our Russian friends seem intent on reaching Berlin ahead of the Anglo-Americans for the paper mentions that in one sector, which we believe to be west of Krakow, “bitter fighting is in progress, but so far the Russians have been kept off German soil”. Mention is also made of the northern sector of this front where the “Battle for East Prussia” is being waged. No towns are mentioned in this area so we are completely in the dark as to the location of any lines of battle. No mention whatsoever of the Pacific warfront for about a week, but we feel the Yanks are not taking any rest cure in the interval. In mentioning the U.S. Air Force in China, the paper seems at a loss to account for the fact that the Americans still retain air superiority in China, in spite of the loss of over a thousand planes alleged to have been shot down by the Japs. Figures given for the present American air strength in China are some seven hundred odd. An interesting bit in the same article mentions an American claim that planes, with a capacity of two hundred men each, are leaving India on the Indo-China air route at the rate of a plane every five minutes. – Not bad! – Considering that our news is conceded to be at least two weeks late, can we be blamed for our optimism?

Another type of news was received in camp tonight. Commencing at once, electric power has been completely cut in camp and henceforth we revert to permanent black-out conditions.

This measure was not entirely a surprise as we have followed in the paper efforts to conserve fuel by the first curtailment, then discontinuance of the ferry and bus services. Economic conditions in the colony worsen from day to day with essential commodities commanding prohibitive prices. How long can it go on, we wonder, and how much tightening of belts must we resort to before things finally break?

A week of terrific rains has us all longing for a glimpse of the sun. I've seen just about as much precipitation as I care to see in one lump.

"Albert" has braved the rain these last few nights but, though we hopefully anticipate a bit of excitement, it seems that a "look-see" is all he's interested in. Our hosts show much concern over our remaining in camp these days for we are subjected to three and four bed-counts a night. I can imagine that the American task forces galloping about the Pacific hardly encourages tranquility of mind.

August 21 – (Monday)

Glad tidings – we hear that a Red Cross ship is in harbour and unloading supplies. – Allah is good. –

August 22 – (Tuesday)

Great excitement prevails. A work party has been called for handling of the Red Cross supplies. A bulletin covering the situation can be expected momentarily.

STOP PRESS NEWS – A late dispatch from the work party indicates that cases being handled at present are of Canadian Red Cross origin. Each case is said to contain eight individual parcels and our "on the spot" reporter scores a scoop with the following itemized list of contents. Butter (1 pound), chocolate (5 ounce bar), klim (1 pound), corned beef (12 ounce), tea (4 ounce) or coffee (6 ounce), toilet soap (2 ounce), pilot biscuits (8 ounce), cheese (4

ounce), luncheon meat (1 pound), prunes (7 ounce), raisins (7 ounce), sugar (8 ounce), sardines (3 ¾ ounce), salmon (8 ounce), salt and pepper (1 ounce each), jam or marmalade (1 pound).

Another flash reports receipt of medical supplies such as vitamin tablets, quinine, insulin, syringes, etc. plus some dental supplies. The number of cases is not yet known but each case is said to contain enough medicinal supplies to do one hundred adults for six months. Needless to say the entire camp is agog. The only worry we have now is whether or not the parcels will be given out individually or whether Crewe and his parasites will manage to get their hooks in.

A late bulletin states cardigans, shoe repair materials, shirts, two gramophones (plus records), a violin and two ukes, some music and books are also included. Some bulk supplies of milk powder, fruit juice, pablum, and some type of dried fruit, are also listed. One thought is unanimous in camp. "Thank God for the Red Cross!"

Final Bulletin on Red Cross Supplies – number of cases received – 1,761, which should indicate a total of 14,088 individual parcels. It seems that this camp is to be utilized as a distribution point for all supplies, since boxes addressed to Stanley Internment Camp and to Mr. Zindel, the local representative of the International Red Cross are being stored here. The local distribution date is as yet undisclosed but everyone is happy as kids at a Christmas tree with the contemplation of what is to come. Considering that our M.O.s have had to work with practically only those drugs which they have been able to obtain "over the fence", one can imagine what a God-send the medicinal supplies will be to them and to the camp in general. Of course we don't know what our share may be of these supplies but it is nice to hear of millions of units of serum, millions of vitamin tablets and a sufficiency of drugs such as M.&B.s and the newer drugs of the sulphanilimide family. Rumour has it that the whole camp will be given courses of vitamin tablets and nicotinic acid.

In my exuberance over the Red Cross supplies, I almost neglected to mention a windfall we received as a result of the electricity shut-down in the Colony. Cessation of power meant naturally the closing down of cold storage plants and we were the lucky recipients of some seventy pheasants. Not bad fare for a POW camp! Human nature being what it is, everyone immediately decided such magnanimity must have been prompted by the trend of news received from the world's war fronts. Whatever the motives – the pheasant were very tasty – “It never rains but it pours.” All men in camp received 25 yen from the Red Cross. Evidently a belated Christmas gift. Everyone feels himself the hero of a “Rags to Riches” tale. –

September 1 – (Friday)

Another month slides by, a month which has proven quite productive for us, both mentally and physically. The highlight of course, from our point of view, was the receipt of the Red Cross parcels. The initial issue disclosed the fact that much of the perishable articles – such as cheese, raisins, chocolate and prunes, had not weathered the tropic heat too well so that, after considerable discussions, it was decided to issue everyone's full quota of parcels in one allotment. After replacement of shortages, etc., the quota works out to three and two thirds parcels per man. What a lovely pile of food to contemplate. Seems almost a shame to eat it. It goes without saying that the universal part-time occupation is the scoffing of biscuits, jam, butter and cheese, etc. In connection with their distribution of supplies, we were fortunate in having a committee made up, in part, of the Officer commanding Canadians in camp and the Canadian S.M.O. which, although its powers in connection with distribution were purely nominal, did serve as a means of keeping a close tab on quantities, etc. and ultimate disposition of all goods. Evidently Crewe and company had an ear to the ground. Medical supplies have not been released as yet but it is hoped they will be forthcoming by next week. The general effect of the parcels on the camp seems little short of miraculous and, for once, the ever-present topic of release is relegated to a secondary position of importance.

I neglected to mention in the last entry two rather tragic occurrences which served to remind us that we are not yet out of the woods. Two attempted suicides, one of which proved successful, and one mental case, brought home the folly of letting one's mental guard down. One chap, a Canadian, attempted to slash his throat but fortunately was a bit careless. The second chap, also a Canadian by birth but a resident of Hong Kong, was more successful when he jumped headlong from the rafters of the latrine to the concrete floor. Severe head and back injuries caused his death in a matter of a few hours. Hard on the heels of these two came a third, also a Canadian, who – though quite harmless, was considered unsafe to be at large and was sent to Bowen Road Hospital. On the whole I consider that we've been very fortunate in respect to mental cases as I doubt whether we've had more than a dozen since the start. Evidently we must still be careful though.

We've just had word that medical supplies are to be released this afternoon – quantities unknown. Speaking of medicines, etc., reminds me to note that I'm at present on the casualty list with a broken rib – sustained in a volleyball game on Sunday. Due to a lack of adhesive and the fact that I have had a bad case of prickly heat which would render a binding intolerable, my treatment consists of abstinence from exercise or sport for a few weeks.

News from the war fronts continues good, so good in fact that we no longer comment on the good news contained in any one issue. It now seems that every paper records something in our favour. The European front, when viewed through our news releases, is hopelessly obscured. We hopefully believe that advances in that area have been so marked that news censors are stumped in their efforts to release bulletins which would indicate that the situation is still in hand. (I personally don't believe it is). Treatment of the situation in Paris could be cited as an example. According to the paper of a day or so ago, the Germans still held the city and fighting was in progress in several sectors. In the same column, mention is made of two attempts on the life of De Gaulle, one as he passed in a parade and another at a public ceremony of

some kind in Notre Dame Cathedral. Seems just a trifle inconsistent doesn't it? The situation in Romania too can hardly be termed clear, but it does seem evident that Jerry's is a lost cause there. People in the "wise" climb out on a limb and say that Saturday's or Sunday's paper will contain "tremendous" news. One local school of thought believes that the special session of the Japanese Diet, scheduled to meet September 6th, is being convened for the purpose of making the decision as to whether or not the war is to be continued, after the fall of Germany. Could be!! Rumours of Germany packing it in were very strong early this week.

September 3 – (Sunday)

Current rumours say we've penetrated some fifty miles into Germany on the French front, against very little active opposition. Evidently the resistance being offered is said to be half-hearted at least on this front, and it is also said the representations for peace have been made by some German group, evidently the army. Another bit of "hot dope" is that Russia is massing troops on the Manchukuo border. – Everything points to happiness.

September 25 – (Monday)

Nearly a month has passed and we have yet to hear of the fulfillment of the Germany rumour mentioned in the last entry. This war situation can be horribly annoying, particularly when this intense impatience grips all of us. One day I feel the culmination of things to be a matter of a very few months, even weeks, then again there are times when I can't visualize any conclusion for at least six months or a year. I'm afraid our news, plus the natural desires for freedom, rather warps our judgement as to the potentialities of even such a juggernaut as the Allied war machine. Sporadic flashes of news indicating tremendous advances tend to make us set rather large quotas for our forces to gain per day, or week, without consideration for difficulties of terrain, etc., which are not apparent to us. I seem to have lost some of the complacency with which I was formerly able to regard our situation. Perhaps cessation of sports is the answer. I'm at present enjoying a week's lay-off from work due to a bit of strain on the broken rib. I had thought

everything nicely under control in this connection and had been sawing for a couple of weeks, then spoiled it all by wrenching something while drawing wood last Friday. Seems that I must have bruised a lung judging by the pain occasioned by breathing. Time on the hands certainly seems to leave the mind carrying the load.

The question of distribution of vitamin tablets, etc. for the camp has been settled and everyone goes on a thirty day course of a capsule per day plus an ascorbic acid tablet three times a week. The capsule is reputed to contain nicotinic acid, thiamin concentrate and several vitamins so our system, after their three year holiday, must needs go back to work. The sudden onslaught of vitamins gave many of us slight reactions for a few days but the situation was only a temporary one.

The general result of the parcels and medicines throughout the camp is a very evident improvement – mentally and physically in everyone.

News from the theatres of war serves to heighten, if possible, our impatience. Although today's paper contains no European news, we have been able to note of late the tightening of the encircling ring around Germany. Penetration of the Siegfried defence positions in the west and the arrival of the Russians at the Czech border make it only a matter of time until Germany must fold. Why she postpones her eventual fate is beyond us. What a debt to German humanity is owed by Hitler and his crowd, if only for the senseless slaughter and desolation from this point to the end. I don't think we can expect any less from the Germans. It does seem such a futile waste though.

Of more personal interest to us is the announcement of landings on Palilau and Morotai Islands, the former of the Palau group, situated some five hundred miles east of the Philippines, and the latter three hundred miles south of Davao. The bombings of two airfields near Manila by two hundred and ninety planes and a raid on Manila itself by one hundred and fifty planes, both on the same day, would seem to presage an attempt on the Philippines in the near future. No European news today but instead a rather

“defeatist” article which raps Germans for committing strategical errors and for underrating the Allies. Is this lack of news indicative of the end, or is it merely that the weekend dispatches have been held up?

Draft rumours have been revived again and it is thought efforts will be made to evacuate us before hostilities commence in this area. Contemplation of the tragic end suffered by eight hundred Americans, when their ship was sunk off Mindanao leads us to hope that we’ll be completely forgotten and allowed to remain here.

We enjoyed lights last night from 7:30 to 9:30 as power was resumed. Curtailment of electricity is said to be responsible for a shortage of cigarettes which has been in effect for about a month. Fortunately our canteen, by rationing cigarettes at four packs (10’s) per week, per man, has been able to guarantee a supply until the end of the month. We hope supplies will again be forthcoming following resumption of power.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

October 1 - (Sunday)

A new month faces us, one which six or eight months ago we optimistically thought would find conditions sufficiently clarified to enable us to make a fairly reasonable estimate as to how much more time we were to spend “in durance vile”. One of our self-styled intellectuals is poorer today by \$400 (Cdn) owing to the fact that the Allied strategy board let him down in not having the war concluded by this date. The current bet is a double or nothing affair – his first date was Christmas of last year. Very little sympathy is being wasted on the individual as he’s one of those pedantic lads who can always read between the lines and thereby has at his finger tips stores of knowledge which enables him to expound to all and sundry the inside story of just how things are going – anywhere. We do feel a bit badly though, about the Allies not adhering to his plans.

A few letters this morning but none for me. Seems months since I received any word, to say nothing of the pictures I’ve hoped to receive.

The reading of a book called “Testament”, which depicts the struggles and chaos of Russia just prior to and during the Revolution, has hardly served to ease the mental strain that my impatience imposes on me these days. A sympathetic bond was established right from the beginning when the author was captured by the Austrians and placed in a prisoner of war camp. I suffered with the poor gent from his release, by repatriation, all through the desolate years of uncertainty occasioned by the revolution, until his escape to France. Personal post-war problems occupy my mind a great deal and I must confess I don’t get much satisfaction from contemplation of them. This frame of mind, plus a change in control, which has resulted in our receiving an altogether

unfavourable view of events lately, is no doubt largely responsible for the annoying feeling of pessimism which I'm enjoying these days.

News of continuance of cigarettes in yesterday's paper – at a slight increase in price – so we sit back and hope supplies will be forthcoming. The wholesale price is quoted at 1.80 yen per pack, so we can reasonably be certain they'll be more expensive here. Anything will be better, I think, than getting along on five fags per day – besides food prices in the canteen render our money useless anyway.

Another of our lads went “mental” on us a couple of nights ago and was fortunately able to make a Bowen Road draft yesterday. Present circumstances are not entirely responsible for his condition since he was one of several who, at the outbreak of war, were being treated for syphilis. Lacking treatment, the M.O.s have had these lads under observation with the expectation that just such a fate would befall them. Quoting Churchill in a recent speech, the paper prints an excerpt in which Winnie suggests the possibility of the European war lasting in to the first months of next year. This doesn't do much to allay my current pessimistic mood. Casualties admitted by the British in Burma were a bit of a surprise to us. Evidently we've been treating the Burma campaign much too lightly.

The Red Cross parcels didn't do half a job on my weight. A check-up this morning verifies the Jap weigh-day figure. One hundred and eighty-one pounds. Fortunately the weight includes a bit of muscle for there are few in camp that outweigh me. It's almost shameful in these circumstances. I start back to work tomorrow so I'm hoping a spot of exercise will yank me out of my mental slump.

Big doings on Thursday, October 5th, the Portuguese National Day. Unfortunately my rib precludes any athletic endeavours on my part, but the Ports will be taking on the camp at volleyball, softball and bowls following which an impromptu concert will be given.

Our enjoyment of electricity was short-lived. Today's paper announced the discontinuance of power for an indefinite period. Evidently we're out of coal again.

October 13 – (Friday)

This "lucky" date combination seems to suggest that this day is just as good as any other to make an entry. Unfortunately news remains one of the items which we have least of – with the possible exception of cigarettes. This last commodity is almost in the position of graduating into the unobtainable class along with the dodo, etc. Mac, Prendy and myself hang on stubbornly in spite of disheartening fluctuations in the cigarette market. Three days ago we paid 5 yen per deck, then 7 yen and yesterday morning the market hit 11 yen. A rumour yesterday afternoon to the effect that fags were coming in today at the old price resulted in a sharp drop to 4 yen, but we too were sucked in and failed to capitalize. The rumour proved groundless so we bought this morning at six yen. It would seem as though the master's body is going to lack nicotine unless something unforeseen turns up.

Our European news is hopelessly vague these days. One day we hear of the Allies breaking through the Siegfried line in two or three places, then again we read of fighting miles to the rear, then splurges forward again. The net result is that we wonder just what the hell is happening. The old "Germany folds" rumour circulated very strongly again early this week. The big event was supposed to have taken place on the sixth.

The air raid siren has just gone – Quite a number of planes passed over a few moments ago but we thought they were Japs. A heavy cloud bank prevented our seeing them. Three large four-engined flying boats arrived yesterday from somewhere so, of course, we assume they have been driven from the Philippines. We had a rumour going around last night that some islands between Formosa and Luzon had been bombed by 400 carrier-based aircraft. We hope so. It brings Chester that much closer. Quite a large convoy of medium-sized craft are in the harbour today.

Perhaps that's why they're a little touchy with the siren. Sunday, several large freighters were in and one of them either struck a floating mine or turned into the local mine field. Some people saw and heard two explosions but were unable to determine the extent of the damage, if any. By next morning all the bigger ships had moved off.

Camp life still follows the old routine. The days I don't mind but the nights particularly without lights, become hopelessly tedious. If we only had something new to talk about. After three years, we've all told and retold our life's history so there remains nothing but the old standby, "How long will it be now?" and what we hope to do on release. The physical aspect seems to have been relegated to second place by the mental and it's a much more difficult burden to bear.

Planes are again circling overhead but, as no effort is being made to pierce the cloud-bank, we assume it is not the "enemy".

October 15 – (Sunday)

Big news in yesterday's paper which may affect us in some way. Eleven hundred carrier-based planes raided Formosa on Friday. Formosa, about the size of Vancouver Island, is some four-hundred miles from here to its closest point. The rumour re the 400 planes was correct in all except the objective. The islands bombed in this raid lie approximately half-way between Formosa and the Japanese mainland. Definitely things are beginning to move. Ten planes went over yesterday afternoon, followed by "Albert" making a reconnaissance, but nothing dropped here.

A big mail in this morning, but I failed to click.

October 16 – (Monday)

Great excitement in camp. We now have a topic of conversation at least for awhile. The siren blew about 4 pm this afternoon and, after an interval of twenty minutes or so, we heard our planes. Twenty-eight four-motored bombers appeared in the

north-east and, flying in beautiful formation, passed directly over the camp, dropping two sticks of bombs on – we think – Kowloon Docks. Despite a rather heavy barrage of ack-ack fire, the flight made its seemingly leisurely way, apparently quite oblivious to the bursts which could be seen all around them. Hardly had the large flights passed overhead when, with a great chattering of machine guns, another flight of some fifteen Hudsons appeared, flying very low, and crossing the path of the bombers at right angles. These planes were so low that it seemed something of a miracle that they were able to escape the barrage of rifle and m.g. bullets that went up. Escape they did, however, and it was beautiful to watch them, never varying their formation one iota, as they passed directly over our heads. This flight evidently had the ships in the harbour as their objective for they continued on in the direction of Stone Cutters Island where each released his load at the ships clustered there. Our hut came in for a bit of excitement when a pom-pom shell hit the roof, exploded and came on through, scattering bits of shrapnel around the interior. The hole in the roof where the missile made its entry is directly above a spot midway between Mac's bed and mine and it's most fortunate that no one was seriously hurt – for about fifteen of us were clustered about the doorway having a look-see. Huck O'Neill, the Canadian Knights of Columbus man, received a gash in the knee and one in each arm – but he was the only casualty here. I had something of an amusing, though rather stupid, experience during the raid. It seems that when the shell exploded the majority of the sight-seers grouped around the door made a dive for comparative safety under the first handy bed. Being of a curious nature, I made for a side window instead, in an effort to get a better view. I had no sooner arrived than the second flight appeared and their appearance, accompanied by the terrific roar of their machine guns, was so thrilling that I turned around to call Mac so that he too could enjoy the spectacle. I was flustered momentarily to find not a soul in sight for the full length of the hut...everyone had climbed under a bed. For just that moment I knew exactly how the boy on the burning deck must have felt. However it did have its compensations – I was the only man in the hut to see the Hudsons.

Considerable shrapnel fell in camp and Sergeant-Major Honda thoughtfully had “orderly-sergeants” call blown, before the “all clear” went, to ascertain the number of casualties, if any. The check-up revealed eight casualties, none of them serious – five of which were Canadians. Pom-pom shells tore holes in the roofs of our wash-house, our hut and the hospital kitchen – where one of the cooks was spattered with shrapnel. Spent casings from the m.g.’s of the planes that flew over were picked up all over camp, as well as bits of shrapnel of varying sizes. An unexploded ack-ack shell 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches by about 8 inches, hit the roof of the Canadian convalescent hut, gouged a terrific hole in the roof and bounded harmlessly to the ground between the huts. The head of the shell that came into our hut was about three inches long and it gouged out a sizeable chunk in the concrete floor. During the raid a stretcher was seen being carried in the other camp, the occupant with his head heavily bandaged, and rumour now has it that it is a Canadian officer who is said to have been seriously hurt. – Taken all in all, it was something of an exciting day.

October 17 – (Tuesday)

A check-up on the results of the air-raid (by rumour of course) reveals that over a thousand Chinese are reported to have been killed in the Kowloon dock area so the damage can be judged to have been fairly extensive. The power-house on the mainland adjoins the dock area so I doubt if we can hope for lights. Power was supposed to have been resumed yesterday too. Further rumours claim that a duplicate number of planes that appeared over here also appeared over the island so it would seem that, if this is true, over a hundred planes in all took part in the raid.

A raid signal was sounded again today but nothing came of it. We enjoyed a game of bingo in the hut until the “all-clear” – much easier on the nerves.

October 22 – (Sunday)

Another week and another short entry. Yesterday’s paper brings news of what appears to be a landing on the Philippines.

The wording of the dispatch was that the Americans had commenced their re-invasion of the Philippine Islands, but no definite statement of an actual landing appeared. A large task force accompanied by numerous transports, commenced coastal bombardment on the island of Leyte, south of Luzon, and aided by the China-based aircraft and planes operating from the island of Pililau and the island of Morotai, heavily bombed numerous areas preparatory to landing. Coming as it does on the heels of the Formosan action, this new venture gives us new grounds for our hopes. Final results of the Formosan raid have not been given as yet but the Japanese claim to have wrecked havoc on the task force involved. That the loss was considerable for Japan can be judged by the fact that they admit the loss of over three hundred planes. Evidently this operation must have been used as a diversion move to screen the subsequent attack on the Philippines. Could anyone but the Yanks conceive and operate on the stupendous scale which the present Pacific campaign calls for? I doubt it. When one considers the colossal organization required to successfully operate over the vast distances which face them in the Pacific, it's almost staggering. It does my mean streak a world of good seeing the British Naval men eat humble pie. No jeers now when we prod them with, "Leave it to the Yanks".

Further bits of rumour re the bombing – we understand the docks are ruined and to date one thousand and seven bodies have been recovered from the ruins. Unfortunately the dock area was surrounded by a thickly populated residential district, mostly Chinese dock workmen, and I think they too were very badly hit.

Another peace conference rumour yesterday. All the details too! Clement Attlee is said to be acting as Chairman of the British-American-Russian committee and the story is that at, or after, the capture of Aachen, peace offers were tendered by Germany and an ultimatum received in reply. Gist of the ultimatum was "complete surrender", the alternative being the complete demolition of German towns and cities. A statement by Attlee says that only those actively participating in the fighting will assist in setting the final peace terms. This latter statement is absolutely "pukka" dope

from the Vernacular but we think that most of the first part is an assumption arising from improper translation.

Red Cross clothing was issued yesterday on a basis of one of each of the following per man – great coat, pajamas, underwear (longs), shirt, socks, gloves, towel, hankie, winter cap, socks, woolen sweater. I clicked on a suit of underwear (Stanfields) so I'm quite happy.

Lights were resumed for the two hour period the night before last, so I guess they missed the power house.

Today we lost our status as a Canadian officer group, having been amalgamated, through no wish of ours, with the Imperial officers. I can scarcely visualize any of them being overcome with joy for that matter!

November 3 – (Friday)

Another milestone slips around and again I must celebrate a birthday in prison camp. I was so certain this time last year that its date would find us enjoying freedom that, in a moment of rash optimism, I offered MacCarthy a case of Scotch in the event of our still being incarcerated on the next anniversary of my birth date. Well...we're still here. I'm dopping out a plan of retaliation which will ensure my being able to get in on the consumption end of the deal.

The prospect of further months in here is anything but heartening for I'm sure the drab, purposeless existence we lead must be exacting its toll, particularly on the mental side. Some degree of mental stagnation must surely result from the unnatural life we lead. While formerly one experienced a bit of difficulty in matters demanding concentration, now the job of marshalling one's thoughts has become a task of no mean proportions, particularly as we believe freedom to be around "that" corner. Oh we do have our fun! I can imagine that there will be enough "misfits" back from Germany, who will have been enjoying similar circumstances, to make us more or less inconspicuous when we

once again reach civilization. Perhaps we can form a “mutual sympathy” club.

Efforts on the part of the censor’s department to render the news from the several war-fronts as unintelligible as possible are meeting with entirely too much success from our point of view. On the western front we note with pride that the Canadians seem to be more than holding their end up. Give ‘em Hell lads!

Naturally we’re inclined to view with some impatience the seeming lack of great progress on that front, however if the plan is to conserve life at the expense of a few months, so much the better. In the Philippine area, the Yanks seem to have themselves fairly solidly established on Leyte Island, despite the huge losses the enemy claims to have inflicted.

A rumour circulating last night that we are to be moved to a new camp in the Canton area. Original basis was the story given by one of the sentries, backed by the absence of Honda, who was said to be in Canton – ostensibly to look over the new site. With action in this vicinity not entirely beyond the realms of possibility, the suggestion is not entirely without logic. A change of scenery would help a lot in our efforts to pass the time.

Again there’s nothing of local import to record. General health remains good, although the appearance of numerous septic sores reveals a decline in fitness either due to seasonal changes or the lowering of our diet standard. Blockade measures have been rendering it increasingly difficult to keep us supplied with vegetables of a decent quality and it’s inevitable that the effect should soon be apparent.

Something in the way of a local scandal has come to the surface the last day or so. It seems the boys have been putting their Red Cross clothing on the market in order to be in a position to buy the odd fag, put their children through college, or buy coal for their poor old widowed mothers and, quite incidentally, to enable them to shoot the odd game of craps. The sentries have been most helpful in this respect as it seems that they too have their own

obligations to fulfill, and the net result is, or was, that the camp – for a few days – did more trading than is normally recorded on a good day on the floor of the “Exchange”. Circumstances quite outside the sphere of operations however were finally to assert themselves and put the whole scheme on the “unprofitable ventures” list. It seem that the powers that be downtown decided that their inflation program called for the issue of notes of 100 yen denomination to facilitate purchasing powers in the colony. Now that in itself may be an extremely sound measure, but it happened that, since prices being paid for goods in camp were rather large, some of the “century” notes began to circulate within a day or so in camp of the notice of issue and there being no official channel by which the notes could have entered camp, someone immediately “smelled a mice”. No one knows just how the word got to the proper people but, after a day or so of vigorous bartering, some ten or twelve lads were called to camp office to explain just how they happened to be in possession of such nice new “C” notes. Fortunately, Sgt-Maj. Honda decided to take a lenient view, at least as far as our fellows were concerned and they were let off with a bit of verbal chastisement. Of course there may be still further repercussions as there is to be a check-up of Red Cross supplies at the end of the month. (I’m planning to wear my underwear until then – just to be safe.) The sad sequel to the story is that the quarters of the sentries were searched and a large supply of Red Cross materials found, confiscated and turned over to our ordinance stores. Nor does the story end here. It seems that they must re-buy and return all goods bought from our lads and, to add insult to injury, or vice-versa, they report every day for a week to undergo a bit of physical “going over” as a reminder that merchandising is not the best hobby that a sentry of a prison camp can indulge in. Having seen a bit of this “physical” business, in which the administrator doesn’t stint himself, I’m inclined to be a trifle sympathetic.

November 12 – (Sunday)

A brief entry this week to record the gist of a speech by Uncle Joe, alleged to have been in the Vernacular a day or so ago. As we get the story, the occasion was Red Army Day, November

6th, and Joe is reported to have stated that “the fighting on both the eastern and western fronts was both bitter and heavy, but that everything was progressing according to the schedule laid down at the Teheran conference”. Acknowledging the support rendered by the United States and Britain, he said that “at one crucial point of the struggle, the timely aid given by the Allies had been instrumental in turning the tide of battle from defeat to victory”. Commenting on post-war plans he stated that, “it had been decided that the aggressor nations would be rendered impotent by “force of arms” indefinitely if necessary and that the three powers, Great Britain, the United States and Russia, would maintain armies for this purpose”. Of more immediate interest to us was his classification of Japan as an aggressor nation. This suggests to us the possibility that Japan is being given a very broad hint that on the conclusion of the European affair, Russia will declare a state of war with her. The whole thing looks like a beautifully timed bit of political persuasion which might possibly influence Japan if she has any ideas of a continuation of the fight after the finale in Europe. We think here that, providing the Yanks are pretty well-established in the Philippines, the Japs may decide that the odds are a bit too heavy for her to continue the struggle. We hope so –

A softball game today between the Canadian officers and a team composed of the pick of the Portuguese and Canadian men resulted in the officers ekeing out a narrow win with the score of three to two. A nice hit by Prendy in the tenth inning (which Joe Hamel misjudged) drove in the winning run. Although reminiscent of former tussles with the crack Portuguese teams of a year or so ago, the decline of form was very evident, particularly in the batting. Of course we don't get any younger.

My weight has slipped slightly and today I registered a seven pound loss. Still plenty there to carry me through.

November 15 – (Wednesday)

A draft of fifty men from Bowen Road today confirms our Vernacular speech rumour. The mention of it in our paper and an editorial dealing with its implications (or lack of them, as the Japs

prefer to think) had both been deleted from our paper but not from the one received at the hospital). Evidently it is the plan to completely evacuate the hospital, due to a shortage of water, as another draft of fifty is expected within the week. Curtailment of the water supply on the heights of the island due to lack of power for pumping purposes is the reason for the shortage. Further reports on the bombing verify our rumours of damage done in the docks as well as damage inflicted on the power-house and cement works which adjoin it.

November 27 – (Monday)

The closing phases of this month find us in much the same unenlightened frame of mind as that of a few months ago, though we had hoped the situation to be sufficiently clarified at this stage of the game for us to hazard some reasonable prediction as to the time hostilities were liable to continue. One would think that by this time we should have realized the folly of allowing ourselves to be influenced by successive waves of optimism and instead, adopted more of an attitude of resignation to the circumstances which refuse to be controlled by wishful thinking. Apparently we are prey to the usual frailties that beset human nature.

Mac had a birthday yesterday and we celebrated the event with a gastronomic orgy consisting of bully-beef, chow fan, fried spuds and a cake, the latter a most laudible effort on Mac's part considering he had only rice flour, corn flour and an egg to work with. Very, very good. Considering the commonplace articles that we now class as luxuries, it is almost frightening to contemplate our reactions when we are finally turned loose amongst things.

Our news remains as unrevealing as ever and we must be content with odd bits gleaned from the Vernacular. This source, being contraband, is apt to be so generously studded with rumours that it is something of a job trying to figure just what is the "dope". Our paper has contained no European news whatsoever for four days but we can't be sure whether it is the result of accident or design. Meanwhile, operations in the Pacific seem to be progressing favourably although – as it seems to us – slowly.

Yesterday's paper informs us of a raid on Tokyo in which seventy planes, operating from the Mariannas, participated in Yank activities in the Leyte sector and appeared to be successful – in fact we hear a rumour today that the Japs had evacuated the island. We don't quite understand what appears to be a steady advance by the enemy against south China bases of the Yank Air Force in this sector, Kwielin, Henyang and now Nan King, have evidently been evacuated by our people, whether through necessity or according to plan we don't know. We can assume however that they know what they are doing.

Local prices continue to sky-rocket, attesting to the difficulty resulting from the blockade. One or two items and the prices listed for them may serve to indicate what the local people are up against. Syrup (1 pound) 45 yen, sugar (1 pound) 32 yen, soy beans (bulk) 21 yen per pound. The government has recently lifted its rationing system on the essential commodities such as rice, etc., and the resulting prices – (increases over the previous rates) in the necessities directly affected practically everything else. Cigarettes remain our big problem and a month's smoking at 7 yen per deck, takes some financing. We still smoke though!

Sweeney arrived last week with a Bowen Road draft of fifty and he will be a big help in the entertainment field, although we suffer from a shortage of instruments. Plans are in the making for a Christmas concert and we expect to get down to business shortly.

We are now enjoying the best season, insofar as the weather is concerned, of the colony. Lovely clear days and nights serve to accentuate the feeling of impatience. What a lousy waste! Strange, I didn't seem to notice commonplace things like the weather at home. Maybe I'm developing a sense of appreciation!

A rumour of mail today, but no sign of it yet. Did I mention that the last mail brought a letter from Flo?

News in the paper that a Red Cross ship has arrived at Tokyo with supplies for prisoners in Japan and South China leads

us to hope that we'll see some of it here soon. Diet conditions remain none too good here so we hope it won't be too long. We are experiencing a shortage of toweling at present which isn't too surprising when the service required of them is considered. My "one and only" has done noble duty since early North Point days which, considering that at least one shower a day is indulged in, is about as much as one can expect. Socks and hankies too are beginning to show the ravages of time, but of course, there's always an alternative solution for these.

December 6, 1944 – MAILED TO CANADA

Dearest Glad & Kiddies,

Just a time to express the hope that you've enjoyed the best the coming holiday season has to offer. Health being maintained here as I hope it has with you. Extend my greetings to family and friends. Am looking forward to....

(rest of message missing)

December 8 – (Friday)

This being the third anniversary of the outbreak of war in this area, an entry would seem to be called for – however, due to the extreme cold we have been experiencing since the first of the month, I had decided that the cold fingers that would result made the effort not worth the sacrifice. The cold, rainy weather certainly held no promise of any excitement in the way of commemorative action by our air laddies and we were quite resigned to letting it pass as just another day. The Yanks however, thought differently and about 9:30 – while we were busy chopping wood, we heard the sound of planes and dashed out in time to see five Hudsons come swooping over the camp from behind the hills to our north. Following on the heels of the Hudsons came some nine or ten single motor fighters (P.51's we believe) flying very low, in threes, pairs and singly. The Hudsons dropped their loads on targets on the island and on shipping concentrated in the harbour and we heard later that one ship had been sunk and another set ablaze. The

damage done on the island, if any, could not be ascertained but at the time of writing, smoke can be seen issuing from the ship that was set on fire. Evidently the Japs were of the same frame of mind as we were insofar as any expectancy of action was concerned, for the planes encountered practically no ack-ack fire until they had accomplished their first task. The fighters then moved to Kai Tak, where they subjected the airport to a terrific strafing. Just what further damage the bombers did we can't say, but they buzzed around for some twenty minutes before moving off, by which time the general racket was so intense that it was impossible to ascertain just what was going on. We did hear later that Whitfield Barracks and Cosmo Docks received a going-over. All in all it was quite a morning's entertainment and it helped bolster spirits that had sagged perceptibly with the cold of the last few days.

Speaking of cold, and who isn't these days, we got quite a kick out of a camp detail which stated that – pending an issue of blankets, “people would be allowed to sleep together”. As can be imagined, some of the “fatter” fellows came in for quite a ribbing.

Camp life flows along much the same as usual with little to break the monotony, particularly at night.

STOP PRESS NEWS – While writing this (4 p.m.) I heard the noise of explosions and rushed to the door in time to see two planes swooping in across the waterfront. A few more explosions, whether ack-ack or bombs we can't say, and several bursts of m.g. fire from the planes – and all is quiet again. This seems to be getting to be a habit.

As I was saying before the interruption, the nights are bloody awful. These last few days have been so cold and miserable that almost everyone retires to the comparative warmth of their beds before nine o'clock. Certainly if we are deficient in other things, we don't suffer from lack of sleep. For a month or so we have enjoyed the visitation of “Oscar”, the nocturnal counterpart of “Albert”, almost nightly and how he does it we don't know, but nearly every night, rain or shine, he drops bombs somewhere in the

vicinity. The advances in instruments since we dropped out of the picture probably accounts for it.

Four planes just circled the colony but we heard nothing drop. Our most recent crop of rumours state that a breakthrough has been effected in Germany, somewhere in the vicinity of Essen, but of course we have no verification. Draft rumours are again starting up and another choice bit of stuff heard today is that Prince Konoe is forming a government in Japan. Meanwhile, the proper news reveals as little as usual and we can only hazard guesses as to how things are going. There seems little doubt that operations in the Leyte sector are still progressing satisfactorily which means that the theatre of war comes ever nearer to us here. Perhaps today's little show is a prelude to something in this neck of the woods. I guess that is too much to hope for just yet though.

We hear that lights will be available for two days at Christmas, and also that Camp Sergeant-Major Honda is personally donating four cigarettes and some sweets to everyone in camp. A nice gesture on his part, if true. I have nothing but praise for the thoughtfulness and consideration shown by Honda for we prisoners. Little things like dismissing each group as it is counted, when the weather is inclement, help a lot since a big majority of the men are usually under-clad. Formerly we waited anything from ten minutes to an hour and either froze or got soaked, depending on the weather, while doing so.

December 21 – (Thursday)

Lack of wood provides a bit of a holiday this morning so I will utilize the time to make a pre-Christmas entry. We have been more than fortunate these last few days in having had a bit of daily excitement provided in the form of air attacks by small groups of P.51's. Almost every day this week in the early afternoon, we have been visited by the fighters who seem able to get right in before they are noticed. The main objective seem to be Kai Tak for they usually drop whatever load they carry, then gang up on the airport and give it a good strafing. Yesterday, one of the small seaplanes which is stationed here, took off from the airdrome and headed out

to sea when the planes appeared (a sound bit of strategy as I don't think it is armed). Unfortunately however, it just happened that the route he chose fell across the path of two of our fighters that had circled the colony. The pilot evidently did not, at first, see his adversaries and when he did, one plane was practically upon him. From our vantage point we saw him make a desperate effort to escape by side-slipping when he realized his danger, but just as he disappeared from our view we heard the rattle of the fighter's guns. Later we learned that the fighters paid him no further attention but the damage had evidently been done for, though he did manage to recover from his side-slip, he later crashed in flames close to the airport. A new wrinkle in ack-ack projectiles which on bursting, eject three parachutes from which trail either wires or small bombs. Apparently it is much the same as the type used in England two or three years ago. Shortly after the raid yesterday, some twenty-four Japanese bombers appeared and, until their identity was established, gave us a bit of an additional thrill. Things are certainly perking up in the aerial line.

Our little gang celebrated Ala's birthday on the 18th with a bit of a feed and another cake experiment. Evidently our other cake success can be attributed to beginner's luck as this was not the gem we had hoped to produce.

The paper of the 17th gave us the news that the Yanks had extended their Philippine operations with a landing on the island of Mindora. This development, if successful, will provide an excellent base for operations against Luzon, since the northern tip of the island is only some 175 miles from Manila. Heartening too is the news that Nimitz has shifted his Pacific operational base to Guam from where he is expected to direct his offensive against Japan proper.

A somewhat grim ration situation was alleviated by the arrival of the local Red Cross monthly supply of beans, etc., augmented this time by some bran, suet, peanut butter, sugar and dripping. This lot, supplemented by the killing of a pig for Christmas, assures us of a promising bill of fare for the holiday season. Mention is made in yesterday's paper of the Japanese

government asking for safe conduct for a ship containing Red Cross supplies destined for prisoners in China and the Philippines.

Speaking of the coming holiday season, the camp is a bustle of preparation for concerts, church services, etc. With air-raids disrupting things in the afternoons, the problem of getting in rehearsals becomes a major one.

Underground channels reveal that the lot of women and children in the internment camp at Stanley has not been a happy one. We hear that some thirty-seven children have succumbed to the effects of malnutrition and also that the disquieting effects of bombings is beginning to tell on the nerves of both women and children. It is said that application has been made to our hosts to have them removed to less exposed quarters closer to town. The same source reveals that Stanley Fort is pretty much a shambles due to the action of land-mines that have been dropped lately. Either Oscar's missiles have been landing in that area or they have had raids of which we heard nothing.

December 22 – (Friday)

Another raid last evening just before muster and again this morning as we were preparing for the morning parade. Clouds of black smoke rising from the airport last evening indicate that either a plane has been hit or a small cache of oil set ablaze.

December 25 – (Monday)

Today we celebrate our third, and we hope our final, Christmas in Sham Shui Po. Celebrations in the main will be confined chiefly to our favourite indoor sport – eating – and at time of writing our little gang is away to a good start with a cake and (bean) coffee breakfast, followed by a light snack of bean chow fan after parade. The menu for the day shows much promise, with flapjacks, soup and gravy listed for tiffin and pork cottage pie, soup and small individual cakes for dinner. The success of the day is almost assured with these delicacies to look forward to. Midnight Mass, celebrated last evening at seven o'clock, while

enjoyable, somehow failed to live up to my hopes. Perhaps I'm too prone to judge things by the '42 standard. It would seem that conditions prevalent that year contributed more to the impression created than I had realized. I hope Johnnie, Joe, Guita and other friends since departed on drafts are enjoying the best this year. News in the paper that Nagoya has been the objective of several raids by B.29's leads us to hope that none of our lads have been casualties.

A most pleasant surprise in the way of a Christmas package was the receipt of mail the day before yesterday. A letter from Glad, which included some snaps and a postscript from Paddy, was very welcome. The usual thoughts attendant to Christmas Eve, of the girls getting set for the big day, prompted a bit of nostalgia last night and my only solace was the thought that next year would find me participating in the preparations.

A break from the weatherman was much appreciated and for almost a week we have enjoyed beautiful clear days and nights. Our spell of cold weather prior to that certainly left much to be desired.

After a three-day lay-off, our visiting airmen yesterday repaid us three-fold for their lack of attention. Three raids in the afternoon by a type of fighter plane hitherto not seen in this area (some believe them to be carrier-based) kept everyone on the go. Our enthusiasm was dampened somewhat in the last raid of the day when we witnessed the destruction of one of the raiders who was unfortunate enough to run afoul with an ack-ack shell. I did not witness the happening myself but evidently the pilot bailed out and subsequently landed in the water off Stone Cutters Island. Reports from the sentries differ but it does seem that he was picked up later by launches.

December 31 – (Sunday)

We've just finished our first presentation of the Christmas Concert and must say it was very well received. Two more shows, one tomorrow and one the day after, will mark the finish of this

production and the commencement of the work on the New Year show. Lacking lights, the show was staged in the afternoon and, by clever arrangement of mirrors, Old Sol provided the flood light arrangement system, with exceptionally good effect we're told. The show was of the light musical comedy type, complete with glamour girls, chorus, band, etc., and featuring the latest tunes (from 1925 on). I must remind Joe Hamel in later years that he makes a fine bandy-legged chorine!

I have just finished dinner – and what a dinner – I feel foundered. We're in the midst of an air-raid scare, our third today and all duds as far as we're concerned. They must be a might touchy with that siren button.

The latest rumour is that Stalin is conducting a big drive in East Prussia in coordination with a similar effort by Eisenhower in Europe. Nothing of importance from the Philippines except that the Yanks are busy constructing airfields. Air attacks on Manchukuo and the Japanese mainland seem to be a daily occurrence with the number of planes running from twenty to eighty B.29's a raid. Looks as though they'll soon be getting down to business.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

January 1 – (Monday)

Once again we begin a new calendar series, fully confident that this is to be “our year”. The observance, on looking back over our period of incarceration, that this is to be our fourth celebration of New Year’s under these circumstances, rather gives one a jolt, but even our confirmed pessimists concede the possibilities the coming year holds for our release. The current German counter-offensive, which local papers have seized upon as a new basis of hope for Axis victory, fails to impress us as anything but a last desperate lashing-out by the Hun, against the inexorable machine which must inevitably crush him. Developments in this section appear to us to have been slow until we consider the immense strides made in the last six months. Distances to be covered and the difficulty of establishing supply routes being taken into consideration, it must be admitted that our friends, the Yanks, have done a big job. That the Philippines battle which now rages is of great strategic import can be judged by the treatment it receives in the local press, where it is referred to as the “decisive” struggle in the battle of the Pacific. The recapture of the Philippines will no doubt be the prelude to a landing on the China continent, and, though there are several points the Yanks might choose, dependent on the strategy involved, we live in hope that the Kowloon peninsula will be their final choice.

Looking back over the years we find that our lot seems to have improved steadily until we have now reached a point where, aside from rather uncertain ration conditions whose fluctuations are determined by general conditions, our loss of freedom seems to be our only serious consideration. Admittedly, that loss is of no mean value, but when coupled with former grim reminders that

every day was a struggle for one's very life, the resultant depression became a very heavy cross to bear. However, what's past is finished, and we have since learned to some extent that it is unwise to indulge too much in that old human frailty – self pity. Turning thoughts to the new future which faces us fills us with a terrible impatience to be out and doing things. How are we to fit ourselves into environments which have been changed so drastically by events of the past few years? How much has the mental stagnation to which we have been exposed affected our abilities as parents and providers? These questions are ever before us as we try to exercise the necessary patience we need to carry us to their fulfillment.

Our Christmas concert was very well received and the past four days have been days of hectic preparation for some kind of production for today. If the show planned for New Years happens to please, it will certainly have created some kind of record in stage annals. Conceived and executed in four days! It looks as though the first run will be little more than a dress rehearsal, however, our public will understand.

The sport program of the holiday season consisted of matches in all sport between representative teams from the hospital side and the lines. Our hospital team last night lost a hard-fought volleyball match to the lines, but evened things up this morning by taking their measure at softball. All matches have not yet been completed but I believe the hospital leads the series at present.

Our aerial activity ceased abruptly on Christmas Eve, at least as far as we were able to find out, though we averaged a half-dozen alarms a day. I neglected to mention in the last issue that we had one casualty in the last raid. One chap very nearly lost an eye when he was hit by shrapnel from a pom-pom shell which exploded in front of him. An ack-ack shell splinter some six inches long landed at the door of our hut but no one was hit.

January 2 – (Tuesday)

Strange how these things go. The new show not only went over all right, but most of the people to whom I have spoken claim it was enjoyed more than the Christmas concert (????).

One more item – an indication of some of the difficulties faced by the housekeeper downtown may be had from the perusal of the latest price list as given by our canteen. Peas per pound, 67 yen; beans per pound, 73 yen; rock salt per pound, 20 yen; sugar per pound, 50 yen; chicken per pound, 105 yen; pork products (lard, liver, etc.) per pound, 150 yen; beef per pound, 80 yen; other commodities such as rice, wood and cooking oil are not listed but we can assume that they are proportionately high. The paper editorially warns the public that they can expect to encounter still more difficult conditions in the new year (??).

January 7 – (Sunday)

Papers of the 6th and 7th contain one or two items of interest to us. First, task forces are on the loose again and on the 4th and 5th, raided Taiwan with four or five hundred planes respectively. Yesterday's paper mentions a task force west of Luzon, which puts them within a day and a half of us here. Some U.S. shipping production figures given yesterday are interesting. The item reports that sixteen hundred odd ships, totaling sixteen million tons, were built last year in the States, and this makes good reading for us. An item that mentions the widening scope of Montgomery's command in Europe is probably the basis of an earlier Vernacular that we received which stated that Eisenhower was moving to the Pacific to assume command here, and that Montgomery was taking over in Europe.

January 14 – (Sunday)

The first fortnight of the New Year has been marked by a noticeable acceleration in the tempo of the war effort in the Pacific theatre. The appearance of a task force off the west coast of Luzon, as mentioned in the last entry, has resulted in a landing having

been made in the Lingayen Bay area on the ninth. Yesterday's paper admits that two infantry divisions and one tank division had successfully landed and were attempting to advance in the San Fabian sector. The same paper also mentions a landing attempt at Akyab in Burma, and since the paper mentions that the Japs bombed the waterfront, we can assume that at least a bridgehead has been established. Shonan (Singapore) also made the news with a raid on the 11th by twenty B.29's. Friday's paper mentions the fact that the British fleet is now in Australia and that Australian land, sea and air forces are now taking their active part in the Philippine operations. The Pacific now seems to have become the focal point of the greatest activity in the global struggle.

News that the "enemy" landing at San Fabian employed three convoys of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty vessels each, plus the escorting war-craft, must make rather dreary news for the Japanese public. Developments on the European front have been relegated to a secondary position by us due to the fact that the news seems unable to follow any logical sequence in its presentation. Despite minor setbacks and evident fluctuations along the front, we feel that everything is under control in that area.

Mail came in today but I failed to click....Official weight now is 181 pounds. Ye Gods! What will happen when I hit real food again?

The paper tells us that a ship laden with Red Cross supplies sailed from Japan on the eighth for Shanghai. It looks as though we might be getting some here in the very near future.

Current news has everyone riding the crest. Numerous private strategies are being expounded, most of which, of course, include the recapture of the colony at an early date. The most common theory advanced is that the Americans will continue on to Taiwan after the consolidation of Luzon, from where they will be in a position to establish bases for their attack on the Japanese mainland. Proponents of this theory believe the task of the continental landing at Luichow, Hong Kong or Fuchow will fall to

the British Fleet. The opinion that the drive on the China continent will commence within the next three months is also expressed. Offers are out for cinch memberships in the "O.B.E." (Out Before Easter) club. It would seem we don't lack hope anyway!

Cigarettes still remain a problem with the current price seven yen per deck. My greatcoat and ring have done their bit for the syndicate for the past few weeks but, unfortunately, our stock of saleable articles is about shot. My tin-ticker went the way of all such things a year ago and provided us with a goodly supply of tinned goods. We have managed remarkably well at that.

Chilly weather has discouraged such quiet past-times as reading or typing of late, but I have managed to get in a bit of good reading. "Oliver Wiswell" and "Three Harbours", both of which deal with the American War of Independence were rather good, particularly the latter. Biographies of Churchill ("Battle") and of Galileo ("The Star Gazer"), I particularly enjoyed.

The alarm has just sounded, but since the sky is overcast we see nothing. "Albert" is evidently around though. A convoy of some kind is reported to have come in last night so if he spots it we're liable to see some action.

January 15 – (Monday)

A big raid today in which twenty-four fighters and fighter bombers participated. The raid lasted an hour and a half and featured considerable dive-bombing on shipping in the harbour and Half Moon Bay, as well as on the airfield at Kai Tak. We have heard no rumours yet as to results but we in camp had a lively time with ack-ack, shrapnel, etc. dropping all over the shop. No casualties reported in camp though. A further raid this afternoon provided the thrills of the day. Four torpedo-carrying planes suddenly appeared from over the hills behind the camp, streaked across the corner of our parade grounds (so low that they had to swerve to avoid hitting Jubilee buildings) and leveled out at ships in the harbour. One destroyer was hit squarely amidship and sank almost immediately, and two other ships lying close by were

damaged. (Several people walking on the square at the time got the thrill of their lives.) Fires were seen to break out on the two damaged ships but how serious we couldn't say. Four more planes, following on the heels of the first group, also came across and one of these was brought down, the pilot managing to bail out. Numerous buildings in camp were hit by ack-ack shells, mostly pom-poms, and though there were several narrow escapes, again no casualties were reported. The menace from ack-ack shrapnel is not too lightly dismissed here, as the huts offer little, if any, protection from it. The advent of low-flying planes from behind the camp means that we have everything from pistol to heavy ack-ack shells directed at us from all angles. T'Ain't funny.....

I suffered from a "near-miss" of another kind this morning on the wood pile when a piece of wood flew up and hit me in the face. Strangely enough, the piece hit me "long side" on putting a gash over my left eye, another on my chin and taking a bit of skin off my nose and upper lip. A couple of stitches above the eye served to put things right, but I'm glad I have a snub nose!

Strange that I should mention the state of the exchequer in the last entry. Last night I was almost "forced" to part with some of my bed clothing for sufficient fags to last the three of us until the end of February, at the rate of a deck a day. Seems one never knows one's luck.

(Monday evening) – a rumour going the rounds seems to be fairly authentic too – that all garrisons in the colony were given a "stand to" order as of yesterday noon. It apparently comes from the fact that a task force is supposed to have been spotted two hundred miles north of Hong Kong. Consensus of opinion is that a good number of the planes which participated in this morning's raid were carrier-based Grummans.

January 16 – (Tuesday)

(11:45 a.m.) This is being tapped out in the midst of an air raid that has lasted since 8:30 this morning. Shortly after reveille, "Oscar" circled the camp – evidently to spot shipping dispositions

in the harbour. We had barely returned to our huts after morning muster when the alarm went, followed almost immediately by the sound of planes. Since that time we have had, with very few lulls, one of the best exhibitions of dive-bombing we'll probably ever see. Objectives seem to be scattered all over the colony and territories. Just how many planes are taking part in the raid is hard to say, but I've counted more than twenty in sight at one time. This is the best yet!! The ack-ack is terrific but it doesn't seem to deter the pilots, who keep circling and diving in sort of wild "follow the leader" style. The planes seem to work in waves – each wave devoting about twenty minutes to its task then, leaving four or five around, the main body of wave moves off, to be replaced in about ten minutes by another flight. Needless to say, the camp is coming in for its share of shrapnel, etc., several bits having dropped quite close to the hut. Angie is raising hell because one has landed in the midst of his carrots, just outside his window. (It was an unexploded pom-pom, as we discovered later). Several minor scratches reported in camp, but nothing serious.

The all-clear blew at 12:30 and at one o'clock four planes swooped in over the hills and made for the ships in the harbour. Two of these planes carried torpedoes. Rumours of results achieved we'll get when the raid is over. We hear that a member of the camp office staff, who has been in hospital with malaria for a few days, suffered a heart attack during the raid and died shortly after. Another shell through the roof of our cook-house but no casualties this time. Quite a number of huts throughout the camp have been hit, and pierced by ack-ack, but again, fortunately no one was injured. Smoke from the bombers objectives can be seen rising almost from every direction that one looks.

3 p.m. – Another alarm, about an hour ago, and I was about to write that the only evident activity was "Albert" circling around, when we heard the drone of a number of planes. Going to the window for a look-see, I finally picked out a formation of six – flying very high above the island and, as I watched, one lone ack-ack shell burst in their midst, scattering the formation.

It is now almost five o'clock. I've made about six attempts at this writing but every attempt is discouraged by another wave of planes. To revert to the scattered formation: Two of the planes seem to have been hit and fluttered down until they passed from my line of vision. The remainder of the flight went into vertical dives, and as though this were a signal, the air was quite suddenly literally filled with planes. The ensuing din was terrific, and for twenty minutes or so, everything rumbled and shook with the concussion of falling bombs and ack-ack firing. (And still another bunch has come over)...The rumble of planes has not ceased since three o'clock and the plan of operation seems to be twenty or so minutes of bombing, followed by a comparative lull of ten minutes, and then another series of heavy bombings. The sky is overcast by pall of smoke and dust and there are at least nine huge columns of smoke arising from the general direction of the waterfront. The raid of a few minutes ago deposited a bomb at the Castle Peak road junction about two blocks from us, and gave us a bit of a shaking – to say nothing of the dust which is drifting over and filling the hut. Two more planes were casualties from these later raids. I witnessed two downed planes over Stone Cutters Island, one in flames and the other with his wing shot off. Several claims to have...to hell with it! I'll finish this tomorrow when things become a bit less exciting! (I hope!)

January 17 – (Wednesday)

As happened yesterday, "Albert" was over shortly after reveille and we expected a repetition of the big show yesterday – but nothing came of it. The alarm sounded about ten o'clock but no planes materialized. The summary of yesterday's results, according to Honda (we hear), seems to be that ten ships, six destroyers and four transports, were sunk while they bagged thirteen of our planes. Added to this there is the damage caused along the waterfront, where fires in the godowns, etc., are still casting up smoke. The Texaco installation at Shing Mun, about seven miles from here, was also set ablaze, a huge column of smoke and flames which could still be seen at reveille this morning. Estimations of the number of planes taking part in the raid vary from three to five hundred, but I do know that in one raid, over fifty planes were

counted in the air at one time. Two freighters can be seen “bottoms up” from the camp and there appear to be three or four ships either beached on the island or listing badly. The result achieved by the four planes which came in about one o’clock yesterday were – one destroyer, hit squarely amidship and almost immediately sunk, and a large tanker badly holed in the bow. One bomb, which was evidently intended for the small shipyard adjoining the camp, hit a few feet from the sea wall which forms the camp boundary on that side and gave the inmates of the dysentery hospital a bit of a thrill. The pilot of one of the two planes which burst into flames tried to bail out but unfortunately delayed too long and his chute caught fire. Another of the pilots, his plane evidently badly damaged crashed into a destroyer and caused a fire aboard the vessel. Considerable attention was paid to ack-ack positions with some success evidently for we did notice a definite slacking off of ack-ack fire towards the end of the afternoon. Not only were objectives in this area bombed heavily, for we could hear tremendous activity over on the island, apparently around Stanley and Aberdeen. Some of the planes carried markings in which the red and blue were quite distinguishable and we assume that they were from a British task force. Regardless of nationality, the pilots today certainly put up one of the most remarkable shows we’ll probably ever see. Their exhibitions of dive-bombings were absolutely superb. To attempt to describe such a show with any kind of continuity would be impossible. After I was finished, one felt much the same as after having witnessed a five ring circus. There was simply too much going on for one person to absorb anything but a very hazy picture of the whole...We hear that six more destroyers have just come into the harbour. That may mean another big day tomorrow.

A sentry rumour raised the ship losses ante to twenty-six. We hear too that one of the planes, with a full bomb load, crashed on the Kings’ Theatre in Hong Kong, and rather made a mess of things in that section.

The best story of the day is that during the raid on the harbour shipping, the Chinese were out in small boats to collect the fish killed by bombs.

Today's paper estimates three hundred planes took part in the raid, claiming to have downed fourteen, damaged ten and one probable. Some damage was caused, it admits.

January 19 – (Friday)

The papers of yesterday and today contain some items worth recording – chief among them being the fact that Macao came in for a bit of bombing and strafing on Tuesday when twenty-one Grumman-carrier-based planes raided the harbour facilities, forts and wireless station. The paper mentions that the planes were believed to have come from the carriers of a United States task force known to be operating in South China waters. On Monday, this task force launched attacks against Canton, Swatow, Hong Kong and Hainan Island with its carrier-borne planes. Eighty B.29's also raided Taiwan on Wednesday, while Shanghai was raided on Thursday. Deletions from our one page newspaper lead us to believe that the rumour that some internees at Stanley were killed in Tuesday's raid is correct.

Four P.51's gave us a thrill on Thursday when they came across camp at a very low altitude and strafed the small shipyard next door. Empty cartridge cases were strewn all over camp.

January 21 – (Sunday)

A formation of thirty or more four engine-bombers, flying quite high, passed overhead about four o'clock today, dropping their cargo of bombs on the harbour area. No report of damage caused is available as yet but it is believed the naval dockyard must have suffered. The work party announces that one large ship was set ablaze.

January 28 – (Sunday)

The week just past has been productive of such an abundance of news, rumours, Vernacular reports, etc. as to leave us

in a state of optimistic bewilderment as to just what is taking place on the world's war-fronts. If we are to place any credence in even a percentage of our reports we find that events are progressing very satisfactorily for us; that is in fact just the trouble! Things seem to be going too well. It would seem that the years have at last taught us an abhorrence of being "sucked in". However, I'll list the events and let the future prove their veracity or otherwise. We'll commence with the European front. Of the Allies in the west we have heard nothing for quite a number of days. In the eastern section of this battle-ground, according to an alleged report from the Vernacular, the Russians commenced their winter offensive, throwing in one hundred infantry divisions and fifteen tank divisions (just when the offensive began we can't say, since our English paper has studiously avoided any mention of Europe since the German counter-drives check). A few days ago we heard that in the north, Konigsberg had been evacuated and that in the central Polish sector, Warsaw had been given up by the Germans on the 16th. In rapid succession, following this, we heard that the Russians had control of all of East Prussia and were now operating in the outskirts of Danzig. South and west of Warsaw the momentum of the drive had gathered in the cities of Lodz and Posen in its westward thrust until finally we heard that the German border had been reached. Fair enough...but we now hear that the Ruskies have reached Frankfurt (??) which is only about sixty-odd miles from Berlin. Of course this type of news presentation which we enjoy might (?) make such terrific speed possible but ???. Our informants insist that it's the "straight stuff" and we do know that in the past these sources have been reasonably "reliable". Still....

And now for the local dope. The fact that task forces are gallivanting around the Pacific almost at will these days, leaves the possibility of action imminent in any one of a dozen likely places along the China coast, including Hong Kong, so that anything we notice locally may be nothing more than routine precaution because of existing circumstances. The first item of interest – from our standpoint – was the announcement in the paper that the Japs had routed a brigade of Chinese troops and captured the village of Huichow, thereby forestalling any plans the Chinese might have had to link up with the Yanks in the event of a landing in the Bias

Bay area. (Huichow is only fifty-two miles from here by rail, and the proximity of Chinese troops was a pleasant surprise to us!) About the same time, the “Vernac” is quoted as saying that Chiang Kai Chek was establishing head quarters at Suichow, some ninety miles north of Canton. About the first of the week we witnessed troops, to the number of some three-thousand and in full battle kit, marching out on the road to the territories. Then came a rumour that the Adjutant of the next camp had made the statement that the Governor had declared Hong Kong to be in a state of siege. The same day the Japs ordered our R.E.’s to construct some kind of container capable of holding a week’s supply of water for the camp. The day following, one of our visiting “traders” told us that the troops we had seen marching earlier were engaged in fighting Chinese troops between here and Canton and that the Chinese had a great many horses and machine guns, which would indicate to us that here was something different to the guerillas of which we usually hear. This lad also said that rail and steamship communication with Canton had been cut, a fact which had its effect on the local “dry goods” market, and that local labour was being recruited to build fortifications in the Bias Bay area. So much for the local stuff.

Because of a very noticeable lack of news concerning the Philippines battle, we assume that the Americans are progressing satisfactorily. The last bit of news the paper gave us was that the Yanks had penetrated, in small numbers of course, to a point on the highway halfway from the landing point at Lingayen to Manila...And there it is. Certainly the general run of it permits a basis for optimism but – how much are we to indulge in without leaving ourselves wide open for a big fall?

In connection with the raid by big bombers last Sunday, the local press describes them as China-based B.24’s and that the raid resulted in the destroying of five hundred homes, with the resultant deaths of over one thousand persons and the serious injury of five thousand more. No military damage was done, the paper admits.

We are now experiencing a spell of the cold, drizzly weather which is seasonal now, but most uncomfortable with all.

Apparently this type of weather accentuates any beri-beri tendencies for I find myself starting to puff up again.

The Japs are fixing the row of huts immediately to our rear, for storing supplies we hear. Hope they don't decide on ammunition!

I've just finished an excellent book by H.C. Link entitled "The Return to Religion" and, contrary to my expectations, found it contained an abundance of good common sense psychology, rather than the usual platitudes on religion.

No aerial activity since last Sunday with the exception of the old reconnaissance flights of "Albert" and "Oscar". The bombing of the Japanese mainland by B.29's seems to be a daily occurrence and, judging by the size of the attacks on Taiwan, it would seem that a task force must be operating in that area.

January 29 – (Monday)

A work party of one hundred and fifty "A" men was called out yesterday with instructions to take a change of clothing, blankets and money, but no foodstuffs. The destination is unknown but it is rumoured that the party will be out for twenty days; billeted at Bowen Road; and will be employed at garden work at the Happy Valley Race Course. This seems a logical explanation since the colony is being exhorted to support a "Grow Your Own Food" campaign to counteract the effects of the blockade. Our rumours of the Russian drive seem to have been "slightly" exaggerated. The "guff" seems to be that they have progressed as far as the Polish city of Posen. The Chinese dope seems to be holding up, however, for we hear that today's "Vernac" reports very heavy fighting seventy miles north of Canton.

Our own paper tonight says that the Yanks – again in small numbers – have penetrated into the Clarke Field area, north of Manila. The paper adds that the main body of the "enemy" has succeeded in reinforcing itself with an additional division, giving the main strength some seven or eight divisions. We hear (strictly

rumour) that two task forces are operating in the Taiwan area and have effected a landing on the southern tip of that island. Burma news is very heartening, with several divisions converging on Mandalay from all directions.

February 1 – (Thursday)

Early this afternoon we heard a rumour (supposed to be “the goods”) that the Russians had advanced to the German city of Leipzig and that whole German armies were laying down their arms. Neutral observers are reported to have stated that the fate of Germany will be settled in a matter of days. We were inclined to believe this all to be a bit of wishful thinking until the arrival of our own paper with the admission that the Ruskies had crossed the German border, on a very wide front, to a point some eighty miles from Berlin. We are now inclined to believe almost anything we hear....

A further addition to the above is that the Germans are only putting up resistance in isolated groups, and that unless they manage to form some sort of line, the whole show is liable to collapse within the next forty-eight hours or so.

February 4 – (Sunday)

Today the weatherman has completely forsaken us and we shiver in our huts, thoroughly chilled by a bitterly cold, wet north wind. Further news of events in Europe, via yesterday’s “Vernac”, indicates that the end seems finally at hand. The Russians are reported to have pushed forward to a point only forty seven kilometres from Berlin and refugees flocking to that city are said to have been given food for three days by the Red Cross, that being the limit of their available supplies. An unfortunate aspect in connection with these refugees is that those who seek to escape from the Russian onslaught by leaving Berlin are being bombed and strafed by the Anglo-American airmen. Whether or not this be true we of course can’t say, but I should not be surprised if such were the case. The Germans have been warned that they would be subjected to all the horrors of total war and it may be that the

Allies are using this weapon with a dual purpose - to hasten the end in Europe, and to provide food for thought for those in Asia who might decide to fight on to a bitter finish. Perhaps it is necessary, certainly I'm no judge, but I can't feel altogether proud of our use of such drastic measures. Surely the women and children will have suffered enough in this business?

The same sources as the above claim that there is street fighting in Manila, so it would seem that the end is not far off in the Philippines.

An item stating that the United States was preparing to lend Soviet Russia six billion dollars after the war, would seem an indication that Russia is prepared to play ball in Asia when she is finished in Germany. We still hope the Japanese will find a good loophole to withdraw, without losing too much "face". It might be still possible for her to salvage something from the wreckage if she does. Time will tell.

February 5 – (Monday)

The latest flash from the war fronts, although not yet confirmed, is as follows: The suburbs of Berlin have been reached and there is fighting in the streets. On the western sector of that battle-zone the Anglo-Americans are said to have occupied Dusseldorf. Manila has fallen to the Yanks.

Yesterday's paper indicated that three landings have been effected in the Manila locality and that the Yanks seemed to be having things pretty much their own way. The paper also gave us news that the Awa Maru would be leaving Mojii around the 17th with Red Cross supplies for POWs and internees in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Java, Sumatra, etc. so we can look forward to their arrival about the first week in March. With the supply lines to Canton cut, we are finding the vegetable situation becoming rather acute.

February 11 – (Sunday)

Our cold spell still persists and most of our time is spent in the seemingly futile task of trying to keep warm. The mercury is hovering around the 40 degree mark and believe me that's not comfortable.

Progress on the different war fronts can best be judged by a review of our different sources of news for the last few days. From yesterday's "Vernac" we cull the following...The Allies on the western front have unleashed what is said to be the greatest artillery barrage in history, evidently as a prelude for a big "push" to eventually link up with the Russian drive on Berlin. Hitler is said to have instigated another "purge" which brought the execution of the chief of the Berlin Gestapo and several others suspected of being pro-British. We hear too of the contemplated territorial divisions to be made in Europe after the war. Silesia and Brandenburg provinces to the Czechs, East Prussia to the Poles, etc., etc. Is it to be another "Versailles Treaty"? I had hoped that the "minority" question would be avoided in this settlement. From the same source we learn that, after a terrific shelling by war ships of the Allied Fleets, the fortress of Corregidor has been reduced and our ships are now in Manila Bay.

News in our paper has been rather scanty but we took pleasure in reading yesterday that "the Yanks on February 3rd preceded by Filipino guerillas, entered the city of Manila and made their way to the Santo Thomo Internment Camp, where they released some two hundred internees and posted a garrison at that point". Generally speaking, as far as we can ascertain from the news, there seems to have been very little real stiff opposition put up in the Manila sector. What the situation is in northern Luzon we have no idea, since there has been no dispatch from there for the last couple of days. Our last report was that the Japs were adopting guerilla tactics "according to plan".

We note that the Japanese Diet, scheduled to adjourn on February 8th, "unless some emergency arose", is still in session. Dare we hope that the emergency may be the collapse of her German ally, and that she might possibly be considering.....?

Mail twice this week, mostly '44 letters, but again I failed to register. George Porteous received the bad news that his wife had died. They have two sons aged nine and thirteen.

Chinese New Year tomorrow and this weather is the type which they believe will accompany good luck throughout the New Year. We hope so too!

With the main task in the Philippines nearly completed we sit back and wonder when and where the next blow will fall....

February 19 – (Monday)

After a lull occasioned by a press holiday over the Chinese New Year, our paper resumed again today, bringing us the tidings of still another move by the Yanks. We read that on the 16th and 17th, “carrier-based planes, operating from a task force within the Japanese waters, raided several districts on the Japanese mainland for about nine hours. The main strength of the task force comprised of about 30 surface craft, including ten carriers, from which an aggregate total of one thousand planes participated in the sustained raids. Just prior to the nine-hour raid on Friday, about 60 Marianna-based B.29's, in formation of tens, conducted scattered attacks on several districts in the Kanto sector”. We also read of an attempted landing having been made on the Bonin Islands, a strongly-fortified position only 600 miles from the mainland. Evidently the strafing and bombing was a cover for the operations on the Bonins but what we do find significant is the fact that, though the task force was evidently very close to the mainland, the Japs claim of damage inflicted is only “one large vessel, presumed to be a carrier, which was damaged and set ablaze”. In the same paper is the announcement that air-borne Yank troops landed on Corregidor in the forenoon of February 16th...Things are getting hot again! No news from Europe.

The work party from Bowen Road arrived last night and were tired and properly fed up. They seem to have had quite an uncomfortable time of things, digging in the rain and cold, poor food, long hours, and generally being pushed about. They are

certainly glad to be back. They bring the rumour that the Red Cross ship left on the 14th and should be here about the 23rd. We hope so...

No sun yet this month.

Signs of the times: Two English half-sovereigns sold in camp a few days ago brought 5200 yen...our pay, 58 yen per month – seems a trifle insignificant!

February 21 – (Wednesday)

The Red Cross rumour seems to have foundation. The O.C. camp fatigues has been ordered to have a large party ready for the handling of same on Saturday.

A very good source gives us the news that the Bonins are finished. This will give the Yanks a fighter plane base for future B.29 operations against Japan proper. It's quite possible that the Yanks may have decided to go at Japan directly, instead of the longer and probably costlier route via the Continent. We presume of course that some arrangement will have been reached between the United States and Russia.

Official word has just been received that the Red Cross ship is in harbour and a special party has been detailed to handle supplies tomorrow. Everyone is in high fettle as they "preview" the long awaited parcel. It is assumed that, since it would seem the Yanks are behind this shipment, that the parcel will be the same as that issued to Yank POWs in Japan; this being the case, our parcel will be a "super" of twenty-eight pounds.

Meanwhile, events in the Pacific area progress at such a rate that it is something of a job to keep abreast of the times. Between February 16th and 18th, a total of six hundred planes have raided the south Taiwan area; 150 planes on the 16th, 170 B.24's on the 17th and 360 fighters on the 18th. On the 19th, the paper reports that one hundred B.29's raided the Tokyo area again. Mention is also made of the sinking by Jap planes, of one of our

transports off Chichijima, in the Ogasawara (Bonin) group, so that it rather looks as though this island must be slated for the next landing, after the finish of Iwo Jima. Things look up...

February 24 – (Saturday)

Our much-looked for Red Cross parcels have at last arrived, and instead of the jubilation in camp which usually accompanies such an event, we find everyone more than a bit let down. The reasons, to some extent, are of our own making for we have been a bit prone to “build up” the shipment in view of the more than ordinary publicity it received beforehand. Nevertheless, when the parcels finally arrived we found, not the bounteous Yank parcels we had expected, but the eleven-pound British parcel of the original 1942 consignment. The parcels have not been delivered as yet, but since the total for the colony is only six thousand odd, we can hardly hope to do better than one per man. Perhaps we’re becoming a bit selfish in our wants. (?) It does look though, as if we had been “sold” a bit. We find it rather hard to believe that our people would go to the trouble to give safe conduct to a ship which is only going to deliver the rather small total of 39 tons of clothing and food-stuffs for over six-thousand people. Doesn’t seem just right.

As if to rub things in just a bit more, we hear that members of the guard “looking after” our stuff at the docks, were a bit free with their “charge” and satisfied their wants to the extent that one or two of them were sick (all over our parcels, if you don’t mind). Oh well! We cannot have everything.

One bit of good news, for the Canucks anyway, is that there are personal parcels (comfort) in fairly good quantity. These are said to contain – besides clothing, cigarettes, etc., a fact that will be more than appreciated, since fags are now going for seventeen yen per deck. The shipment also includes besides the comfort, the R.C. parcels, shoes, clothing, medical equipment, books, gramophone records, and a crate labeled “Theatrical Kit”. Also mentioned were two cartons of Old Gold cigarettes (nine cartons were unloaded at the docks) so that we can look forward to an issue of five Old

Golds per each. All in all...not bad. We do appreciate these things in spite of the disappointment I mentioned earlier.

We had our first glimpse of the sun this month when Old Sol peeked out for about an hour today, but it was short-lived for an hour later it was raining again. Incidentally, the soaking won't help the general condition of our parcels.

Mail twice this week, and all '44 stuff. I clicked with a letter from Addie Seaver, or "Cincy".

News this week has been rather meager, with much fuss being made over Iwo Jima, where they claim the Yanks have landed thirty thousand troops. The force operating against the island is said to number five hundred war-craft, including three hundred landing barges. Sounds like a lot of stuff for an island of only eight square miles. Our underground reveals that a lull prevails on the western front which is believed to be a prelude to a large scale offensive by both the Russian and the Anglo-Americans. We hear too that things are still "hot" around Canton.

February 27 – (Tuesday)

Yesterday and today are certainly red letter days for the Canadians. With no warning whatsoever, the individual parcels mentioned earlier started to pour into camp yesterday – two and a half truckloads of them, and they should be ready for issue today. Such expedition, on the part of our hosts, was most surprising and the Canadian lines were soon a bedlam of small talk as everyone discussed his chances of "clicking". Excitement reached a peak about four o'clock when a party was called to carry the parcels to camp office to be checked, and individuals learned that they had "scored" for sure in either fags or comforts. I'm afraid an outside observer might have thought us a group of half-witted kids waiting for Santa, so great was the jubilation. It's almost pathetic to see grown men react in such a juvenile manner to a situation which, after all, is not really extraordinary. Perhaps it best illustrates the effect the deprivations of our present existence can cause.

(A slight interval of two days here – the general excitement does not permit the necessary concentration.)

March 1 – (Thursday)

The great days are over at last, and we settled down to some degree of normalcy. To begin approximately where I left off on Tuesday morning...

In the first place, we enjoyed our first sunny day in a month and, as we were out of wood, I managed to get on the outside wood party – thereby wangling a trip downtown to the wood depot. This proved as enjoyable as a picnic since we were out from ten in the morning until about three in the afternoon and in that time we loaded only six trucks of wood. On arriving back we found the Canuck groups around camp office waiting for the distribution of the parcels. Though I had previously been told that I was not among the lucky “expectants”, I now found my name was on the list. From this point on things are pretty much a jumble of pleasurable excitement. When received, I found my parcel to be a comfort one and it certainly proved such to me. The items it contained could not have been more appropriate had I picked them according to my own wants. Such items as soap, socks, etc. are worth their weight in gold under these circumstances. Almost everyone of the officer group managed a comfort parcel and the hut took on the appearance of a bazaar as people spread their new belongings for the admiring gaze of their friends. Any attempt on my part to describe the joy occasioned by these contacts with civilization in general and loved ones in particular would be hopelessly inadequate, but I can say that those at home would have been amply repaid had they been able to witness the effect on our boys here. Naturally, all were not lucky enough to get cigarettes but the officer group alleviated the disappointment to some extent by the formation of a pool which netted approximately 25,000 fags which were distributed to those men who were missed. Several small pools had been previously formed among the officers, prior to the parcel delivery, and as a member of a fourteen-man syndicate I netted about two thousand. It goes without saying that

everyone in camp was smoking Canadian cigarettes before the day was out. I was very glad to hear complimentary remarks by the members of other units on the generosity of the Canucks...God knows...they've had little enough these last three years.

Apparently my quota of excitement was not all used up for the parcels, for on Wednesday I received a card from Paddy and a letter from Glad, with pictures enclosed – both dated 1944. The evident growth of the girls is amazing. Mrs. C. will have become the shrimp of the family by the time of my return....All I need now is a visit by Nimitz to complete things.

We have still to receive our Red Cross parcels (the latest delivery date is said to be Saturday) but somehow they seem to have become an insignificant item.

February has proved a most productive month for us here. Germany, ticketed to fold hourly, seems to be hanging on, but we hear that the long-awaited offensive in the West has commenced and the Anglo-Americans, particularly the latter, seem to be making pretty hefty gains. Out here we note an increase in the number of planes employed against the Japanese mainland, the last report stating that 600 carrier-based planes, in conjunction with one hundred and thirty B.29's, had raided the Tokyo area. It doesn't speak too well for the Jap defenses if a task force can operate successfully so close to the mainland. We hear little else from the Pacific front except that the Iwo Jima garrison still fights bravely on. Oh well! Nothing to do but sit back and see what March has in store for us.

March 4 – (Sunday)

Red Cross parcels were issued yesterday and, to everyone's surprise, they proved to be generally in good condition. The issue was one parcel per man but we hear today that there is a possibility of a further allotment of two parcels between three.

The camp has never witnessed such a session of trading as that which followed on the heels of the Canadian parcels. The

whole thing was becoming fantastic when the camp office found it necessary to issue a warning that a sentry had been apprehended downtown with goods which could have emanated only from Sham Shui Po, and that steps were to be taken in camp to put a stop to trading. Sentries and traders stormed in and out of huts at all hours of the day and night and the quantities of brown sugar and eggs arriving in camp were astounding. Very conservative estimates place the number of eggs that arrived, in a three-day period, at between ten and fifteen thousand. That's not bad for a thousand inmates, particularly when – up to now – they have been unobtainable. I think the best story of the session (and it's absolutely true!) is the one in which coolies were used to help the sentries bring into camp the goods to be used as "exchange". I did hear too that one person had been offered a "woman", very cheap. Prices quoted for Black Cat cigarettes the first day were fifty yen, but by yesterday the price had risen to one hundred and twenty yen per pack (25). Closing prices yesterday were roughly as follows – 6 duck eggs or three pounds of sugar for one Black Cat; Sweet Cap (20's) at 75 yen; Black Cat (25s) at 120 yen; Trades....one can Red Cross bacon for nine eggs; one can bacon for one can milk, two small tins of sugar and one can of cheese. For once, the Canadians will be able to eat. It's a pretty happy camp about now!

We hear rumours of a landing on Japan but we're inclined to discount them as being a bit premature. An island between Japan and Formosa was reported to have been raided heavily by carrier planes a few days ago.

March 18 – (Sunday)

Today being a wood-chopper holiday, I'll utilize the opportunity to tap out a commemorative entry for Paddy's birthday, though I be a day ahead. Many of them Paddy – and again I insert the oft-repeated hope that the next occasion permits the extension of my best wishes "in person". One of these years I'm bound to be right.

Things remain quite normal here and, though the news gives us no indication of anything startling, we have the feeling

that something momentous is in the offing. For the present, we adopt the life of taipans and scoff richly of the foods derived from our trade in cigarettes, etc., received in the parcels from home. After the initial splurge of the first hectic days following their arrival, we found our inventory of stock not as imposing as we had imagined – in fact, a bit of retrenchment was called for in order that our smoking, for at least a short period, would be assured. The result of our efforts is that we plan to enjoy an egg a day for three weeks or a month and, by trading our Canadian fags for Japanese, we have a fag supply that will keep us going for about four months. Trading seems to be about as brisk as ever in the camp though a temporary lull developed for a few hours last night when Honda discovered a couple of sentries who were quite obviously not engaged in guard duty, in our hut. Business is as usual this morning though. The risks the sentries seem willing to assume for a bit of profit seems amazing to we of the west. Oh well! It's certainly been a God-send for the camp as a whole in the matter of food.

Casting back over the years passed, we find that we have graduated to a scale of mental and physical well-being that, by comparison, puts us in the luxury stage judging by the standards of those earlier days. Of course, being human, we didn't underestimate our trials and tribulations, but then the situation was so utterly different to any we had ever come across that we were quite unprepared to meet it as we should. Anyway we have come far and it's a pleasure to be able to note the improvement. If as, they say, the surmounting of such obstacles strengthens one, then perhaps we have even gained, rather than lost, on the transaction. Let's hope so.....

A bit of excitement over the colony the day before yesterday when five fighters appeared. Evidently they were escorting heavy bombers for we heard the drone of "big stuff", though we didn't see them. Two Jap planes doing reconnaissance came in for a bit of a shock when the fighters dropped on them from the skies. One of the Japs cruising over the airport area was forced into a "crash-dive" when two of our fighters dove on him. (I can imagine he must have established some kind of a quick-

landing record judging by his speed when we saw him last), and the other plane, less fortunate, was shot down in the hills behind the camp. No bombing was indulged in so it would appear that their task was merely to neutralize the planes at the airport. (We later learned that the whole China coast came in for a bit of bombing from planes based at Clarke Field in the Philippines). (Vernac).

The action of the Japs in taking over the defence of French Indo-China would seem to indicate a fear of an American landing in that area. We hope so....

With the advent of warmer weather I find my weight dropping back to what should be about a normal camp weight for me. The official weigh-in on Wednesday listed me at 168 pounds, a loss of thirteen pounds in the last month. This loss (?) I believe is probably due to the rise in temperature, plus a supply of decent wood which ensures a good work-out, a combination which promotes perspiration and thus dispels, to some extent, the results of beri-beri which have been evident in me for the past few months.

I have just finished a St. Patrick's Day show which, though not too good, served as a bit of entertainment for the camp. More than anything else I think I miss the musical side of that "other" life. Not having a sax has been something of a handicap here and, though I do borrow one for shows, etc., I do not get the use of it that I would if it were my own. Aside from concerts, the only playing indulged in is a bit of a recital, twice weekly in the different huts and employing two saxes, two violins, two guitars and a snare drum. I look forward to some family sessions on my return hence my frequent references to the musical efforts of the girls.

March 20 – (Tuesday)

News in today's paper that the garrison on Iwo Jima had made their last glorious effort in the defence of that island. I make a note of this for future verification; our papers had given us the

news that Saipan had held on for over a month, but we find that, according to some recently delivered issues of the Japan Times that the struggle was over in a week.

Another task force is reported operating off the southeast coast of Kyushu for the past two days. Heavy raids on airfields in that vicinity coupled with intensified B.29 activities are said to be still in progress.

A rather stiff return of my old stomach complaint has made it necessary for me to take things easy for awhile. I had hoped I had seen the last of that...

Bowen Road is to be moved, en bloc, to some former Chinese school in Kowloon and we hear that, pending the setting up of accommodation, a number of them will be moving into camp for ten days or so. We hear too that Stanley and Rosary Hill may be moved to the mainland. It would appear that the Japs intend making a stand on the island.

March 25 – (Sunday)

Bowen Road crowd have all moved in; the patients on Thursday and the staff on Friday. A “re-hash” concert was staged for them Thursday afternoon and their appreciation was most evident. The majority of them are finding Sham Shui Po quite the place after the gloomy atmosphere of the hospital, and they find it a bit hard to understand the generally cheerful outlook and the comparative freedom enjoyed by us here. I think most of them have already made up their minds that they would much sooner stay here than move to their new home. The noticeably low frame of mind indigenous to the patients as a group is attributed, by the Bowen Road doctors, to “melancholia” induced by malnutrition. Since there is no noticeable difference in diet between the two camps, we are inclined to place the blame on an overdose of poor administration and its resulting effects. The indifference, or the lack of firmness, on the part of the officers of the staff, coupled with the rapaciousness of the R.A.M.C., is a disgrace to British administration, particularly at this stage of the game, in that it has

served to promote a spirit of depression. I boil when I hear some of the stories concerning the treatment of the patients in the matter of rations and Red Cross supplies. It's no wonder people show a tendency to be anti-British around camp. Everyone here is doing his utmost to show the visitors "the best" during their short stay with us. A concert is planned for them next Saturday or Sunday and there are "sessions" in their huts almost nightly.

"Albert" was over before breakfast this morning and, though the sky was heavily overcast, he dropped his load somewhere on the island.

March 31 – (Saturday)

A few minutes while waiting for the dress rehearsal of this afternoon's show...Beautiful weather these days so we take the opportunity to store up a bit of suntan.

News from the fronts remains good, particularly the western sector. Latest Vernacular dope indicates that General Patton has penetrated a hundred miles into the German lines, while the Canucks and the British too, have made considerable advances. We hear that Kesselring's forces have been cut off by the Americans, and that the situation is considered critical. Maybe we are finally to hear that it is sufficiently critical to warrant the long-awaited collapse.

The Americans in the Pacific sector have not been idle in the meantime, for our paper relates of another landing – this time on a small island in the Okinawas, which is one of the main islands in the Riukiu group, situated between Formosa and the Japanese mainland about four hundred miles south of Kyushu. Bases in this area will be of prime importance in the final assault against the Jap mainland. We wonder just what is behind the transfer, at this stage of the game, of cruisers and destroyers, by both Britain and the United States, to Russia. Something cooking in this locality later?

A visit Thursday by some ten fighters, which were evidently convoying bombers, resulted in one of our chaps being

knocked down as he dove in on Kai Tak. No bombing was indulged in and after several dives on the airport, the fighters cleared off.

Eddo Da Silva is the recipient of bad news yesterday when he learned that his father had died last month in Macao. Ed has had a lot of hard luck since coming in here – having lost a baby girl, born shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, and a father-in-law. Rather tough on a young fellow. Ed plans to come to Canada after the war where I hope to be of some assistance to him in the matter of rehabilitation.

A work party of fifty Canadians called up yesterday were given instructions to prepare for a month's absence. They leave tomorrow and we understand, unofficially, that the destination is to be Taipo, some eighteen miles out in the territories.

Another Easter in the offing – and we had thought to spend this one outside. Oh well! We'll just have to change our O.B.E. Club to O.B.C.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

April 2 – (Easter Monday)

In keeping with the festive spirit of Easter, the Yanks came over today and deposited a few eggs along the harbourfront and station area. A total of forty-two B.24's, in waves of six to twenty, raided the colony from noon until three-thirty, dropping their loads – as nearly as one could judge – on Kowloon Docks, the railway station and Kai Tak. A more accurate estimation of damage is expected from the R.A.M.C. party which is out at the school that is to be their new home.

Another case of suicide in camp today. An American, who suffered some kind of a stroke attributed to too much sun yesterday, collapsed last evening and was taken to the hospital. Around noon today it was found that he had severed an artery in his wrist while under his blankets and he died shortly after. No doubt some sort of melancholy resulted from the heat shock, but it does seem too bad with the end in sight.

The “Bardal” tells us of another “forty-eight hour” crisis in Germany. Recent advances by both the Anglo-Americans and the Russians have rendered things extremely “critical”. (I’m beginning to lose faith in that word.) News in our papers of a day or so ago, that the Yanks in the Okinawa area are employing over a hundred and fifty war vessels, makes good reading for us. Included in this operation are twenty-eight battle ships which, with the compliment of carriers, cruisers, etc., makes a rather sizeable show of fire power.

The party of Canadians scheduled for Taipo left yesterday morning. The boys should enjoy their outing – for the scenery is said to be beautiful, the weather is fine and good quantities of food

were taken. Honda went with the party so that it can be assumed that they will be treated very well. Mattresses were even supplied.

April 3 – (Tuesday)

I had intended writing up the score of yesterday's raid this afternoon, but instead spent most of my time wondering where the next lot of bombers was going to light. A repeat raid today, employing approximately the same number of B.24's and attacking in waves, kept us hopping from about 11:30 a.m. until three this afternoon. The raid today proved considerably more exciting than most others since their targets, Cosmo Docks and Stone Cutters Island, are of no great distance from the camp. Three attempts at Stone Cutters, evidently with the intention of silencing the guns there, proved a bit exciting for us – but the prize thrill of the day came when they turned their attention to Cosmo. The first flight to attack the docks came slowly over the camp, from the north and, flying very high, released their bombs a bit before they were directly over our heads. The whine of the descending bombs was a bit demoralizing, to say the least, and we were more than a mite disappointed to note that the missiles had fallen wide for it meant they would probably have another go at it. Sure enough, another try, again directly over camp and again a miss. On the third attempt, a change of tactics was employed and only three bombers were used. Changing their direction a bit, but still coming in directly over our heads, the trio was, fortunately for our blood pressure, more successful. Not that we have no faith in our bomber laddies, Hell NO! but the margin of safety was just a bit thin for our liking. One stick of bombs lit straight down the street from the camp, leveling a theatre and some tenement buildings. This theatre is situated three streets from the camp and part of the base plate of one of the bombs, weighing almost nine pounds, lit inside the camp area, four huts down from ours. That's quite close enough! Results of yesterday's raid, as confirmed by the work party, are that Taikoo Docks (on the island) and North Point, Kowloon Docks and gun positions of Devil's Peak were given a real pasting. The record landing, of which I spoke a few entries back, seems to have been eclipsed for we hear that a Jap plane, cruising about yesterday, suddenly decided that home was the best place for him

and came in for a quick landing. The idea was quite sound but the pilot rather spoiled the effect by omitting to lower his landing gear with the result that the plane crashed and burst into flames.

One of our officers, Willie Nugent, was hit by shrapnel today - the piece going right through his knee, fortunately missing his knee cap.

April 5 – (Thursday)

Another raid yesterday, again employing formations of B.24's and this time, to our intense satisfaction, all targets were along the waterfront. The raid seemed much more intense than the previous ones and one of the work parties that was out reports that the whole waterfront area, from Taikoo to the Naval Docks, was methodically pounded. The A.P.C. installation on the island was hit and smoke and flames poured forth until the early hours of this morning. The party also reported that they had a go at Holt's Wharf but that the bombs fell a bit wide, leaving a trail of craters that extended from Signal Hill to the roadway in front of the Peninsula Hotel and blowing all the windows out of one side of the latter.

We can see rescue workers digging amongst the debris left by the bombs that lit down the street from us, and parties passing by say they are still taking out the bodies. Rumour has it that two thousand Chinese perished in the raid of that day.

Some type of pamphlet was dropped yesterday which warned the Chinese to stay away from the Dock areas.

The latest flash from the Bardal states that two hundred transports, plus one hundred and fifty warships, are said to be off the island of Kyushu. The report adds that this makes a total of fifteen hundred warcraft operating in that area. Big Stuff!!!

Nothing at all on the German situation. Our own paper of yesterday reports that Goebbels, in a magazine article, exhorts the

German people to fight till the last as they can hope to gain nothing by surrender.

Reports from a small work party that went out to Taipo indicate that the Canadians are having a royal time of it there. We hear they are quartered on the former estate of a Chinese General; are enjoying good grub; the work is light (gardening); and that they work eight hours a day, with fifteen minutes of each hour as a rest period. The work is all apportioned out ahead of time and we hear that Honda has told the boys to ease up a bit as they are already nine days ahead of schedule. Quite a nice little picnic!

Although the sky was heavily overcast today, the bombing came at the usual time and the bombers again subjected the dock areas to a heavy barrage. Because most of the bombing had to be done through breaks in the clouds, the bombardment was not as heavy as on previous days. We were again relieved to find that they had chosen targets a considerable distance from the camp for, though we have every confidence (?) in the infra-red devices for penetrating clouds, etc., we didn't cherish the thought of them going for targets like Stone Cutters or Cosmo with any possible hindrances to their accuracy. This being the fourth day of heavy raids, we wondered if it is possible that we are to see something here after all. Could be!

April 6 – (Friday)

It's heavily overcast again today and, although a reconnaissance plane was over about noon, there were no cloud-breaks so we saw no raid today.

A big rumour (credited to the Bardal) says that Premier Koiso and some of his cabinet have resigned. General Minami mentioned as a possible successor. We seize hopefully on items of this kind as indications of possible deterioration. Another Bardal report is that the Anglo-Americans and the Russians have effected a juncture at Coburg, Germany; also that Okinawa has fallen. Of local interest is the rumour of some kind of move affecting this camp and the Officers camp next door. Some say the two camps are to be merged, others that the Canadian Officers are to be

moved over. It seems likely that the former may be correct. Personally, I'm quite happy as we are now.

April 7 – (Saturday)

Our rumour of the Cabinet change was confirmed by today's paper which headlines the news as follows: "Koiso Cabinet Resigns En Bloc: Imperial Command Given Baron Suzuki To Form New Government". The editor comments that, "The Koiso Cabinet had been rather weak in facing the situation, hence its resignation." Of course it's a bit early to predict just how the new set-up will fit in with Japan's present war policy, but we recall the fact that Admiral Suzuki was against the policy of the Militarist Party, and as such was the victim of an attempted assassination during the "Purge" of 1936, when that party seized power. We think that this bit of news is the most significant as far as we're concerned, that we've had to date, coming as it does on the heels of Japanese denial of "peace feelers".

A little "bird", which we consider reliable, whispers that Germany has finally capitulated. Late Bardal news tonight tells us the Benes has set up a Czech government and that the Nazis have gone "underground" and are busy exterminating those whom they consider have "given up". The same source mentions that Tokyo is being bombed night and day and is pretty much of a shambles; also that the Yanks have two airfields operating on Okinawa. All very good stuff!

April 9 – (Monday)

News concerning the projected move into the other camp, of which I spoke in the last entry, is still forthcoming – but it does look as though we are to do some shifting. Officers from the other side have completed their move to what was formerly our hospital "c" lines and we hear that we are to be transferred "sometime before the Taipo party returns". Unfortunately, this means the end of the woodchopper gang on the hospital side and, commencing Thursday, Prendy and I join the ranks of the unemployed. Since our kitchen still functions, the shifting of the officers has given us

the opportunity to converse across the wire and we have renewed acquaintances with Dud, Mac and others whom we met at North Point. From what we can gather, conditions are pretty good with them and the only big difference is the matter of rations. Evidently the manner of ration distribution prevalent there, which is said to be the result of a sort of mutual distrust, prevents their eating in the rather high standard to which we are accustomed.

Incidentally, the Japs didn't take too kindly to the intercommunication across the wire and an order was issued that anyone found doing so was to be shot at by the sentries – the result, one man was shot in the arm and another was given a jab with a bayonet.

It would seem that those “forty-eight hour” forecasts don't mean a thing for Germany still hangs on although a report credited to one of the Bardals claims the Allies have entered Berlin. The other Bardal goes to bat with the story that the Allies are now ten kilometres from the city, so we can take our choice.

Everyone was surprised and shocked at the news of Roosevelt's death on Friday. We feel his loss will be particularly evident at the post-war parleys and hope that Churchill will be spared to do his bit.

Our heavy weather finally cleared Thursday and “Albert” was over two or three times doing a spot of reconnaissance. Friday, nine B.24's came over and after circling the colony once or twice, dropped their loads on a ship which had been beached on the near side of Stone Cutters for plate repairs. Only one stick of bombs was dropped and though they failed to score a direct hit on the ship, they were close enough that she quickly developed a list and settled her stern on the bottom. Considering the height of the planes, we thought it a pretty good bit of shooting. After dropping several small loads on points around the colony, the bombers departed. Continuance of good weather gives us an alarm every day about noon, but the planes pass over to some objective in the direction of the territories. It looks as though we have little excitement to look forward to in this line for awhile.

Our paper tells us that a British task force is operating off the northern tip of Formosa and lists four or five of the big carriers taking part.

I forgot to mention that the Bardal is quoted as saying that Togo (Japanese Foreign Minister) was visiting Molotov in Moscow; also that twelve hundred B.29's have been pounding Tokyo recently.

April 25 – (Wednesday)

I had decided to discontinue further entries until something concrete in the way of news turned up, hoping thereby to eliminate a small percentage of the repetition which characterizes these entries. Our paper of late has taken to featuring the news from the European front and we find that we don't have to place the same reliance on the Bardal as formerly. Yesterday the Bardal scored a bit of scoop with the news that a million and a half Russians had entered Berlin and now occupied fourteen districts in the city. Our paper, received after supper, featured the same story although lacking some of the details, and stated that the Russians, in large numbers, had entered the city from the north-east and were advancing toward the centre of the city along Uter Den Linden, under cover of a terrific artillery barrage which was preceeding their advance. The paper quotes speeches by both Hitler and Goebbels in which they exhort the people to fight to the last man etc., but methinks they are a bit late...it will avail them little now.

I believe we can safely assume that the European phase is finished, at least insofar as future supplies of planes, etc., are concerned and we now relax and wonder what the Frisco confab will produce.

Definite news today of our move to the next camp. We hear that thirty-four Canadian Officers are to be included in a group of fifty scheduled to move tomorrow. We can only hope that we are not included among those listed for a change.

Being unemployed has its drawback and we find time lagging. Today and yesterday I have been filling in for Blackie on the lines woodchopper gang as his stomach has been acting up a bit lately.

The air raid siren has just blown, the first in some days – but no sign of planes.

April 30 – (Monday)

This is being penned from our new surroundings as a result of the fulfillment of our move rumour. Friday afternoon we received the order and by that evening we were installed in our present quarters. So far the change seems to have been for the better and, with the exception of a few minor details, the look for the future shows promise. One unfortunate result of the move was the break-up of our little mess syndicate due to Mac's staying behind to superintend the woodchopper gang. The main point of difference between the two camps is in the matter of food. Being used to the system in which all rations are turned over to the cookhouse for cooking, we are now faced with a different manner of handling supplies for we find that such rations as oil, sugar, salt and some beans are given to the individual in the raw state due to a spirit of distrust that seems to pervade the camp. While this system does have the advantages of discouraging any "rackets" in the food line, and ensures that every man gets his full quota, it also means that we have to do without some of the tasty stew, chow fans, and cakes, etc. to which we were accustomed. Products of the camp gardens are distributed to individuals and so far we have received several heads of lettuce and some cucumbers. Small fires are not sanctioned officially but eyes are discretely turned so that we don't do at all badly. The menu is unvarying and reads as follows: breakfast – a porridge of rice and ground beans; tiffin – plain rice and cooked vegetables (boiled); dinner – rice-bean-porridge on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and rice "bust" the remaining nights. A new innovation just prior to our arrival is the serving of tea at 7:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. instead of the usual tea with meals.

The greatest attraction here, as far as I'm concerned, is the musical opportunity. On arrival here I was presented with a sax which is in pretty fair shape and I've already indulged in considerable playing. The first evening we had a "session" in the concert with a combination which included a piano, sax, clarinet, accordion and drums, and many were the favourable comments it provoked. The next afternoon I rehearsed with the camp orchestra which consisted of four violins, three saxes, two altos and a tenor, cello, flute, piano and drums. This latter group is presenting a concert on Friday. I have also committed my rather scanty knowledge of sax to the effort of helping a Portuguese officer, Captain Bottillio, who is interested in the tenor. All in all, it looks as though most of my leisure time is to be taken care of. With the exception of such permanent fatigues as sanitary, etc., the remaining fatigues around the camp are done on a voluntary basis so that if a person requires a spot of exercise he has the choice of any one of a dozen or so jobs to which he may be suited. I've already taken part in a barrel shifting fatigue, plus a spot of road building. So far I've found the days have fairly flown by and if the present temp is kept up, the months should roll by pretty rapidly. A much easier spirit prevails in this camp than we had hoped to find and with everything run on a sort of communistic basis we notice that a better feeling of fellowship exists here than across the wire. Most of the Canadians are bunked down in one hut and that too is to our liking. I believe that most of us would not take the opportunity of returning to the other side if such a thing presented itself.

General news remains much the same, although we read that they have finally caught up with old Mussolini. News from the Burma front indicates that things are pretty close to the finish there, as they seem to be in Okinawa. We await the results of the Frisco conference and wonder what the next step taken by the Yanks will be.

May 4 – (Friday)

We hear that Nimitz had met the different unit commanders at Okinawa and that they had discussed the ways and means of the

rapid transportation of two million men from the European front to the Pacific sector. We hear too that Tokyo has had almost eight hundred thousand homes destroyed, thus rendering homeless almost four million people. That's a lot of destruction! Yesterday's paper tells us that Hitler has finally caught his. What a nice job Donets has as his successor. We still think the Japs will probably do a bit of thinking before they decide to emulate Germany.

May 7 – (Monday)

This date, by reason of its being something of a birthdate special for the Corrigan clan, rates its special entry and I extend my special best wishes to Shelagh, Grandma Hart, Nina, et al. Due no doubt to coincidence of this collective celebration, I've come to look on this date and this month of May as one of special interest for we-uns in here and for myself in particular. That this year is to be no exception is borne out in a concrete manner by news of the collapse of Germany. A more personal manifestation was the consummation of a little clothing deal by Prendy which netted the firm some nine hundred yen.

The final capitulation of Germany is, of course, the main topic of conversation these days and there is much speculation as to whether Japan will elect to carry on or follow the more sensible course in emulation of Germany.

A five-star latrine-o-gram this morning had the Americans delivering a five-point ultimatum to Japan with Japan considering the acceptance of four of the items but rejecting the fifth. We also hear that the mass migration of bombers from the European sector to the Far East has got under way. Our own paper, a few days ago, mentioned a change in air strategy out here which involved the transfer of all B.29's in the Pacific sector to base in the Mariana group, from where they will be utilized against Japan proper. The paper added that B.24's will take over the bombing tasks in the South China and Malayan sectors.

Camp life in our new home continues as enjoyable as ever with the time fairly jumping along. A light attack of fever slowed

me up for a day or so, but aside from that I've been very much on the go.

Trading continues apace, after a very slight interval occasioned by a bit of local scandal involving the sentries. Evidently some eleven of them were mixed up in a small burglary affair in which a quantity of silk and paper, stored in the empty huts in camp, disappeared. Two of them are said to have escaped, taking with them a half million yen as their share of the booty, and the remainder of them were taken out securely bound, to Stanley Prison. Their fate we can only guess. The net result of the escapade, as far as we are concerned, was a noticeable slackening of trading activities for a day or so due to the patrolling of the lines of supply into camp by the Gendarmerie. The boys are now back in force again, however, and we took advantage of the fag market to dispose of the last four packages of our Sweet Cap stock at ten eggs apiece.

Shelagh....

May 7th – my sixth birthday. A momentous year was beginning for me. I was to start school in September and – although I had no idea at this date – my father would be liberated from prison camp in Hong Kong in August of 1945. Many changes coming!

Even when I was very young, I have always thought I had a great “birth” date. May - because spring seems to have a good start – at least on the prairies, so you can feel the air getting warmer and the plants coming to life. And the 7th because that was always thought of as a lucky number.

But I had no idea until I read my father's diary that he had come to look on May 7th as something of a special occasion as well. With the three birthdays happening on the same day – my Great-Grandmother Mary Hart, who had a special relationship with my father – and his sister, my Aunt Nina, he speaks of good things happening on this date. What a shame that he didn't share that memory with me – we didn't have much to build a relationship on after four years. But these things get submerged in post-war times when people have to just get on with their lives. (over)

*And, unfortunately, the three May 7th birthdays
never did get to celebrate that date together.*

May 11 – (Friday)

Proof positive of the efficacy of our “lucky 7th” belief is given in yesterday’s paper with the announcement that the armistice with Germany had been signed on that date.

With the cessation of hostilities in Europe we are subjected to a flood of rumours concerning the war in this end of the world. Our latest buzz is that Okinawa is finished, and that the Japanese Diet had convened in an extraordinary session after which Suzuki is said to have had an audience with the Emperor. Of local interest is another of today’s crop which states that Rangoon and Tonkin have been occupied by our people, and this one has a rider attached that says that Hong Kong and Amoy are next on the list. (It’s remarkable how free the Yanks are with their plans of campaign!) Also of interest to us are the contents of some pamphlets dropped during an air raid the day before yesterday. Unfortunately, a heavy bit of ceiling prevented our seeing the raiders but they did drop somewhere on the other side of the island. One of the work parties from the other camp, which was downtown at the time, reported seeing some of the pamphlets which were dropped during the course of the raid and they report their contents to be roughly as follows: pictures of different types of Japanese warcraft sunk or in the act of sinking, in Manila Bay and Amoy; also a statement showing Jap ship losses in the recent campaigns. A shaded map of the Okinawas discloses that the Yanks are in control of all the island with the exception of two very small bits at the northern and southern tips of the island. Pictures of the damage wrought to Tokyo by the recent bombings were also included, as was a commentary showing the general position of Formosa and Hong Kong in the general war situation. Last but not least, was the usual bit of propagandizing intended for the “forgotten man” which included, in this case, an alluring picture of a Geisha girl with appropriate texts considered conducive to establish that “Home Sweet Home” frame of mind. Some people claim that the leaflets also make mention of impending action in this particular section in

the near future, but we can't confirm this addition and dismiss it as a bit of wishful thinking.

Some idea of the stimulus given to the camp musical efforts by the arrival of Neal Bardal and myself can be had by considering the sudden burst of activity which at present features in music circles. Aside from the "big" orchestra, which handles the classic end of things, we now have a swing band which operates about four or five nights a week and we are at present busily engaged in writing music for a jazz band consisting of three saxes, three violins, clarinet and flute, accordion and piano and drums. In addition to this, Neal is organizing a plectral sextet, composed of guitars, banjo and mandolins. In addition to this, Neal and myself have embarked on a teaching career (old stuff for Neal but not for me) and it means that, aside from my other musical activities, I listen to about two and a half hours of scales a day. What with practices, sessions and lessons, I find that my time is pretty well taken up, though I have found time to take up the manly art of self-defence as well. Sweeney has been over to assist in one or two of our sessions and we are looking forward to a visit from Alla as soon as he recovers from a bout of malaria and jaundice.

May 20 – (Sunday)

A short entry to make note of an occurrence which could, and may yet, have a most serious effect on camp. Thursday, Major Hook of the Grenadiers was taken to hospital in a state of collapse, suffering from what was diagnosed the next day, to be spinal meningitis. Preventative measures were adopted at once and the occupants of Hook's hut, which is just across the nullah from ours, were promptly quarantined, in order to check the possible spread of the disease. The camp hopefully awaits the fulfillment of the incubation period to see whether any further cases result. The recently received Red Cross drugs proved a blessing and we can thank Heaven for the miracle-working Sulpha drugs.

The gravity of the food situation has again become apparent and commencing next month we embark on a new ration schedule which will entail considerable curtailment of our present

food supply. Our oil ration is to be reduced by two-thirds, our bean ration is to be discontinued altogether and the green vegetable allotment is to be reduced by some undetermined amount. To offset this reduction, we hear that our rice ration is to be increased by three or four ounces per day, which will help, but unfortunately beans and oil are the only means we have of deriving our supply of protein and vegetable fat so that the loss can be considered serious for us. We are consoled somewhat by the thought that the end should not be far distant. Our personal supply of Red Cross foodstuffs is not yet exhausted, thanks to Canuck fags, and we still have sufficient eggs to last the coming week so we consider that we have sufficient reserves stored in our systems to meet the needs in the thin days to come. I consider that I have done exceptionally well to date and am prepared for anything. My weight shows an increase of one pound since my arrival in this camp and the present figure of 167 (which is sans beri-beri) represents what should be my camp norm.

Beautiful weather these days and nights, a fact that doesn't help relieve the urge to be up and about.

News from the war fronts is quiet these days and features the movement of planes, supplies, etc. from the European theatre to this. Fighting still continues on Okinawa Island and every day's paper indicates an ever-increasing number of planes and raids over the Japanese mainland. A very strong rumour has persisted for the past few days that a landing had been made on Kyushu, but so far we have been unable to verify it, and consider it a hopeful fabrication. We do read however, that two task forces have been operating in the waters adjacent to that island, and that planes from these carriers – in conjunction with bombers from the Marianas, have been indulging in considerable activity these past few days. Wednesday, so we hear, a total of fourteen planes raided objectives on Kyushu. The Bardal is credited with the report that the number of planes in the Pacific sector is to be boosted to six thousand by the arrival of some three thousand planes of all types from the western front. Mention is also made of the transfer of sixty thousand tanks, plus an incredible amount of small arms and ammunition. The little lads will waken with a fair-sized war on

their hands if they persist. A beautiful buzz from one of the work parties says that the Chinese outside expect a landing in the colony – by the British – on Empire Day. Now that is a gesture which we could certainly appreciate!!

Reconnaissance flights by “Oscar” nightly, but nothing in the way of local excitement.

The loss of our concert hall temporarily put a damper on boxing and musical activities but we hope to have the further use of it next week.

May 27 – Sunday

The observance of the Sabbath in this camp permits a bit of relaxation from my arduous (?) duties of road and path building and music lessons, so I’ll utilize the opportunity to scratch out this entry. I’m pleased to be able to record that Major Hook continues to show improvement and is now out of danger, and that no further cases have developed in camp.

Last night we staged the first of what is intended to be a weekly series of entertainment, in the form of a radio hour broadcast, and it was very well received.

A great surprise last night was the receipt of two hundred pounds of beef, which, so we hear, is to be a weekly feature to offset the losses of the beans and oil. Very good! It isn’t much but every little bit counts.....

Nothing in the way of excitement these days though we are pleased to hear that the Chinese have a force of ninety divisions, officered by some three thousand Yank officers, based within two hundred miles of us – these to be used, according to the paper, in conjunction with the much-publicized landing attempt on the China continent. Report credited to the Bardal also states that an American mechanized artillery unit is included in this array. Looks as though we may yet see some action in this area. But when?

A late buzz last night announced the final fall of Okinawa, so if true, we can look forward to some land operations on Kyushu very shortly. With the array of power which is being diverted to the Pacific these days, it would seem impossible that our stay can be of any very great length and as a result, impatience again has me in its coils. Days and weeks gone by seem to have travelled at an incredible speed but when looking at these days and weeks still to come, it seems that time is at a complete standstill.

May 28 – (Monday)

A continuation of yesterday's effort to record one or two events of minor impact. First and foremost is the rumour that we are to receive Red Cross parcels sometime before the 8th of next month. We think this is a bit wild but a breath of authenticity is lent to it by the fact that the story is laid to the man responsible for the rumour of the beef coming in (whoever he might be) and who, because of his infallibility on his one scoop, has now assumed the status of an oracle.

Some rather meaty bits of info are credited to last night's Bardal, one item being that over four hundred bombers gave Tokyo a terrific pounding a day or so ago. Figures were also given of the naval strengths of the Yanks and British navies. When you start to compute naval ships in the hundreds about all that can be said is that it's colossal. We hear too that a landing attempt is imminent on another island north of Okinawa and about one hundred and fifty miles from Kyushu. The Japs seem to be making much of the allegations of "Yank propagandist" that they (Japan) have been circulating "peace feelers" - in fact their denials are so vigorous that one is inclined to think that perhaps there is something in that story after all. The same malicious sources are credited with the spreading of the rumour that the Soviet declaration of war against Japan is imminent and the Japs offer several "sound" reasons why the Russians would not want to tackle Nippon at this stage of the game. We wonder what's behind it all, but of course that is as far as we can go...

A couple of “specials” tonight are rather worth repeating. Some of it is either a duplication, a continuation or an exaggeration of the earlier bulletin but I’ll pass them on “as received”. The first item has to do with the Tokyo bombing and there are two versions – first that a thousand B.29’s were employed; two that it is the biggest raid in history. It is said that as a result of the trail of desolation left in the wake of this raid, the special Diet session, due to meet tomorrow, is faced with the problem of having no suitable quarters in which to hold its meeting. A bit of “crying” is indulged in by the Japs when they deplore the fact that the vessels now operating in Japanese waters outnumber the planes in the completely special Attack Corps, thus rendering it impossible for this group to completely annihilate the enemy with their crash diving tactics. They note too that some forty countries are now aligned against Japan and express concern that Russia may be forced into the hostilities due to the economic pressure applied by the Yanks. Reasons for this fear are said to be as follows. The toll of the European war has resulted in benefits of the Russian “Five Year Plans” being nullified with the result that the Soviets, in their rehabilitation efforts, are faced with the lack of various raw materials – unfortunately controlled by the United States, and the Yanks are cunningly attaching strings to these which will force Russia to declare her hand against Japan in order to procure them. Just why is hard to say, but mention is also made of the terrible bombing which the German city of Dresden underwent in which six thousand planes were employed and some two hundred thousand people were said to have been killed. This dope, incidentally, is said to be “pukka” stuff, a point which we should be able to check tomorrow, but even if it is, where does it all lead? It “could” be that it is all part of a build-up for the packing-in we have been hoping for, however, it still seems a mite fantastic.

June 14 – (Thursday)

This is being penned from the old familiar atmosphere of the hospital. The complaint this time is that hardy nuisance, malaria, and I’m here as a result of a rather peculiar set of circumstances. I have mentioned previously Major Hook’s attack of meningitis and his subsequent emergence from the more serious

aspects of that disease. Unfortunately, Harry's recovery suffered something of a set-back with the development of a rather stiff attack of malaria, and this further complication proved such a serious drain on his system that it was deemed necessary for him to have a blood transfusion. Colonel Blaver and myself, being two Canucks considered most able to dispense with a pint of blood without too much trouble, were therefore typed and it was found that my sample blended perfectly. Fortunately the M.O. recalled my light bout of fever the previous week and, though the slide taken at the time proved negative it was thought that as a precautionary measure I should have another slide taken to ensure that I pass on nothing that would further aggravate Hook's condition. The result of this slide was definitely positive and suggested that I was fairly teeming with the parasites. This of course rendered my donating out of the question and the M.O.'s had to cast about for another suitable candidate. Strangely enough, some thirty people were typed before one was found whose blood merged successfully – the final choice being Art Campbell, with Dick Maze and Wells Bishop ready to go in a pinch. The transfusion incidentally was a success and Harry's temperature took a healthy drop at once. So – after waiting for the completion of a concert last night, I'm once again in the coils of the M.O.'s.

Tuesday last we were the recipients of something out of the ordinary in the way of air-raids when twenty-odd B.24's came in over the forenoon and dropped incendiaries on the island. To us it seemed strange to see the bombers circling their targets and, shortly after, to see columns of smoke arise though we could hear no explosions. Reports from work-parties downtown at the time indicate that the damage and loss of life was most severe. With the exception of certain districts such as Wanchai, Causeway Bay and West Point, in which large concentrations of the poorer dwellings and tenements provide firetraps, most of the buildings in the colony are of stone or concrete and therefore are not readily combustible. Unfortunately, either by accident or design, the districts mentioned above were severely smitten and we hear the resultant casualties quickly filled all available hospital facilities, exhausting the supply of morphia in two hours. Casualties are said to have numbered over twenty-three hundred. Not being in a

position to guess the strategic intent behind the raid we can only suppose that the seemingly useless loss of civilian life must have been justified in some degree.

Our local paper having been stopped the first of the month, we find we must now rely wholly on Bardal rumour for any scraps of information received. Actually we have been hearing some pretty healthy stuff lately, particularly in the South China area. It is with hopeful pleasure that we hear that the Chinese, aided by American air-borne divisions have set up their operational base at Hunming and it is believed that their drive in South China is about to get under way. From the obscurity of numerous rumours etc., we gather that a three-pronged drive on Canton is in the making and a buzz yesterday says that a Yank aerial unit dropped paratroops at a point some miles north of Canton. This has not been confirmed but if true, it means a lot to us, or rather it could mean a lot to us. We also hear that some Canuck volunteers are on their way out here – it would be nice if they could pull the liberation act...

Today, those personal parcels belonging to Canadians on draft to Japan, were distributed pro-rata throughout the camp. My allotment consisted of four fags, a razor blade, a pencil and a pair of socks.

Prices of commodities have risen to ridiculous heights lately, and having nothing of sale value, Prendy and I borrowed ten pounds Sterling apiece, which netted us a total of five hundred yen. This magnificent sum enabled us to purchase three pounds of sugar, four pounds of salt and one hundred fags.

A late buzz tonight says that concentrations of aerial transport equipment have been observed at Clarke field and Kweilin. I forgot to mention that a day or so ago it was mentioned that an American tank unit had assisted in the capture of Waichow, perhaps indicating that their drive was already underway.

My light bout of fever last week cost me eight pounds so that I now scale under the 160 mark.

June 27 – (Wednesday)

A dull drizzly day prompts an entry to help pass the dreary hours. Since the finish of the German show a most pronounced “drag” has set in with the result that people are beginning to display symptoms of impatience, lack of concentrative ability and general boredom. In my own case, the lack of physical activity, rendered impossible by the anti-malaria treatment, seems to have aggravated an already existent mental depression. My stay in hospital was short, due to the accommodations there being taxed to capacity by a minor wave of malaria which is going the rounds, and I was permitted to continue treatment in the lines, with the injunction that I take things easy since the drugs used are quite toxic and liable to affect the old “ticker”. This taking things easy is okay to a point, but it does tax one’s patience. However I finished the course yesterday and if the results of my slide are negative, I should be ready for action by the first of next week.

Perhaps the best reason for our rather pessimistic outlook these days is the news – or should I say the lack of news. Having become used, in the past months, to being bolstered periodically by news of new landings, vigorous advances and successful political manipulations, we find that the present campaign seems to have become – by comparison – almost a stalemate. With the tremendous difficulties presented by distances, it’s rather hard to discern in the day-to-day news evidence that the wheels are slowly turning which will bring our ultimate release. Anyway, three and a half years is a long, long time! Consideration of those vast distances and transportational difficulties they present has a very sobering effect when we contemplate the possibilities of that early release. Of course we are not really as pessimistic about our chances as the above might indicate. In fact, wagers involving goodly sums of money are being bandied around these days, most of them supporting the belief that our release will be a matter of, in most cases, two months or less. This view is being nurtured by sporadic flashes which indicate that the Chinese armies are really slowly coming this way in what the Japs say is a drive to link up with a landing attempt by our people. From the northern sector we

hear that Okinawa has finally passed completely into our hands, on the twentieth, and that the Americans are busy concentrating supplies for their drive to the Japanese mainland. We hear too that the Americans are changing their bombing strategy to some extent forsaking their bombing of the larger centres and concentrating on the medium industrial cities. From our purely selfish viewpoint, the only news that will really give us a lift is that of a landing attempt. Yes, three and a half years is a long, long time.....

One or two bits of purely local guff are worth passing on. Last Saturday, we heard the startling rumour that a Vickers machine gun, in position at Jubilee buildings, had been stolen. We were inclined to scoff, thinking that there must be some limits past which the sentries would hesitate to step, but sure enough after evening parade we were ordered to stay on the road after the count while the camp sergeant and interpreter made a very cursory search of our huts. Subsequent information revealed that the culprits included a belt of ammunition and a couple of revolvers in their loot. Only last week, the huts which the Japs had been using for storehouses in camp, were looted for the second time. Between trading activities running off and the odd bit of burglary, these Formosans seem to be a bit of a headache for our hosts. Another interesting bit of gossip concerns a shell fragment which the Japs brought into camp for identification purposes. The story, quite unofficial of course, is that sometime on the 14th of this month, a war vessel of unidentified category shelled Lantau Island for a short period and the Japs hoped that identification of the fragment might shed some light on the type of ship etc. The interesting part to us is that Lantau lies only some eight miles to the west of us – in plain view from here because of the height of its mountains. Still another local item, and of extreme import because it deals with the ration supply – commencing today the tea issue has been discontinued until further supplies are forthcoming. Of course we Canucks will not suffer to the same extent as our English cousins, but we will miss it. This camp has also found it necessary to borrow wood from our next door neighbours and we hear too that the rice situation is very critical. Whether the state of affairs is due to scarcity of supplies in the colony, lack of transportation facilities or just plain non-cooperation on the part of the Jap supply branch,

we can't say. Perhaps I should clarify the last mentioned possibility. As mentioned previously, we now receive a small weekly supply of fresh meat to compensate us for the withdrawal of beans from our rations. This weekly ration amounts to between six and seven hundred pounds of beef for the two camps, so it's quite evident that when spread between fifteen hundred men there is not too much danger of protein poisoning. One can imagine then that it was with some justification that our own ration people were a bit put out to find that about a hundred pounds of choice meat had been hacked off last week's supply, prior to delivery. A complaint was duly laid with the camp commandant and it must have resulted in some sort of chastisement for the ration people concerned, for the individuals at once became very "shirty" in their dealings with us. Rumour has it that the rice ration for the future is to be cut by approximately a third, commencing next month. Certainly hope not, things are looking a bit grim now.

Just in case circumstances do not permit, I include birthday greetings to Mrs. C. in this entry. Many happy returns on your ?th birthday (Saturday) Mrs. C! After watching so many of these anniversaries slip by I'm beginning to see why people resent having their age recalled to them. So old, and so much to do (Deep Sigh). Oh well, it (or we) can't last forever.

After a good spell of glorious weather we settle down to our couple of months of the rainy season.

July 2 – (Monday)

No Dominion Day celebration in this camp so Prendy and I paid Mac a visit next door and watched Canada win a hard fought game of volleyball from "Great Britain".

July 8 – (Sunday)

Again this is being pounded from hospital surroundings. This time the old stomach complaint. Apparently I have been working up to this for some time, having been visited frequently these last two or three months by periodic spells of

uncomfortableness. On the night of July 1st, pains of more than usual intensity set in and increased to such an extent that I was sure I was really in for something. By Thursday I was ready to welcome even the knife, if it promised relief, and reported sick – with the result that I again languish “in dock”, enjoying (?) a two-hour feed schedule of ground rice. The mush diet seems to be doing the trick and, with the exception of the odd waking period during the night, the pains are now pretty well under control. Long hours of idleness in hospital accentuate the problem of occupations to while away the time and strangely enough encourage a desire to write. Unfortunately stimulation and inspiration are two widely different forces and the former doesn’t seem very efficacious when it comes to projecting a thought or subject to write about. I feel for the songwriter who responds to the urge to create a masterpiece and who gets no further than rhyming June to moon. Reading, while it does give a certain amount of pleasure, fails to satisfy that creative urge which a person experiences when forced to remain abed, hence some of these atrocious bits I’ve turned out while hospitalized. I greatly regret that my misspent youth precluded the development of that most useful commodity, the power of expression. Perhaps my children – reading these poor efforts will profit by my shortcomings. Lying on one’s back seems almost conducive to day-dreaming, with the subject, as can be imagined, centering chiefly on the future we hope to pursue on our release. The fact that any and all fanciful plans must necessarily terminate in blind alleys due to our ignorance of the present and it’s possible bearing on the future, seems to be no deterrent whatsoever, except that one loses the satisfaction attendant to planning because of the impossibility of fruition.

My particular problem is to evolve some compromise which will permit me to partake of some holiday trip, in which I can again become acquainted with my family, and at the same time enable me to formulate concrete plans for earning my daily bread. The first consideration I believe most necessary, as there is no question about our needing a period of rehabilitation before we settle down to our life of drones again, is only to preclude the possibility of our getting in to a “rut” too quickly. The second however, is the pressing problem. I believe that for my health’s

sake, I must cast about for some other means of employment. Handicapped by the lack of business experience, a profession of any sort and that most essential commodity – influence – I can't quite see prospective employers falling all over themselves in the rush for my services. How then may I reconcile the loss of two or three months valuable time which should be utilized in getting a new start in life? The old, old problem of the cake and eating it...

Life runs its tedious course here, utterly devoid of anything exciting to furnish us with a new topic of conversation. The weather seems to have settled into typical monsoon weather, with sporadic showers and heavy skies. Indications of a possible typhoon last night rather stirred things up around camp as people scurried about battening down doors and windows. Fortunately however, after some rather hefty squalls of wind, things again settled down to normal.

Our news remains quite unspectacular, the main item seeming to centre around the daily increase of bombing activities on Japan. Two buzzes, both unconfirmed, drifted in today. The first that Russian troops are again massing on the Mongolian border, falls among thorns for we've had so many reports of the Ruskies massing on borders in recent months that I'm sure Stalin must be experiencing difficulty rounding up sufficient manpower in Russia to ensure enough Volga boatmen to make up a chorus. The second, I'm afraid, is almost as remote as the first, and has the Yanks giving the Nippos until the twenty-fifth of this month to cry "Uncle", after which they promise to really settle down to the business of destruction, threatening to leave no one stone upon another! Of course "we" are quite amenable to any suggestions of finishing the business any time now and hence hope our hosts are of the same mind.

I'm beginning to slow up a bit. Just had my temperature and pulse taken and the latter registers a measly forty per. A good jolt of rum would be in order.

July 26 – (Thursday)

This entry is made in order to record a combination of rumours, news and facts from which it is just possible, may arise circumstances having a great bearing on our future destinies. Food, being a matter of prime importance to us, will serve as an introduction! Tuesday morning we heard rumours of an administrative change in the handling of our ration supplies. Henceforth, so we hear, we are to receive these supplies through the Governor's Office, instead of through the army, as at present. We think it highly unlikely that we will gain materially from this move, but we do think that it serves as an indication that the general war situation has begun to influence political policies. Tuesday evening we were further pleasantly surprised at the arrival of a small quantity of fresh (?) fish and we were uncharitable enough to express the opinion that it must either be a mistake or that the work is progressing even more favourably than we had hoped. We were even more startled Wednesday morning with the arrival of approximately a thousand pounds of beans and a like amount of bran, neither of which, so it is said, emanated from the local Red Cross. I might add here that the local Red Cross representative, Mr. Zindle, had recently expressed his sorrow at being unable to maintain the usual monthly supplies of beans, bran, etc., these last few months for the very simplest reason – lack of funds for the purchase of same. The lack of these supplementary items in our diet has been sorely missed of late since it means confinement to a pound of rice each, per day, plus a small amount of vile greens. Another “administrative change” rumour concerns the possibility of our being moved to Macao and being re-interred there by the Portuguese. Apparently, so we hear, the Japs have been negotiating for the return of the passengers of the “Awa Maru” which had been “high-jacked” a few months ago when that ship was either sunk or captured, but the Yanks refuse to cooperate, claiming that the Japs have violated the international agreement concerning POW's which states that they must be repatriated after a specified term of captivity. Our optimists are of the opinion that we may be used as “exchange”. And now for the general news picture.

First, we hear that MacArthur and Mountbatten had conferred in Manila and that with the arrival of the Yank Fifth Army in the Philippines, the American Pacific strength is boosted to the million mark. Another conference took place somewhere in China in which nine Chinese generals met, evidently to discuss the coming offensive. Some British mechanized force which made a name for itself in Burma has arrived in Chungking from where it will be sent to the different Chinese armies to act as spearheads in the coming continental drive. Shifting our news locale northward we hear that nine task forces are operating against Japan, four air-fleets and five others comprised of capital ships. The Jap mainland recently underwent heavy bombing and shelling at a point just north of Tokyo and it is noticed that in the last couple of days some 4,500 planes have participated in operations against the mainland. All this is pretty invigorating stuff but the political news raises our hopes even more. In a news article alleged to have been in one of the Tokyo dailies, the Japanese people were warned that they might expect very disquieting news from the Potsdam Conference and they were told that, in the event of Russia deciding to enter the war, Japan would be placed in a critical state. Another item in the same vein (it may be a different version of the same article) and credited to either Koiso or Suzuki, states that Japan had been given terms by the Yanks, through the mediation of Russia, but had refused same as having been too severe and that, if Japan refuses to comply, she (Russia) might find it necessary to revise her policy of non-intervention in Pacific affairs.

Can we be blamed for a bit of overt optimism in the face of these cheering portents? All we have to do is establish their veracity!

Another rather peculiar instance, though I can't vouch for its accuracy, is reported from C.B.S. It seems that Dr. Saito, the Jap army medical chief who has his offices at C.B.S., by some simple stratagem enticed Colonel Bowie away from his office for a short time the other day and in his absence burned the hospital records and case sheets. Now what do you make of that?

Well Mrs. C., another celebration date rolls around next Tuesday with the 31st – marking the twelfth (I think) anniversary of the hitching date. My what a lot of celebrations I have to catch up with on my return.

Still in hospital on the ground rice diet, but I hope to make it out of here by the end of next week.

We're in for a bit of a food shortage until the end of the month due to our having run out a day or so ago. With the arrival of five bags in camp to tide us over, we'll be able to manage by cutting the ration in half for the next five days. Another notch in the old belt....

July 31 – (Tuesday)

One can hardly allow such an important event to slip by without a commemorative entry of some sort. It comes as something of a jolt when one faces the realization that one-third of one's married life has been spent in the confines of a prison camp. Whether for better or worse remains to be seen. By way of celebration, the "gang" puts on the nosebag for a bit extra in the way of chow tonight. Our last can of M&V, hoarded against this occasion, will provide the main course aided and abetted by a cake of Prendy's manufacture. Mac and Eddo are coming over from the other side to help us celebrate what we confidently expect to be the last of such anniversaries under these circumstances.

The weather, so decidedly unpromising at the beginning of the month, rather gave all the amateur prophets a shock by turning out to be bright and sunny for most of July, rendering the days most enjoyable – but the nights something of a bit of torture. Our huts are very low and when combined with a hot sun beating down all day on a tarred roof, and the resultant evening temperature, it would do credit to a good bakery. One result of this condition is that a good two-thirds of the camp suffer from the agonies of prickly heat.

I'm afraid I must report that the last entry's crop of rumours etc. seems to have been the product – to a degree – of someone's hopeful imagination. Some of the points however did have substance to them – the most important of which was the ultimatum delivered to Japan by the United States, China and Great Britain. We now understand that a nine-point manifesto was issued which was to be the final possible chance for an arranged peace, the result of the refusal to be the complete desolation of Japan. From our point of view, the terms seem to contain some degree of fairness, but how the Nipponese will react may be an entirely different matter. The net result for us is a burst of hopeful optimism punctuated by wild rumours of cabinet resignation, acceptance of terms, refusal of terms, etc. etc.....

With the arrival today of rice supplies it is to be hoped that we will again return to the normal rations after these few lean days.

Prendy, Mac and myself wangled a deal involving seventy pounds of Sterling, (collectable post bellum), which enriched us by some three thousand yen and which we at once turned into a supply of beans and bran. Prices: beans – 150 yen per pound; bran (100 yen per pound); sugar – 300 yen per pound (too expensive for our purses). Some amazing deals have come to light in the last few days. People fortunate enough to possess rings and watches at this late date have been unloading same and then negotiating deals which will enable them to exchange yen now for Sterling after the war. Two fair bits of capitalization I'll record. For a watch, which didn't run, one chap was able to get twenty-three thousand yen, which he promptly exchanged for a promise of six hundred pounds of Sterling. Another chap sold a ring whose original price was £2.10 and after a similar transaction netted himself nine hundred pounds. Not a bad stroke of business, I'd say.

With the number of "old school tie" men that we have in camp, it's been something to note the effect produced by the election results from England. To be fair it must be admitted that a good majority of them will concede the need of a pretty drastic change "at home", but it was almost comical to listen to some of the old "die-hards" who can conceive of nothing but ruin and the

complete submergence of Britain as a big world power. Perhaps the latter wouldn't be a bad idea at that.

I cleared from the hospital Sunday but I still retain the ground rice diet. (I'm afraid tonight's little celebration will probably rebound.)

In Canada.....

*From Lieut. L. B. Corrigan
6/3/45*

*To Mrs. L. B. Corrigan
Post Office Box 1313
Swift Current, Sask.,
Canada*

Message.....

Dearest Gladys

Your letter, with pictures of girls enclosed, received recently; also comfort parcel. Growth of girls, as evidenced by snaps, almost amazing. Excellent health being maintained with work and sports. Hope interest in golf and music being maintained by yourself and girls. Am looking forward to big golfing holiday on return. Collection of previously mentioned magazines important. Belated best wishes to Bob and Violet. Everything fine for Noreen. Best luck and health to parents, relatives, friends and postal gang. To yourself, Paddy and Shelagh,

*All my love,
Leonard*

Within days...Gladys was to receive cards from many sources with this same message, as well as a small recorded voice message from B.O. South of San Francisco, California.....

Voice from Hong Kong.....

“Lieut. Leonard Corrigan of Swift Current, prisoner of war of the Japs in Hong Kong in the ill-fated Canadian expeditionary force, is well and looking forward to coming home – some time. His voice was heard over the radio last week. Mrs. Corrigan got a card from people in Idaho saying they had heard the broadcast last week; since then she has had similar messages from Texas and California. Leonard said he was well and had received pictures of his two daughters, which Mrs. Corrigan had sent in a letter, also Christmas parcel. He said he was looking forward to a “golfing” holiday soon and judging by recent successes it may not be so long at that.”

7-23-45

Dear Friend,

I just heard a message from your husband, Lt. Leonard Bertram Corrigan, W.G., read over Radio Tokyo by the announcer. He said in part, “Dearest Gladys, Your letter with pictures recently received. Also comfort parcel. Growth of girls unbelievable. Hope interest in golf and music maintained by you and girls. Want golf holiday when I return. Collection of previously mentioned magazines important. Belated best wishes to Bob and Violet. Best to you, girls, Patty and Shelagh”.

May God bless him and return him safely to you.

*Sincerely,
Mrs. Ernest Grumm*

*Short Wave Listening Post – G.C. Gallagher, San Francisco, Cal.
July 23, 1945 – 8:30 a.m.
Tokyo, Japan*

*“Dear Gladys,
Your letter, com par...received recently. Hope Beatrice...music...maintenance yourself and Bill...Please reserve? Magazines. This is important...Best love and health yourself Bill and Sheilah?...”*

Message in part, mostly unintelligible here, received over short wave radio from Lieut. Bert Corrigan of the British Army, now interned in POW camp at Hong Kong. Address is this camp, c/o International Red Cross, Geneva.

*Above heard by writer and relayed with best wishes.
Please acknowledge.....*

Yours truly G.C. Gallagher

With this welcome information, Gladys and the girls, Paddy and Shelagh had a renewed sense of hope that Leonard would indeed survive and be released from his three and a half years of imprisonment at Hong Kong.

Newspapers would certainly be full of information on the progress of war in the Pacific and the pressure being put on Japan to surrender.

But on July 31st, 1945, Gladys would spend her twelfth wedding anniversary without Leonard – a third of their married life apart.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

August 4 – (Saturday)

A little bird whispered yesterday that Tuesday the 7th, was the date that the ultimatum is to expire????

A quick inspection today by Mr. Zindle, the Red Cross representative, revives the rumours of Red Cross parcels, but it's not taken very seriously.

Last week's little celebration has really played hell with the old stomach and may result in another spell in hospital. I'll give it until Monday to return to some proximity of normal.

August 10 – (Friday)

Having had to make out another war diary today, I thought I might as well use the opportunity to tap out an entry while I had the machine. Nothing of interest to report since the last entry unless the use of the atomic bomb over Japan can be considered to have some bearing on our present predicament. Our rainy season, so confidently expected last month, seems to have hit us with a vengeance and every day this month has seen sporadic showers through the day and heavy downpours at night. These last few days have displayed all the symptoms of typhoon weather and, since this is the month for them, we will not be too surprised if we should wake up some morning to find the roof blown off.

The horror story of the month came to light a few days ago when one of the sentries told of a Chinaman who lives close to the camp, having been arrested and charged with "putting the snatch" on young children, killing and cooking them and selling the meat as pork or chicken. Some of the more fortunate moneyed people of the camp are wondering whether or not they have been guilty of

cannibalism. That the food situation downtown is not too rosy can be judged to some extent by the price list of our official canteen. Some of the items I'll include below: sugar – 325 yen; syrup – 645 yen; salt – 80 yen; tea – 340 yen; bran – 100 yen; cooking oil – 810 yen; salt fish – 420 yen; washing soap – 192 yen per bar. These prices are per pound and it would be interesting to know what staple foods such as rice, etc. are costing the consumer. The problem of wood, for example, is a grave one at the best of times. Noting an item in a paper of recent date which gives the price of milk as 70 yen per bottle ($\frac{1}{2}$ pint), we can sympathize with the poor man trying to raise children.

EXTRA - A flash has just come in that Russia is "IN". We hear that she crossed the Manchukuo border and bombed Korea yesterday. How we hope this is the "straight stuff".

The weather has been conducive to reading these last few days and I have been dividing my time between Well's "Outline of History" and the "Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens", both pretty good material. Whether or not I have profited directly by my reading while a prisoner remains to be seen, but I do believe that I've managed to whet my curiosity and interest. The exposure of my complete ignorance, these last few years, has fostered a hunger to learn which I hope to satisfy by the adoption of sensible reading material on my return. May I not fall by the wayside.

Great excitement! This Russian business is alleged to be "the goods". Further amplifications of it are...that the Russians crossed the east and west borders of Manchukuo shortly after midnight of the 8th – 9th, and at the same time bombed North Korea. The extent of its meaning cannot as yet be gauged but the camp is agog at this bit which we consider the best piece of news we've had yet. We're just that much closer to the biggest adventure of our lives.

The clothing market operates at fever pitch, and heaven help us if we're caught here another winter. Unfortunately, Prendy and myself have nothing left to dispose of.

Rumours that the Chinese downtown are refusing to take yen notes has resulted in people converting what money they have into consumable goods as fast as they can, with the result that it's hard to buy even if one has the where-with-all. Sentries were in this afternoon and bought fags at the camp rate of 18 yen per deck for sale downtown, where the price has jumped to 28 yen.

I attended a camp variety show this afternoon, which turned out pretty well. The audience, in an expansive frame of mind due to the news, received it very well.

The big question in everyone's minds is now "Will she fight or do the sensible thing?" To us it could mean now or three months from now.

August 11 – (Saturday)

A big flash came in just before evening parade tonight. Rumour from the next camp says that one of the Portuguese lads, who was on a work party today, was told by his wife that Japan has asked for peace. Is it true??? Needless to say we're as excited as Hell! Everyone is on edge but inclined to be skeptical, it's just too good to be true. We hear, belatedly, that sentries were around this afternoon with rather incoherent stories about Russia and Japan "shaking hands". We'll just have to stand by and see what happens...

In the meantime, an incident in connection with the Russian entry is worth repeating. In the next camp our friend, Major Boon, hearing the news being passed around their camp about Russia's move, demanded of one of his stooges the sources of the news and declared that there must be a radio in camp. Giving his Sergeant-Major orders to search the camp for the radio, Boon immediately hot-footed it for the Jap guardhouse and asked the camp commandant if he had heard the news, adding apologetically that the whole camp was discussing it but that he had no idea how the news managed to get in. Another story that comes in, whether it has any bearing on the above or not, we can't say, and this one says that Jubilee Building, which serves as barracks for the guard,

was raided by the camp commandant and a radio found. What a nice situation if it should so happen that Boon's action was responsible for the search. Still another story which concerns the Formosans and which can be more readily believed is one which says that Lieutenant Wada walked into the Jubilee to find the guards clapping one another on the back and showing general signs of jubilation on receipt of the Russian news...Nothing more. We must wait to see what turns up from the newest rumour. And if it's someone's idea of a joke – well, I'm afraid I'm losing my sense of humour.

A sidelight story concerning two of the guards came to light this morning. It appears that eleven of the sentries decided to go downtown last night and “hopped the fence” (they are almost as much prisoners as we are). Coming back some time during the night they either expected the current to be shut off or forgot about it completely, with the result that two of them were electrocuted. From what we can learn, the remaining nine are still outside after that bit of discouragement.

I have just heard the text of Molotov's speech on the Russian declaration of war. Quite a masterpiece. Significant to us is the fact that the Japs had asked for the terms which resulted in the nine-point manifesto.

August 12 – (Sunday)

Another day and the “finish” rumour still persists. The returning work party tonight says that four sources confirmed the news today. To quote one of the Portuguese who met, or rather saw from a short distance, his wife who said “It's all over”. But still no official confirmation. My personal opinion is that we won't hear anything until our people get here to take over administration, that is if it's true. I'm inclined to bite, myself. Our news sources give us the dope that the Ruskies penetrated one hundred kilometres into Manchukuo by the afternoon of the 9th, and also that the new atomic bombs are creating havoc wherever they're used. Rumours are circulating too that the Kwantung Army (Manchukuo) had surrendered en bloc so, whether our local news of the finish is

correct or not, all the indications point to demoralization that needs very little for its completion. If it hasn't happened yet, it's certainly in the cards to happen very, very shortly. The reaction in camp is featured chiefly by indecision. People are afraid to believe, they've been bitten before and there's so much at stake this time that everyone is a bit shy. Personally, I'm a sucker. I'm going for it, hook, line and sinker.

August 14 – (Tuesday)

Still nothing official on the big news. People, in the main still are chary about accepting things as they appear to be. A “flap” early this morning has influenced a great many who were wavering on the brink. This latest bit is that (1) Armistice declared on the 10th. (2) The Emperor committed suicide. (3) August 15th is said to be the date on which the “taking over” will commence. We are cautioned not to be alarmed if we should hear firing, since units of the fleet are expected in and will probably fire a salute....

Last night's work party reaffirmed the general information already divulged by parties of the last few days. The most solid of this latest crop is one in which the mother of one of the work party lads said, “It's all over. They have surrendered”. We heard last night that the information was to be officially broadcast from Chungking at three p.m. yesterday, from Manila at seven p.m. and from Moscow at 3 a.m. this morning. Well, if this is a hoax there are certainly a flock of people outside (and in) who have been taken in. I forgot to mention that Col. Toc gave us a half-hour notice that he was to inspect yesterday and asked that arrangements be made for a conference with our O.C. Colonel White. Although he failed to show up, he (and this is most unusual) phoned offering his apologies. I might mention that our people have been vainly endeavouring for over two years to get a conference with “his nibs”.

Our camp officials seem to be placing some credence in the rumours, for we hear that we are to have pork killed for tomorrow.

August 15 – (Wednesday)

Well, still we wait! Everyone's spirits are down considerably from yesterday's peak. Many people were so convinced yesterday that wherever one went industrious souls could be seen polishing brass, getting out uniforms and packing kits. Whether or not our imaginations play us false, we can't say, but it does seem to us that the town is ominously quiet. The usual noisy clatter of Chinese street life has been inaudible to us these last couple of days.

Weather the last few days has been very beautiful, for which we are thankful since the accompanying depression of wet weather, added to the mental turmoil we all feel, would make things quite unbearable.

Wednesday evening – And still further confirmations! First, the work parties have been officially cancelled in the next camp. Stories from the work party personnel tonight include another story from the same lad who spoke to his mother a day or so ago. This chap again saw his mother and this time implored her to give him something definite on the situation. Her reply was that the war was definitely over, she had heard it over the radio at 2 p.m. today. A Chinese worker told the same details to other parties in another part of the city. Other members of the parties report that none of the public buildings are flying the usual flags, and special "riot" squads of Chinese are patrolling all over the city. Another significant thing happened in the next camp about 1:30 yesterday afternoon. In front of the guard room, a table was set up and a radio set upon it. Around this were grouped the guard commander and the guard. Later reports say that this was a broadcast from Tokyo by the Emperor, but this has not been confirmed.

Everyone's spirits are again on the upswing. Half the other camp is over tonight and their enthusiasm was so contagious that they've managed to infect everyone with their confidence that it's all finished.

August 16 – (Thursday)

Everyone is confident now. Excitement last night was terrific. People smoking, talking, walking around until all hours this morning. Mac was over before breakfast to tell us that the same conditions prevailed over there. Noises of the Chinese celebrations downtown commenced about eleven o'clock and in the next camp about a hundred excited people who couldn't sleep were grouped in the main road when Wada came along, asking why they weren't in their huts. On being told that they couldn't sleep, Wada is said to have told them that they should get their rest, as they had a heavy day coming up tomorrow. At parade time, Colonel White button-holed Wada, apparently to ask him to set our minds at rest, but we have not learned the outcome of it yet. FLASH! People over from the other camp just came in to tell us that the news is in the Chinese paper. The statement says that the Emperor, in order to save life, etc., had agreed to the terms of the Potsdam Conference and had signed on the 14th. The War and Navy Ministers were said to have committed hari-kari. People are milling around like mad. I guess we're all a bit "tetched". More later if I can collect my shattered nerves...

IN CANADA.....

From the Department of National Defence

August 17, 1945

To – Next of Kin of

Canadian Prisoners of War in the Far East

Now that victory over Japan has been attained, we are looking forward to the return of those who have been prisoners of war in Japanese hands.

Communication during these years of internment has been very difficult, but it is now possible for us to forward for you a letter which will be flown to Manila and placed in the hands of the liberated prisoners at the earliest possible moment.

A special air letter form is forwarded herewith to be used for such correspondence. Letters are to be addressed as previously instructed. The name and address

of the sender is to be shown on the back of the air letter form above the notation "No enclosure permitted". The sealed letter will then be inserted in the envelope addressed to the Director of Repatriation, Bate Building, Ottawa, and may be mailed without postage on either envelope, if mailed in Canada. If mailed in the USA or Newfoundland postage will be required on the outer envelope only, in accordance with the regulations in these countries.

It is requested that you return this air letter form as quickly as possible, and preferably within ten days.

No restriction is placed on the length of the letter, but enclosures are not permitted.

Facilities available at present are only sufficient to allow one letter to be sent from each next of kin but it is hoped that in the near future arrangements may be completed for a regular air letter service.

Immediately upon receipt of advice that liberated prisoners have reached Allied hands, next of kin will be notified by telegram by the Director of Records.

A special air mail service from liberated prisoners has been arranged; such air mail will be routed to next of kin through this department.

Arrangements have been made for the care and welfare of liberated prisoners. Hospitalization and medical treatment will be available where required. Everything possible will be done for their welfare and health, and plans have been made for their return home on a high priority basis, subject of course to their physical condition.

You will be kept informed as to further developments.

*(Geor. H. Ellis) Colonel
Director of Repatriation*

August 17 – (Friday)

Last night we tasted the first fruits of our new-found freedom. It all began sometime yesterday afternoon when Colonel White cornered Wada, the camp commandant, and demanded to know definitely about the cessation of the war. Wada evidently did

a lot beating around the bush about it so White put on the screws, demanding food, removal of guards to the outside of the wire, and the cessation of parades, hut pickets, etc. Poor Wada said he was not in authority and could not officially grant the demands but White stated that we would take over all the administration within the camp so there was not much of an alternative. As a result of all this, the two camps became, unofficially, one, - and last night saw a big sing-song on the main road.

I spent most of yesterday digging up diaries, etc. some in good shape and others rotted to dust.

Yesterday's rumour crop consisted of (1) Tocanoga's suicide, (2) The date of the taking over of the colony – said to be the 18th, (3) The expected arrival today of three ships, including one hospital ship, (4) Eight transports said to be laying off the far side of Stone Cutters.

The Formosan sentries evidently raided Col. Toc's chicken farm last night and made away with all his prize fowl. They also nicked the farm run by the other camp, necessitating the removal of the remaining chickens and some eight pigs into our farm, it being now vacant. The Formosans, though still nominally our guards, were conspicuous by their absence last night and when a protest was lodged to the guard N.C.O. about the chicken theft he said he could do nothing about it as the sentries were debunking right and left. Most of these lads feel genuinely frightened about the probable treatment by our people and are quite confident they are to be bumped off. No wonder they decamp.

I'm not so sure as I was about this freedom business. This idea of having to wear clothes again doesn't appeal to me at all.

(Friday evening.) Nothing of any particular interest has transpired. We're still pretty much in a daze. Can't quite get used to this idea of being free. That freedom includes the odd restriction we're reminded by an order stating that shorts will be worn at all times in the camp. The taking over of administration by our people means a renewal of regulations etc. and I find myself again a

platoon commander. One of the first official acts this morning was the arrest of Major Boon, and I heard this afternoon that eleven of his stooges were to be taken into custody.

Our people had a confab with Col. Toc this afternoon and judging by the report given us, our people really laid down the law. Colonel T. feebly protested that we were a bit premature in the take-over business, but I guess our people talked him down.

Tomorrow is said to be the big day of the official take-over. In the morning at 8 a.m. the camp is having a full dress parade for the purpose of a flag-raising ceremony, with all the musicians in the two camps combining into one big band to provide music.

Everything goes in cycles. When we first arrived in January 1942, the fence was lined with the Chinese – either selling or begging. Again the Chinos crowd the wire hollering “cumshaw”, this time receiving mostly clothing, although each hut did collect plentiful supplies of food for them. They tell me that starvation has been a very serious problem downtown with numerous cases of cannibalism reported.

A P.51 appeared over the colony shortly after noon and gave everyone a thrill. It circled a couple of times and headed out to sea again.

Diary excavations are decidedly not a success. Two caches were badly decomposed, and one was not found – out of four tries. To Hell with it!

Sleeping outside last night was like a holiday at some resort. No parades helps too!

There was a touching sight today as the Indian officers, residents at Jubilee, were reunited with their British officers. Full marks for these fellows. They’ve undergone some rough treatment and their loyalty was unflagging.

I feel sorry for the few remaining Formosan and Jap guards. They have not been in evidence around camp the last day

or so but today they cleared their guard room of rifles, M.G.'s etc. We know exactly how they must feel. I hope the Formosans get a good deal from our people for, though they're certainly a bunch of rogues, had they not been willing to take the rap for the trading they undertook with us, I'm afraid our numbers would have been decreased by considerably more than they are.

Another night of waiting --- Two Yanks, (Naval Intelligence men) were brought into camp around noon. Their story was that they had been operating along the China coast for the past year and were picked up by the Japs five days before the capitulation. Very much on the hungry side, they were fed double rations from our kitchen and taken away by the Japs again. They mentioned that when they were told to move they thought they were to be taken out and shot and, as can be imagined, they were quite overjoyed to hear that things were all over.

August 18 – (Saturday)

Still another day of uncertain waiting. The day characterized by the reunion of camp people with their relatives outside. People from Stanley were brought over about 9:30 this morning and since then almost a steady stream of people have been allowed in. Touching scenes these, and they remind us that soon, we hope, we too will be embracing loved ones. Particularly pathetic were those involving young children, born since the war, who had never seen their fathers and were naturally quite shy. Eddo's wife and sister were in and Prendy, Mac and myself spent about an hour in their company. Comparing notes with these people, we find that we haven't been too badly off after all. Some of the Portuguese people report living in an atmosphere of terror these past three years, in constant fear of gendarmes who were continually taking people into custody for interrogation, coupled with the unceasing struggle to keep families fed and warm. Every time mail from Macao was received by these people, it entailed a visit from the gendarmes who questioned every word, every phrase, trying to read hidden meaning into all that was written. Third nationals were jailed and, in some cases, beheaded. Eddo's father-in-law was lodged in jail and died while in custody. We

noticed a small incident this morning which illustrated quite clearly the terror the Nips inspired. Two small children that had come in with their mother noticed Wada and the Jap interpreter coming towards them and ran crying to their mother. (Slight interruption here. Seven of our planes – they look like carrier-borne U.S.! – just arrived over the colony and circled the camp at a fairly low altitude, dropping pamphlets. What a thrill!) The pamphlets were addressed to POW's and internees in the occupied areas and stated that a representative was on his way to look after the interest of the internees etc., in regard to food, housing and so on – until such time as the occupying forces arrive to take over. The pamphlet was signed by Lieutenant-General A.C. Wedemeyer. Someone just came in to say that one of the pilots threw his helmet out as he swooped down on the camp and some Canadian in the other camp was the lucky finder.

To revert to the atrocities mentioned above, we hear that some of the chaps taken out of camp at Argyle were tortured and put to death in the course of investigation concerning the radio found there. One chap was tied to a bed, gas thrown on him and, after he had burned awhile, shot. We hear that the four Canucks who escaped from North Point were seen being led through the streets, tied together with wire through their hands. Apparently they were later executed. The number of stories of murders, torturing and general atrocities is appalling. What beasts these people have been.

Rumour from the people outside, who claim to have heard it from the radio, is that a force left Manila at 5 p.m. last night headed for here. We “should” be seeing them tomorrow morning sometime if this is correct. We hear too that according to settlement terms, Hong Kong is to be made an international port with Kowloon reverting to the Chinese and we hear that these people (the Chinese) have already taken over Canton (evidently the South China Japanese forces surrendered to them) and are on the border of the New Territories waiting for the relieving force to come in here. It is said that the occupation of the colony will be accomplished by an international force of Russians, Yanks and British troops, said to be under the control of a British marine

officer. I had hoped that we would get away from this rumour business but evidently it is not to be – for awhile anyway.

Our people have taken what to me seems to be a rather high-handed attitude towards the Nips in the present situation. With no communication of any kind from our people, they have decided that they – in the person of our Colonel Field as senior officer of the colony – have just taken on themselves the authority which as I see it, is vested with the Nips until such time as they can officially transfer their responsibility to our people. Fortunately they have managed to get away with it, so far, and parties from camp today went downtown, commandeered trucks and a car and proceeded to look for godowns of food and other supplies. Small quantities of food were found and brought in – mostly tea, salt and sugar, I hear.

Something which should help to eliminate the rumour problem is the arrival in camp of two radios. We understand that at present they are capable of handling only long wave, but they expect to have them adjusted very shortly. Come on Nimitz! This indefinite waiting is wearing everyone down...

August 19 – (Sunday)

Nothing of any great import has occurred as yet although we hear that a fleet comprised of some ten transports, three warships and one hospital ship have been anchored off the far side of the island of Hong Kong since early this morning. A further rumour tonight says that the representatives mentioned in yesterday's pamphlet have arrived in the colony. We'll most likely see the forces landing tomorrow or the next day.

Life in camp is hardly to be recognized as the same as that experienced a week or so ago. Plentiful supplies of oil, sugar, beans and rice are now available and everyone goes around with that satisfied look characteristic of the well-fed person. We find it just a bit difficult to realize that we don't have to economize on food anymore.

The radio that came in the other day has been set to work and we now have the regular news broadcast from Manila daily. Nothing of interest to us personally except that the delegates have arrived at Manila for the signing of the treaty. I hear that one of the commentators really roasted the Emperor in tonight's broadcast.

After listening to further horror stories from the people from downtown today, I find that I'm not quite so inclined to that feeling of forgiveness of one's enemies that is supposed to characterize the proper Christian. Rape, murder, extortion, and the most cruel tortures have been practiced by the Nips on everyone in the colony. An example of the pleasant manner in which these boys conduct a war can be had in their treatment of the Yank airmen shot down in raids over the colony. These poor lads were publicly crucified to crosses with wire, their heads covered with sacks to cover the extent of the brutalities they had suffered, and later their heads lopped off and exhibited in public, together with one of the planes shot down. Story after story told by people who had brothers, fathers, friends, etc., rather inclines one to hope that the Yanks will learn of the fate of their comrades and exact a grizzly revenge. The extent that the women of the colony have suffered is almost beyond belief.

My weight a week ago was 155 pounds, but I'm afraid that at the rate I'm shoveling things at my stomach, I'm going to walk out of here almost back to normal.

We just finished a band concert tonight and that, coupled with a strenuous game of ball this morning has left me almost punchy with fatigue. I have to play practically all afternoon tomorrow so I must get some sleep. I forgot to mention that we now enjoy lights again. What a life!!

August 21 – (Tuesday)

Still hanging around the old stomping ground. Our latest news indicates that Canton and Hong Kong are to be occupied some time before the end of the month so we don't expect a change of scenery much before that time. Evidently it looks as

though the policy is to have the British do the taking over. We also hear that arrangements are being made for convalescent camps in the Philippines to accommodate one hundred and fifty internees and POW's, so we may have a two or three month sojourn there – however, our immediate problem is to get out of here.

Nothing in the way of interesting news of the camp. People come in daily from downtown to see friends and relatives here, and from twelve noon until seven in the evening, the place looks like an Elk's garden party – liquor and all. I've met a number of Portuguese young ladies and you can believe me that, after a three year period in which none of the fairer sex were in evidence, it's no easy task to mix easily with them now. I'm thinking of becoming a hermit after I get home.

In order to make things as pleasant as possible for the guests from the city, entertainment has been provided every afternoon – chiefly in the form of “swing” music. This has entailed playing from 2 p.m. to 6 and, coupled with practices and shows for the inmates of the camp, makes something of a busy day for me. There has been a concert every evening for the past few days to help pass the time and it is intended that this schedule be kept up until we're released. Nimitz, or someone, had better hurry – we're running out of material.

The latest dope on the above possibility is that MacArthur is to proceed to Japan at the head of a huge air and naval force made up for the purpose of the signing of the treaty and the occupation of that country.

A big B.24 or B.29 was over yesterday cruising around, and he was followed by four P.51's who circled the camp very low and dropped some individual packets of cigarettes. I smoked a Philip Morris today. Not bad at all....

There is much bustle and activity in camp as various units attempt to get records and reports up to date. With pips and crowns again in evidence we suddenly find we are once again in the army and senior officers who were only too glad to borrow your tea

kettle or what-have-you, hardly recognize you when you meet them. Oh well, I guess we'll pull through okay.

August 24 – (Friday)

Well, we had thought by this time to be enjoying the balmy breezes of Baggio, or some similar establishment in the Philippines. Rather a unique experience this, to be enjoying freedom (?) and yet still remain captive. Our contact with the outerworld, the radio, while a blessing in many ways, serves as well to heighten the impatience we all feel. We hear that the fleet still lies off Stanley so it's rather annoying to have the radio report that much interest is being taken in the prisoners and internees in the Far East. Further postponements of signing etc., would indicate that we'll probably be relieved about the end of the month. I suppose our grumbling typifies our human frailties, for after all, we're not suffering a bit except in our own minds. Grub is plentiful, the future looks rosy and we have nothing to do but lie around. What more could anyone want? Indications of typhoon weather have been in evidence all day and since early afternoon the wind has been increasing in velocity. The radio reports that a low pressure area has been noticed around the Philippines for the last two days so that we may still be in for something stiff.

Reports from downtown indicate that peace and order are being maintained despite the fact that the Nips have been subjected to the odd bit of provocation by the Chinese. We hear that four Chinos were shot to death when they expressed too much jubilation at the appearance of the planes on Tuesday. Like ourselves, the Chinese population jumped the gun on receipt of the surrender news and for a day or so the Nationalist flags were in evidence on all the streets. We hear that the Nips resented this just a bit and after one or two spots of not too serious trouble, the flags have again been put in the moth balls until the propitious moment. For our part, we regret a bit of optimistic generosity which prompted us to give away our remaining stock of beans, salt, etc.; if this lasts much longer we'll have to go out to the fence and start begging it back.

Now that freedom is in the offing, I find those amazing stocks of ambition, which served as a background for my plans for the future, to have mysteriously evaporated. It's always so much easier to surmount tremendous obstacles in one's imagination than when faced with the real thing. I'll have to give myself some pretty strong pep talks when we are finally released.

Tonight's radio reports that a typhoon in the Kanto area in Japan has interfered with communications in that country and the signing may be still further delayed. Last night's radio stated that every effort was being made to expedite the return of prisoners and internees to their homes, and added that opportunities to communicate with the people at home would be given those affected at the earliest possible moment. We now wonder if the plan is to take us directly to Canada. Everyone was convinced we would spend some time in convalescent camps in some tropical clime to take the edge off the rigours of the Canadian climate. Makes no never mind, as long as we enjoy a bit of freedom.

August 25 – (Saturday)

Just a wee note to record one or two minor points of interest. Tonight's broadcast is said to have stated that Admiral Harcourt will arrive some time next month for the relief of Hong Kong, as there has evidently been a delay of forty-eight hours in the signature proceedings. The delay in the take-over has begun to give the camp officials a bit of a headache with some of the boys finding the tardiness a bit irksome and going over the fence. Two nights ago, one of our chaps was absent for the night and again last night four Canucks spent the evening "out". Just how many actually go out every night is difficult to say for the wire is quite easy to surmount, there being no sentries on and only an occasional picket of ours making the rounds. The five Canucks who were found out, were checked only because they had sense enough to report to the M.O.'s for anti-VD treatment on their return to camp; I'm afraid there are a goodly number who didn't report and are therefore almost sure to be in for it. You'd think men would learn after almost four years.

Re the question of leaving camp – parties go out from the camp daily to Stanley and C.B.S. and starting tomorrow thirty people who have relatives downtown will be allowed out on pass. Walking parties, not to exceed forty persons are to be commenced on Monday and though they are not allowed downtown it does mean that we'll be allowed to hike back over the hills a bit into the New Territories.

This morning the ration front was strengthened with the distribution of an ounce and a half of butter per man and we hear tonight that some coffee beans and meat have arrived in camp. We were issued with an ounce and a half of coffee and two and a half ounces of Saki day before yesterday and we understand tonight that the Nip ration man is reported to have stated that, knowing that we dislike Saki and have a preference for whiskey, the Nips are scouring the colony for whiskey to issue instead of the Saki. Our people say that the Nips are really falling all over themselves in their efforts to cooperate.

August 31 – (Friday)

So much has happened in the last few days that everyone has been thrown into a flat spin. To go back a couple of days; Wednesday, Prendy and I had an opportunity to get away to Stanley and though much of the day was spoiled by rain, we did enjoy ourselves. We were taken in tow by a young couple who had been marooned in Canton and who knew no one in the colony and had an amazingly successful day. What a treat to meet human beings again, although the fair sex looked a bit formidable at first. One point we noticed, and we did think it an improvement, was the complete absence of any of the usual trivialities of conversation, etc., on the part of the women; of course, when married and unmarried people live practically in one another's laps for nearly four years, most inhibitions are bound to go by the board. On the whole, the people of Stanley don't seem to have done badly, though they have been terribly crowded.

The big thrill of the day came in the early afternoon when a Douglas transport circled the camp and dropped supplies by

parachute. We had as a vantage point the roof of one of the barrack buildings and the plane came low enough that we could almost make out the features of those who were kicking the cases through the door in the side. The plane circled four times, dropping about twelve cases, the parachute of one failing to open, and then the pilot circled very low, below the roofs of the buildings and gave everyone a wave before he pushed off. I neglected to mention that on the way to Stanley, our launch was dived on every few minutes by one or another of the planes which circled the colony all day. A few minutes before our departure from Stanley, we were given an additional lift by the appearance at some distance of units of the fleet. All in all, quite a successful day.

Arriving back in camp, I found a stag party and, being asked to play, joined in. The guest of honour, a Rajputs officer, is to be married tomorrow. This session broke up in the wee small hours and, though I had previously sworn abstinence, the finale found me rather fuzzy. The supplies of liquor, food, etc. that have come into camp daily for the past couple of days are amazing. Thursday proved an even more strenuous day than Wednesday. To begin with, I attended a wedding at St. Theresa's Church in the early afternoon, followed by a reception at Matta Chong internment camp at which we again supplied the music. The fleet having steamed into harbour in the morning, we decided that we would go down to the waterfront and have a look-see. We were happily thrilled to find the Canadian cruiser, Prince Robert, tied up to the Kowloon wharf and proceeded at once to take steps to go aboard. Arriving on board, we found almost the total Canadian population of camp milling around, searching for news from home. My only contact was a chap named Darjes from Swift Current, but unfortunately I didn't have much time for conversation. I'm trying to get to see him today. The Canucks on board ship really played the good hosts to our people. Cigarettes, chocolate bars, cookies, drinks, everything; our lads came away fairly staggering (that goes quite literally). Canada, according to all reports, seems to have emerged from the war in a most enviable position economically, at least as far as belligerent countries are concerned. There seems to be the usual political chaos which has evidently resulted in some rather stupid situations.

This is being finished off on Saturday – September 1st – with so many interruptions, bits of news coming in and general confusion, it's almost impossible to get something like this done. As mentioned yesterday, we're all in a flat spin. This colony is in a most peculiar category. From what we can gather, Harcourt came in quite all on his own and as a result arrived ahead of the transports, etc., so that we have the peculiar situation of the British walking in and assuming command without sufficient troops to back them up. The formal surrender has not taken place yet so the Nips have not as yet been dispossessed of their arms. Crews of the "Robert" and "Anson" patrol a very small area around the docks, but aside from that the Nips are still responsible for policing the colony. Planes from the two carriers zoom around from morning to night to maintain the illusion of force, but I'm afraid that if the Chinese decide to take retaliatory measure against the Japs, there's not much our people could do for, though the Nips still retain arms, mobs are a very annoying piece of business – especially to small groups.

Yesterday, Mac, Black and myself went into town and spent a lovely quiet day relaxing in the flat of a Portuguese friend. To be able to sit back and enjoy the comfort of clean floors, soft furniture and other amenities of civilized life is a joy that can only be understood by those that have been denied the blessing of them. Later in the evening we walked downtown to have a look at the ships and then walked back the long four miles to camp. Within a block of the dock area, a Marine on a motorcycle stopped to talk to us and as we talked, a Chino rushed up to say a mob was looting a building just up the street. The Marine pushed off at once and we followed. Almost immediately, a small patrol vehicle containing some eight or ten Marines also drew up and at once set on the crowd of two or three hundred people who were congregated in front of a godown. In the general mix-up, we found Chinos dragging sacks and boxes out of the buildings where they would be set upon by people waiting there and who would endeavour to hijack them of their loot. The patrol, quite without any help on our part, for it was dark and we had no weapons of any sort, soon dispersed the main body of the crowd to the opposite side of the

street, from where, with a little rough persuasion, they evaporated into the side streets. I forgot to mention that on the way downtown we happened along just at the conclusion of another little incident. It appears that a Nip soldier, dressed in Chinese civvies had cut off his lady friend's head with his sword and then either fallen or jumped from a second story window to the street below. We arrived on the scene simultaneously with a couple of armed Jap soldiers just as it seemed that the gathering crowd was about to do violence to the murderer, who had hurt his leg in the fall and was unable to escape. One of the soldiers put the chap on his back and made off, the others covering him with their rifles, and followed at a discreet distance by the crowd.

We have been hearing of isolated cases of trouble in both Hong Kong and Kowloon and one of the Marines, to whom we spoke last night, said that two of their chaps were reported to have been killed the previous night. A detail in camp this morning mentions that some of the Naval volunteers are detailed for patrol tonight in the Bowen Road area. Hope we can wangle in on this...

This morning the camp administration was taken over officially by a Lieutenant Archer, R.N., who is apparently a POW representative. Members of some Commando units from one of the ships have been in and out of the camp all morning and what a hefty bunch they are.

Someone has just come into say that Colonel Tocanaga, Wada, and Takiyama, the camp interpreter, have just arrived in camp under guard. The rumour is that they have asked to be given the protection of the camp. It is also said that their trip through the camp to the camp office was greeted by considerable abuse, in the form of suggestions as to their disposition in the future. They did not look happy...

Patients at C.B.S. were removed to the hospital ship yesterday afternoon and we hear that further removals from other camps is to take place today.

Rumour has it that the R.A.F. is to arrive to take over today but to date we have seen no evidence of this as yet. Word has been received that Brigadier Kaye, the former commander of the Grenadiers, is to arrive from Chungking very shortly.

Having just seen some of the atrocity pictures of German concentration camps, we realize that, by comparison, we have really been living the life of Riley here. Funny how we can always manage to emphasize and magnify out little troubles. In this connection it is interesting to note that POW's in the Philippines were herded into caves, M.G.'s mounted at the entrance and flame throwers directed into the interior. We hear that at one place only one person survived. This story was evidently known to the people outside shortly after its occurrence and they lived in constant dread that, at the outbreak of hostilities, the civilians would suffer the same fate. We do know that sentries were alleged to have told our people that, in the event of this place being attacked orders included means for our quick disposal. Seems we never know our luck...

Being in town yesterday, I missed a chance of getting an airmail letter away, but I availed myself of the opportunity before breakfast this morning.

Post war rehabilitation plans for service men seem to be very generous and I hope to avail myself of the opportunity presented.....Another trip downtown today to see if I can contact Darjes and get some news from home.

AIRMAIL LETTER FROM LEONARD....

Sham Shui Po Camp, Hong Kong Saturday, September 1, 1945

Dearest Glad, Paddy, Shelagh, et al –

A few lines in haste to once again inaugurate communication. How have you all been keeping these last thirty or forty years? Have had no mail from you since your letter of August '44 so can only hope you have all weathered the storm OK. Send pictures at your first opportunity. My health, and that of friends such as

Blackie, Maze, Blackwood etc. very good. Plans for our immediate future very much in the dark but we hope to be shipped out very shortly.

Hope you have managed to save back copies of Time, Life, etc., for we've been hopelessly out of touch. No plans for the future on my return but look forward to some sort of quiet holiday in which we can again become acquainted.

The thrill and excitement of release still has us in its grip and renders it difficult to express the thousands of queries which race through my mind. Word of friends at home and something of a resume of your local events will be much appreciated.

The last pictures received of the girls make me wonder if I'm to become the shrimp of the family. Do they retain former interest in golf, music, etc.?

Must close this rather incoherent scribble as time presses, but do hope to hear from you all shortly. Best love to Mother, Dad, Grandma Hart etc.

Love, Leonard

September 1st, 11 p.m.

Dearest Glad, Kiddies and all –

Have just arrived back from a trip to the "Robert" to find that we are able to dispatch another letter before 9 a.m. tomorrow. Spent a most pleasant afternoon with a couple of Swift Current lads, Darjes and Mullan and went over as much of the local gossip as the boys could remember. What a treat to have these things recalled to mind.

No word yet as to any plans for our immediate future though we believe that we'll be pushing off for Manila, as an initial stage within the next few days (we hope). Movement of hospital patients aboard the hospital ship commenced yesterday. Forgot to mention this morning that Joe Hanel still with us and in excellent shape.

May I impress on you the urgency of photos of yourself and the girls. My imagination in a turmoil trying to picture you after all these years, after all I must have something to guide me when I met you'se gals at the station. Any news of friends, etc. will be much appreciated.

News of rehabilitation plans for returned men gives me great hope for the future. I've been dreaming and planning these years for a pleasant holiday with you all and the scheme will be a great aid.

I suppose after such a long absence, a wayward husband should fill a letter with numerous expressions of love but somehow it does seem superfluous and beside, I'm out of practice. However you do know you have –

*All my love,
Leonard*

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

September 3 – (Monday)

Brigadier Kay arrived last night and has just given us a bit of a talk in the hut this morning. Not much news that we had not already heard and it looks as though we will remain here another couple of weeks. Taken all the way through this has been a most peculiar situation. We understand our people are taking over officially today, but in the meantime there has been considerable looting and general badgering about downtown.

I went down to the ship and spent a pleasant afternoon chinning with Darjes and a chap named Mullan who used to live in Swift Current. I also heard that a chap named Fowler, who played hockey with Hubert, was looking for me – but I missed him. It's grand to get the odd bit of news from home and though these lads have been away for quite a few months, we were able to get together on considerable guff.

AIRMAIL LETTER FROM LEONARD –

*September 4, 1945 – Hong Kong
Dearest Glad, Paddy & Shelagh,*

The heading indicates we're still at the old stand but hope to be on the move very shortly. Brig. Kaye, Canadian Military Attaché from Chungking and former O.C. of the Grenadiers, arrived yesterday from Kunming and is doing everything possible to expedite our removal. The latest "dope" is that we will be leaving aboard the Empress of Australia within the next 4 or 5 days, destination, the Philippines.

Our present situation here is most peculiar. As far as we can gather it was decided that, for political reasons, H. Kong must be re-occupied by the British, and accordingly a relief "ship train" was made up from the closest of British bases, Australia. Having received no news as to prevailing conditions of POW's and internees in H.K., and to prevent atrocities such as had befallen these people in other "liberated" areas,

Admiral Harcourt, with the fighting ships under his command, soon outdistanced the slower ships of his "train" and despite the fact that surrender terms had not been signed, steamed into the harbour and "took over". The peculiar part is that, though the harbour bristles with strength in the way of carriers, warships, etc. the lack of man power to police the colony has resulted in the Japs still maintaining their arms and the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order. The "Australia" is expected in momentarily with 3,000 R.A.F. people but in the meantime, the Nips have their hands full trying to suppress looting on the Kowloon side (mainland), and in addition they undergo considerable provocative abuse from the Chinese populace. On the Island, British Marines have taken over completely, but there too, the looting problem is quite acute. Several small parties have been recruited from our camp to aid in policing duties but since the terrain is unfamiliar to most Canucks, we've missed the fun. Leave to walk through the town is easily procured and most of our lads go out daily, chiefly with the object of visiting the "Robert" where they have good Canadian hospitality lavished on them.

Speaking of hospitality, a large party from camp visited the battleship "Anson" last evening and we were given a fine reception. The "Anson" is the most powerful of the "George V" ships and the tour of her was a wonderful experience. Don't be too alarmed if you should hear my voice issuing from your loudspeaker some evening for I was one of those chosen to say a few words. Just what I did say I find it difficult to recall for the recording of my particular contribution took place rather late in the evening, after a most convivial session in the wardroom. – Brig. Kaye in for a few minutes to tell us the "Australia" has arrived. Arrangements have been made for us to move on board as soon as the R.A.F. has disembarked, possibly Thursday morning. Kaye believes we'll be in Manila for the weekend, for how long, we don't know.

Well, so long for now.

Love,

Leonard

(over)

Rumoured Canadian mail awaits in Manila!

Leonard

September 5 – (Wednesday)

It's remarkable how easily I can become sidetracked in these efforts to keep up to date in this diary. Yesterday a party from camp were guests aboard the battleship "Anson" and what a fine ship she is. Of some 35,000 tons, she is the most powerful of the Sovereign type ships and with her "radar" controlled 14-inch guns, she presents a terrific unit of firepower. My personal opinion, after hearing descriptions of most of the naval battles which took place in the war, is that the huge outlay represented by this type of ship is out of proportion with its usefulness, due to the immense part aircraft has played in this show. It would seem that the same sum put into aircraft carriers would be more in keeping with present strategies.

The hospitality of our naval cousins aboard the "Anson" left nothing to be desired and a good time was had by all. We were each taken personally in tow and shown the ship, from the Admiral's cabin to the stoker's locker room, with well-timed visits to the wardroom for the occasional stimulants to help ease the rigours of numerous climbs from lower to upper decks. For some obscure reason I was chosen as one of those to make a recording for subsequent broadcast by radio and, checking back mentally, I hope I didn't "put my foot in it". The thing proved harder than I at first anticipated, not being a "man of the public" by nature.

Today Brigadier Kaye was in for a few moments to say that the "Empress of Australia" had arrived with 3,000 R.A.F. lads and that arrangements had been made for us to go aboard just as soon as they had disembarked. Kaye's opinion is that we will probably be in Manila for the weekend. Another point he mentioned was that there would probably be Canadian mail awaiting us there. Plans for us beyond Manila have not been disclosed, and there is a divergence of opinion as to whether we go straight home or slip down to Australia for awhile.

People connected with essential services, other camps and those who could figure any legitimate excuse for staying downtown have been gradually drifting away from camp and with the departure of the H.K.V.D.C. this morning the place takes on the appearance of a deserted village. Almost the only inhabitants left are the Imperials and the Canadians.

Anti-looting patrols are still going out but I haven't managed to get in on any of them yet. Evidently we Canucks are not supposed to be familiar enough with the town to warrant letting us loose with weapons. One patrol on the Peak area last night is said to have bumped four Chinos in the course of duty.

A combined Marine band from the "Indomitable" and the "Venerable" played a concert for those of us left in camp this afternoon. Very nice. Tomorrow a party is being planned for an inspection of the two carriers. All Canadian officers are invited to lunch downtown with Brigadier Kaye tomorrow noon but since two officers are required in camp, Mac and I volunteered to stick around. I don't go for this social business anyway.

I had a bit of luck this afternoon. I was forced to stay in camp this afternoon due to my being a platoon commander and was therefore out of the running for any loot which might go begging downtown. The official turnover took place at eleven this morning and all day our people have been rounding up sentries, taking whatever suited their fancy in the way of armament while doing so. Mac and I and several others were out of camp this morning while taking some rations to the Indian camp on Argyle Street and while there almost created a bit of an international incident by "borrowing" a few swords from a Gendarmerie Headquarters we happened across. It occurred thus: We walked into the building, past sentries, still armed, and boldly by-passed the office where we knew any officers or N.C.O.'s would be located. On finding the proper room we also walked into four or five N.C.O.'s, all of whom still retained their swords. Our lads went for the swords and, since there were not enough to go around, I asked one of the Nips to "lend" me a pistol. Fortunately, the man whom I accosted was an interpreter and he expressed his sorrow

that there were no pistols available, also that we saw fit to confiscate the swords for, as he said – and rightly enough too – that by the article which they had signed, they were to hand in weapons at 11 o'clock and that when our people came around to collect, they would be found wanting in the matter of swords. I was putting up rather a good case, so I thought, and was about to commence moving off myself when one of the N.C.O.'s became quite huffy about the whole proceedings, a frame of mind which seemed to communicate itself to the Nips in general and to one private in particular – for this laddie brought up his rifle. Now, at this stage, I felt very little enthusiasm for souvenir hunting and was quite willing to call the whole thing off, but decided Mac and the rest were not quite far enough down the street, so I took it on myself to take on the duties of ambassador-at-large and pinch hitter for the gang. When I thought Mac sufficiently distant to ease the situation, I did a bit of easing myself, after laying a protective smoke-screen of conversation to cover my retreat. Oh well! We were successful...

Tommy Blackwood proved himself a real pal this afternoon when he returned from downtown with two swords, one of which he intended for me since firstly, I had failed to click in the morning, and secondly, because he thought I should possess one after my personal experience with these implements during the war. I still hope to get at mine before I leave but if I fail I have one to replace it.

It looks as though there may be a bit more delay before we get out of here, due to the "Australia" being a bit dirtier than anticipated, and the fact that it may require some cleaning up.

R.A.F. personnel are in guarding the camp tonight. The Nips have evidently been exercising remarkable discipline in the downtown and the R.A.F. tell us that no difficulty was experienced in the transition today, at least not so far as the Nips were concerned. The Chinos evidently managed to get a few Japs before our fellows could get close to rescue them, for the Chinos were attacking any small groups of Japs that still happened to wander around loose. Looters too, are still a headache, in fact we have

heard twenty or more shots from around our own perimeter in the past hour or so.

September 6 – (Thursday)

A very quiet day, so far. I spent the afternoon on the “Venerable”, the carrier, and once again my legs are worn down to the knees. Terrific cracker offensive downtown today in celebration of the big turn-over yesterday – it sounds like the second battle of the Marne.

No word of any move yet, although we hear that the Nips are to be moving in to this camp very shortly. I saw a few parties of our erstwhile enemies surrender their arms, etc., this afternoon and, knowing how they felt from bitter experience, the sight didn't give rise to elation on my part. Some of our fellows have been stupid enough to take advantage of the Nips in their present situation, but I think most of our lads are ready to live and let live. Yesterday, while out on the party that scrounged the swords, we had the pleasure of seeing Honda at Nip headquarters and took advantage of the opportunity to wish him luck and thank him for his efforts on our behalf during his term of authority here.

Tonight Prendy and I have been invited to the Indian camp for an evening of real pukka Indian food, prepared in the traditional manner, so we look forward to some hefty dishes.

*OTTAWA, ON SEP 9 6:39 P.M. 1945
MRS. GLADYS MARY CORRIGAN
BOX 956
SWIFT CURRENT SASK*

*86051 PLEASED TO INFORM YOU THAT
LIEUTENANT LEONARD BERTRAM CORRIGAN
PREVIOUSLY REPORTED PRISONER OF WAR IN
JAPANESE HANDS IS NOW OFFICIALLY REPORTED
SAFE WITH THE ALLIES HEALTH GOOD STOP
FURTHER INFORMATION FOLLOWS WHEN
RECEIVED*

DIRECTOR OF RECORDS

89625 FURTHER TO OUR TELEGRAM 86051
PLEASED TO INFORM YOU THAT LIEUTENANT
LEONARD BERTRAM CORRIGAN IS NOW SAFE IN
MANILA FOURTEENTH OF SEPTEMBER 1945
DIRECTOR OF RECORDS

September 12, 1945 - Swift Current, Sask.

My dearest Len,

No words can express our happiness in getting the telegram Sunday night that said you were safe and would be home. We've waited so long for the news – it still hasn't really sunk in yet. Now that I can write a decent letter I don't know where to begin. I imagine it will be easier to talk to you than write. We've been apart so long, I can't seem to think of things to interest you.

The children are well. I imagine you'll hardly recognize them. Paddy is nearly as tall as I am and weighs 110 pounds. Shelagh is tall for her age but quite slim. She started school this fall, but as yet doesn't like it. I'm having quite a time to keep her going. I haven't started Shelagh's music lessons yet, but hope to do so soon. Paddy's been taking from Verda Town, and I think is doing well. I know I can't read any of her music now – not that I ever could before. I've been playing in the orchestra at the Elks for nearly two years now. It's extra money, and has given me something to occupy my time.

People here have been grand to me, and everyone is so pleased I've had good news from you. You've no idea the number of people who have asked for you. And I think my phone has rung for two days steadily – people saying how glad they were you were safe. It's been a terrible time for you, and we haven't found these years easy to take at home. I only hope you're in good health and that the weeks fly by so that we can be together again. Our next hope is mail from you personally, and to see you soon.

*All my love,
Glad*

September 9 – (Sunday)

Well, we're finally on the way, that is we've at least moved on board. I hear tonight that we won't be leaving harbour until Tuesday.

The Indian dinner mentioned in the last entry was a huge success. I had the pleasure of meeting three very gallant Indian officers, whose exploits are being rewarded by high decorations after things settle down.

Friday I spent looking over Hong Kong, thence to a happy evening aboard the "Anson". Saturday morning we came down to the "Australia" with a party of Canadian officers to help hump Red Cross supplies and in the late afternoon, due I suppose to the heat, I conked out and was taken to the ship's hospital where I spent the night. Men from camp began to arrive this morning and I believe all military personnel are now aboard. Our quarters are on "D" deck and the temperature ranges from 120 degrees up. As mentioned above, it is said we leave dock Tuesday and proceed to Stanley where we pick up women and children. Present arrangements seem to be for us to proceed to Manila, remain there for a short period and then home. Rumour has it that there's a 50-50 chance on flying from Manila. Personally I'm not too fussy about hurrying home unless we have a very strict medical check. Conking out yesterday seems an indication that things may not be as right as I'd like to believe.

The harbour fairly teems with shipping. Warships, auxiliary craft, transports, submarines, everything in fact. There must be upwards of thirty craft in at present and we hear another dozen are expected Tuesday. Three "liberty" ships are tied up alongside us and they have been disgorging all types of mechanized equipment the whole day. A tremendous amount of reconstruction work will be necessary and I should say it will be a matter of three or four years before things again return to normal.

How good it will be to enjoy some measure of privacy and solitude. One gets so sick of hearing every topic rehashed a dozen

times. People complaining in the camp because we weren't put on board ship at once are now complaining about accommodation now we're on board, claiming they were more comfortable in camp – and so on – That's the aspect of prison life that's wearing.

September 10 – (Monday)

And now indeed, all is chaos and confusion. The women have arrived on board. After a night that would have done credit to a Turkish bath establishment, we pulled away from Kowloon docks around breakfast time this morning. Passing down the harbour was a grand experience as we passed the visible token of victory in our recent war. At least six carriers plus the two score or so other ships of all types waved us a cheery “God Speed” as we threaded our way toward Li Mun Channel. Arriving off Stanley, we anchored for two or three hours, then steamed back into Junk Bay where we remained at anchor ever since, taking on the women and children who remain in Stanley. These people are being ferried from Stanley in mine sweepers and, since they number about 650, it's rather a lengthy task. Future plans are still indefinite but we have a tanker lying close by so it does look as though we're due to oil before we leave – which will probably be tomorrow noon at the latest.

The males on board are quite noticeably anti-female about now as they feel the latter largely responsible for the crowded accommodation. It seems that prior to the outbreak of war, all women except those considered essential for war work, about half a dozen apparently, were ordered to leave the colony. Through the old business of pull, etc., some four or five hundred managed to stay with husbands, etc., and bearing this in mind, the majority of male opinion on board feels quite strongly about being subjected to inferior quarters, by the fairer (?) sex – particularly when most of their own wives had to leave the colony five years ago. Oh well!

I found out last night what cremation holds for one. I tried to sleep on “D” deck in a hammock. Hot was no word for it!

Rumours today that the Canucks are to go to some camp twenty miles from Manila. Chances of flying are still good.

A Major Brown and party of Canadians came aboard this morning but aside from taking some of our much-needed cabin space, I haven't seen much result from the mission.

September 11 – (Tuesday)

This bit is being written on the boat deck where I perch in the shade and consider what a beautiful trip this could be under different circumstances. A lovely, clear day and the blue Pacific really living up to its name. With a bit of refrigeration for the sleeping quarters and a happier choice of company, it would be perfect. This, of course, brings up the question of women and I must say that the old saw of "nature in the raw" etc. has certainly been upheld, in general, by the females from Stanley. Those who take issue with the colossal expenditure of beauty aids should see the results of some of nature's handiwork. Some of it is quite demoralizing. Of course, we males wouldn't walk away with any beauty prizes, but then one doesn't expect too much from them anyway.

I'm afraid my incarceration hasn't helped to destroy my trepidation in regards to women. Coming home promises some frightfully embarrassing moments or I miss my guess.

A short talk today with the Canuck rehabilitation Major reveals that, as far as he knows, we will be spending some (?) weeks, under canvas, at Manila. We are due to arrive Thursday morning and on arrival will be taken in hand by the Yanks who will equip us with clothing and other needs. Whether or not we will fly home depends entirely on the transport problems. Provided we get some measure of privacy, I'm in no great rush.

I've met a young lad, age 11, who is one of the Stanley people, and it was most refreshing last night to enjoy a conversation of a person not afflicted with a POW complex. Incidentally, the young rascal took me in tow for a couple of hours

and we explored the ship – which means that yours truly climbed countless flights of stairs and ladders before we were mercifully rescued by lights out at 11 p.m.

I forgot to mention that we upped anchor this morning about 8 o'clock, having taken on fuel last night. About two hours out we passed a cruiser escorting a carrier and two transports – Hong Kong bound. A tremendous show of power is concentrating in Hong Kong next week with more of Admiral Fraser's fleet and numerous troops coming in. It is said the British 14th Army from Burma is arriving.

I was not so tickled to leave Hong Kong as I perhaps should have been. To me it will always remain "the Jewel of the East" and were it in an American sphere, I would certainly try to return there to live.

*Airmail Letter from Leonard
Aboard "Empress of Australia"
Wednesday, September 12, 1945
Dearest Glad & Girls,*

A few lines to keep you posted on P.W. movements in the Far East. Nothing exciting to report since the last letter. Our departure from camp was most unspectacular. I, as a member of a volunteer party called to handle Red Cross supplies at the docks, was probably the first camp inmate to take up residence aboard, as I conked out in the heat, and spent Saturday night in the ship's hospital. Sunday noon the remaining camp personnel arrived, and by evening were all aboard. Monday we sailed down the harbour and anchored in Junk Bay where the women and children from Stanley Camp were brought aboard. Tuesday morning we upped anchor and commenced the voyage to Manila, which we hope to reach by tomorrow morning. The ride down the harbour provided thrills for us as we passed a portion of the naval strength that accomplished so much during the war. The harbour teemed with shipping of all types, the "Anson", the most modern of the Sovereign Class Battleships, seven carriers, cruisers, destroyers, minesweepers, submarines, transports and

all manner of auxiliary craft. To us, who have missed these things, an imposing sight. We hear Admiral Fraser is also on the way to H.K. with his fleet, and that the 14th Army is coming from Burma. We'll have to start another war to keep these lads out of mischief. Future plans remain quite indefinite and information to date is that we Canadians disembark at Manila, where we will be taken under the wing of the Yanks pending some solution to the transport problem. Manila City is evidently completely devastated so we are to live under canvas twenty miles from the city and we have been assured of a pleasant, comfortable life while there. It is believed it will be some weeks before transport will permit continuing to Canada, but every effort is being made on our behalf and there's a 50-50 chance that we may fly home. We will probably have to undergo all manner of medical exams, etc. and this, with the food we will receive, will almost ensure us arriving home in pretty good shape. The month of food which we have already enjoyed is beginning to manifest itself and I'm afraid I'm going to put on quite a few pounds – in the wrong places. We're all finding it a bit difficult to believe that the freedom for which we have longed these past years is finally ours. It's all rather nightmarish – the women and children aboard (about 600) seem to add to the confusion, rather than dispel it. Incidentally, Mother Nature has been rather rough on most of the females. Stripped of the old war paint, they're a bit disconcerting. – We hear that there is a possibility of receiving mail from home on our arrival at Manila. We hope so – we've all an intense hunger for news, pictures, etc., from you people at home. Please take full advantage of any opportunities you may receive – due to being overcrowded our gang enjoys (?) the accommodation afforded by "D" deck and as a result, we combine the pleasures of eating with the less enjoyable attributes of a Turkish bath. Sleeping below is out of the question and, with the advent of a bit of breeze last night, the deck was almost comfortable. All for now – will write from Manila.

*Love,
Leonard*

September 13 – (Thursday)

8 a.m. – This leg of the trip is just about finished. We are entering Manila Bay, having just passed Corregidor. The sun is coming up nicely and it looks like a good day on the way. Yesterday the weather was featured by rain squalls and brisk winds which rendered travelling conditions much cooler.

They dropped the “hook” about 9 o’clock in the midst of the greatest array of shipping I have ever seen. There must be close to 500 ships, mostly transports, tankers, barges, etc., anchored in the harbour. Small landing barges and launches have been buzzing about the ship for the past hour, but no indication of any move has been given for us. A slight haze makes visibility poor, but we can make out a few buildings on shore. A large number of sunken ships are also visible.

Two men died aboard last night and were hoisted overboard before daybreak. One of them, an internee from Stanley, leaves a wife aboard. Quite a number of our fellows are temporarily sick. It must be the new food.

5:30 p.m. – It looks like we’re finally going to move into dock. “Anchor stations” has just been piped for the crew. It seems that arrangements were not as complete as we had assumed and the people here were not too happy to take us ashore. Rumour has it that the Captain refused to proceed under present conditions, his reasons being that he had neither the crew nor the facilities to handle his passengers under the present circumstances. He is said to have cited the two deaths as evidence of the great responsibility a long voyage would entail. A British Brigadier arrived on board and inspected quarters. His remark – “Appalling!”. The temperature in our quarters was found to be 115 degrees.

Midnight Thursday – Talk about the yokel at the fair – my mouth has been agape for two hours. We have finally arrived at #5 Replacement Camp, some 30 miles from Manila, and since leaving the ship, we have been rendered speechless by the manifestations

of Yank administration which were to be observed on every side. In the first place my estimate of the shipping in the harbour was most conservative. I'm sure there must be twice that number. The next big jolt we received was the motor transport. I've never seen such a display of vehicles, either in variety or number, hundreds and hundreds of them. Our convoy alone must have numbered almost 50 vehicles. Our next eye-opener was the stores of supplies. On the trip out, we passed miles of supplies piled in dumps on both sides of the roads, countless tons for miles on end of every type of supplies from auto tires to canned goods. Arriving at camp we were whisked at once to our tents then given a delicious meal, a process utterly devoid of the usual waiting around so characteristic of the British. In the tent we found a camp bed, mess nets and wooden floors, and on each bed a small bag containing towels, soap, razor, fags, chocolate bars, in fact everything one desired for personal comfort, even chewing gum and a rather nice form letter of welcome. We were told that our stay will probably be about five or six days, after which we will likely be flown home. Some of our lads recently arrived from Japan are to leave for Canada tomorrow. The camp itself is something of a triumph for Yank efficiency for we hear that it has sprung up in the past two weeks.

September 14 – (Friday)

We begin to get settled in our temporary home. Even the camp is a source of amazement to us. The section in which we are now located was a bare patch of ground yesterday. Just how big it is I can't say, but it covers miles of territory. I had a big surprise this morning when I met some of our fellows from Japan. Some of these lads look in the pink, a result we hear, of their ability to steal Jap rations while employed as stevedores. Others unfortunately didn't fare so well. The Canadian casualty list in Japan is very high, particularly the R.R.C.'s and the stories of treatment would chill your blood. Apparently we're to be completely outfitted and medically examined so we'll be kept fairly busy. I enjoyed drawing rations of beer (3 cans), fags (60), chocolate and Coca-Cola for the day. The main idea here seems to be to do everything they possibly can for POW's.

September 16 – (Sunday)

At last a letter from home. One which I'm afraid was just a mite disappointing. My wife must surely be able to cram less news into more words than a writer for the pulps. Perhaps I've got the wrong attitude. It must be my POW complex.

We're still living the life of Riley in Manila. I attended a very good game of baseball this afternoon and the caliber of ball may be judged by the fact that three major leaguers participated – two pitchers and a first baseman.

I had my medical yesterday and was pronounced fit to travel. I scaled 169, a gain of 16 pounds since the end of the war.

News has just come in that we leave, by boat, Tuesday so we should hit 'Frisco about the first week of October. Damn! I hoped we'd go by plane.

I met Guita's brother yesterday and heard more atrocity tales from the camps in Japan. No word of Johnnie or Guita.

Sunday night – I feel very low tonight. Don't know why, maybe the letter. It recalls a problem which has more or less faded into the background this last month, that post-war personal problem. Tonight, in conversation with a Winnipeg officer recently arrived, we reaped a few of the first fruits of our recent incarceration. From him we learned that most of our Osbourne Barracks crowd had done well and managed to get Majorities out of the show. Jealous? Yes, frankly we are. It does seem to accentuate our unproductivity for four years.

TELEGRAPH TO GLADYS –

SWIFT CURRENT SASK SEPTEMBER 21, 1945

PWM LIEUT LEONARD B CORRIGAN

ALL WELL AND SAFE LOVE TO ALL THE FAMILY

ADDRESS CANADIAN LIBERATED POW MANILA VIA

MELBOURNE

LEONARD

TELEGRAPH TO LEONARD –

*PWM LIEUT LEONARD B. CORRIGAN
CANADIAN LIBERATED POW MANILA VIA
MELBOURNE
SO HAPPY TO RECEIVE CABLE ALL WELL HOPE SEE
YOU SOON*

LOVE GLAD

September 21 – (Friday)

Two days out and the ship settles down to the inevitable boredom of a long voyage. With no noticeable swell our ship rides as smoothly as a train so that personal comfort is not lacking. As mentioned previously, the meals are of high caliber and one can almost feel additional pounds being added. We should be in really fine shape, though perhaps fleshy, by the time we reach home. This business of going home is rather awesome and quite frankly I'm a bit frightened by the prospect. So many disquieting influences, working for such long periods as we've been through, can create big changes which may be difficult to assimilate. – I guess there's not much use trying to tackle problems which, as yet, exist only in my imagination. The future has always been my bug bear.

“Abandon Ship” drills these past two days, and some target practice with the 40 m.m. guns yesterday, helped to relieve the monotony. I had a light workout with the sax this morning when they called for volunteers to form a band. With 3,000 to choose from it was inevitable that some pretty hot stuff would come to light and we had a good time. Another session tomorrow.

We've been doing a good 21 knots today due to our having to turn south to avoid a typhoon area yesterday. There's much less propeller vibration than any ship I've travelled.

September 25 – (Tuesday)

Seven days out and very little to relieve the monotony of a long voyage. Yesterday, due to some boiler fault which required 23 hours to fix, our speed on the remaining three boilers was cut to 15

knots but today, in spite of heavy headwinds, we managed to average better than 18 knots. We are now roughly 3,000 miles from Manila and should hit the half-way mark about supper time tomorrow. The last day or so we have been running very close to, and parallel with, the equator and despite a good air conditioning system, the ship's interior is quite hot enough. Fortunately, we've had little sun, the weather being featured by wind and rain squalls. Last night we again turned north and are now on the "Great Circle Route", which leads right to 'Frisco.

A concert tomorrow with the new "ship's orchestra" as the mainstay. The combination, though small, is peppy (and noisy). A tenor, an alto (yours truly), trumpet, two guitars, squeeze box, fiddle and drums comprise the band. A very good Negro baritone came to light in rehearsal. Really grade "A" material.

I'm getting terribly, terribly fat – in fact, I'm being kidded about beri-beri because of the way my face is filling out. The one thing lacking on board is space to put forth a bit of real muscular energy.

September 27 – (Thursday)

Nothing of import to record except the date phenomena stated above and occasioned by our crossing the International Dateline.

A bit of a thrill last night about midnight, when the ship stopped and, on proceeding on deck to ascertain the reason, we found the ship's search light busily sweeping the sea. A distress flare was said to have been sighted but, though we circled and searched for an hour or more, nothing was spotted. Communication with another ship not far from us revealed that she had seen nothing, so after reporting to Hawaii we moved on again.

Our northward swing has brought us welcome relief from the heat and the remainder of the trip should be much more pleasant.

LETTER FROM LEONARD TO GLADYS....

Aboard U.S.S. Admiral Rodman

Friday, September 28th

Dearest Glad,

Your letter received Sunday, Sept. 16th and, while extremely glad to see any word at all from you, wee bit disappointed in it from a news standpoint. However, you can't be expected to have everything, can you Butch? Anyway to get back to the approximate point of my narrative as of my last letter. With rare good luck I managed to click this first draft for, though the next was scheduled to leave two days after our departure, it is not likely that they will be as comfortably berthed, nor are they as likely to make the speed which we are managing. Our draft of twenty four officers and eighty men goes to form a party of nearly five thousand passengers, mainly POW's (Yank) and enlisted men whose terms of enlistment have expired. Our ship, the Rodman, is listed at 22,000 tons and has a very enjoyable cruising speed of over 20 knots, in fact she's by far the most comfortable riding ship I have been on. We embarked Tuesday, 18th, and after oiling up in the harbour Wednesday morning, we set sail about noon. Since then we have managed to plow along at a daily speed of better than twenty knots despite having to cut one boiler for twenty-three hours due to some mechanical trouble.

Certainly these Yanks don't do things by halves. Despite the number of men she carries, a great deal of thought has been given to the comforts of these men and though space is at a premium, air-conditioning has done much to make the crowded quarters livable. The officers' quarters have the added advantage of spring beds and mattresses and though space is still jealously hoarded, the compartment does have its degree of comfort. The one disadvantage is the lack of deck space on which to do something strenuous enough to use up some of the waste energy provided by the exceptionally good meals. I'm beginning to tack on fat at an alarming rate, most of it manifesting itself in those two most conspicuous places, the face and the waist line. I haven't given the scales on board the chance to tell their ghastly story, but judging

from the remarks directed at me, the increase must be substantial.

Despite the comforts of ship life, a voyage of six or seven thousand miles can become a Hell of a bore after the first week or so. Shortly after departure from Manila we were forced to turn south to avoid a typhoon, with the result that for almost a week we ran parallel and very close to, the equator, during which time our air conditioning system really had its work cut out for it. We did get a bit of thrill Thursday night when the ship stopped quite suddenly. Going on deck we found that a flare had been sighted and the sea was being swept with the ship's searchlights. After an hour's futile search we continued on our way hoping that the flare had been the figment of someone's imagination. Contact with another ship in the immediate vicinity revealed that they had seen nothing and apparently Hawaii had no knowledge of anything on the loose in this part of the ocean.

A variety concert staged on the afterdeck a couple of nights ago was, despite considerable interference from rain-squalls, very well received and we hit the boards again tomorrow afternoon with the same show. Some very good talent came to light, a Negro baritone singing "Old Man River" being particularly outstanding. The orchestra, of which I am a humble member, is not bad, not good mind you but not bad.

We are at present a mere two thousand miles out – well up to schedule apparently and latest official word is that we'll be docking sometime on the morning of Wed. 3rd. Rumour has it that this is to be something of a show draft and it is expected that there will be something of a civic reception when we arrive in 'Frisco. We see by the news that Dinah Shore has committed herself to meet all homecoming ships bringing the "boys" back from the Pacific so we'll probably see one celebrity anyway. The last couple of days the ship has cooled down somewhat due to our having turned north again on the "great circle route". Every day closer to shore increases my apprehension of the future we'll soon have to face. We are too aware, even at this stage, of the changes that can be wrought in four years. However I guess these things must await their proper time.

This has turned out to be a terribly disjointed letter but I'm afraid I can't get the old mind clicking at all. Perhaps it's poetic justice after the criticism I directed at your effort. Anyway I think I'll put it to one side and hope that something of interest turns up before the end of the voyage.

...The last day out and inspiration hasn't hit me between the eyes yet. Everything remains up to schedule and we'll be off land sometime tonight – though we won't go in until tomorrow. We understand that personnel on our draft have been listed by radio with Ottawa, so we rather expect mail or wires, or both, when we arrive at 'Frisco tomorrow. Just how long we'll dilly-dally in Vancouver before being released is a matter of conjecture but general opinion is that, after wasting no time in 'Frisco, we'll be in Vancouver for at least three or four days before we set out for home. I'm rather hoping that I'll get a wire in Frisco telling me that you will meet me in Vancouver, though why I can't say.

I've felt more than usually low these past couple of weeks, which seems a little out of keeping with the general spirit that should prevail about now. Must be the result of too much attendant excitement to the idea of going home. I guess I'll have to take a couple of days of the rum cure and see if that won't unwind the tension a bit.

Well, I don't seem to be able to add anything but gloom to this bit so I might as well sign off. I don't expect to have the opportunity to phone from 'Frisco, but will do so from Vancouver so, until then, au revoir.

Love,
Len

LETTER FROM LEONARD TO HIS SISTER NINA....

*Aboard U.S.S. Admiral Rodman
Friday, September 28th, 1945
Dearest Sis,*

With the possibility of improved postal conditions in the future, this seems an opportune moment to reestablish our correspondence to its former semi-annual basis, to say nothing of giving me some practice on this infernal machine

which, if not one of Mr. Underwood's best models, is certainly one of his earliest. I've heard nothing of Hubert so I'm taking the lack of news as an indication that he was wholly successful in his contribution to the downfall of Hitlerism etc. Lacking his address I must ask you to share this with him and pass on to him and his'n my very best.

Nothing much in the way of news to pass on except that this second leg of our trip home is being accomplished aboard a Yank Navy troopship, the Admiral Rodman, a lovely ship of 22,000 tons with a smooth cruising speed of over twenty knots and an extreme minimum of toss or roll. The Rodman was to be our magic carpet upon which we entered that mystic state called 'civilization', where such amenities as spring beds, air conditioning and good food (eaten with a plate), occasioned a bit of joyous bewilderment at first, although it didn't take us long to readjust ourselves, particularly in the matter of food. Our coloured waiters looked on in awe, with a slight mixture of alarm, as we galloped through quantities of food that would have done credit to the appetites of a heavyweight wrestling stable. In the interval between our release and subsequent arrival at Manila, my registered tonnage showed an increase of sixteen pounds. God knows what the additional food I've stored away since coming aboard has done; I'm afraid to let the scales tell their story. It's quite bad enough to have people point out (as though there was something the matter with my eyes), visible changes in contour lines in face and waistline.

Future plans are very indefinite but our immediate schedule calls for our arrival in 'Frisco Wed. morning, from where we will be sent immediately to Vancouver, there to receive complete re-outfitting of clothes, etc., and have our pay and allowances properly adjusted. Following this we embark on a leave period of forty-two days, at the end of which we drop back to depot for our medicals and discharge. Incidentally, this draft which we Canucks form a small part, is said to be a "show" draft and we understand there are possibilities of a civic reception at 'Frisco when we arrive.

A grand feature of our evacuation has been the treatment accorded to us by the Americans since our having been taken under their wing in Manila. Everything possible has been done in the effort to cater to our comfort and expedite our return home and our people have nothing but praise for the thoughtfulness of our cousins to the south. Considering the thousands of their own POW's and men

whose terms of enlistment are up, now awaiting transportation home from the Pacific area, it does seem magnanimous on their part to sacrifice their own interest to further ours. Already they have flown a goodly number of Canadians home and those remaining have been assured that they will be given all possible priority on any available transport. Damned decent I call it. While on the subject of the Yanks I might add that we have all been slightly overwhelmed by the visible results of America's mass production efforts which were in evidence at and around Manila. The hundreds and hundreds of ships, planes and the mechanized vehicles of all sizes and types fairly had us all on the ropes to say nothing of the miles of supplies, piled mile after mile along the road between Manila and our camp. Later in camp, when I was expressing this amazement to one of our Canadian POWs who had been flown down from Japan, his rejoinder was, "Hell! That's small potatoes, you should see Okinawa!" Oh well! I guess we're a bit backwoods anyhow.

To say that we're anxious to get home smacks of deliberate understatement, but I must admit that I'm just a mite terrified by the thought of it all. At the moment we seem to be existing in a rather indefinite present which refuses to recognize either past or future, but underneath lurks an uneasy "lamb to the slaughter" feeling – resulting from the knowledge that one day we'll be suddenly precipitated into reality and have to wake up and live. We've found out four years can be a long, long time and I'm afraid our education has scarcely begun.

These few lines seem to have extended themselves considerably so I'll just nip them off here before they wander too far afield. As mentioned before, things are a bit indefinite beyond Vancouver but I may possibly swing down your way on my leave and tell you a few atrocity stories. In the meantime, I'll close, hoping you'll accept and pass on, particularly to Carole Ann, my love.

*Love,
Leonard*

September 29 – (Saturday)

Still shuffling along. Time seems almost as dragging here as it was back in camp. A repeat concert of our previous show this afternoon was well received.

I hastily, and humbly, correct an entry of a few days back when I mentioned target practice with the 40 m.m. guns. I learned today that the target was not, as I casually assumed, an empty oil drum or something of that nature tossed overboard to give the gunners a bit of sport, but a real, live honest-to-God mine which strayed directly in our path. I wonder if we would have viewed proceedings quite as nonchalantly if we had known.

During the 23 hours previous to noon today we averaged 21 knots to cover 506 nautical miles, a new day's high for the trip. We are now 1,696 miles from the Golden Gate. Our present position is approximately 700 miles due north of Honolulu.

LETTER FROM GLADYS....

Swift Current, Sask.

September 30, 1945

Dearest Len,

Can't begin to tell you how excited I was to receive your first letter, written September 12 aboard "Empress of Australia". You spoke of another letter. I haven't received it as yet. They told me we could write to you at Manila. I wrote one letter. Then I saw your name listed in a group as having sailed aboard the "Admiral Rodman", so I didn't write again. Also, I hope you received the cable I sent in reply to yours. I've read and reread your letter. Even in print before me I can't seem to realize you're really free to write and to come home. We've waited so long for such news that I can't believe it when it does come. I saw your picture in the Tribune yesterday and I was so glad to see you looking so well. Mrs. Amos sent the picture over, and, once again I was pretty excited – first picture of you in four years. Paddy

and Shelagh were so excited, and they're really excited (can't seem to find a better word) about you coming home. To have a Daddy again seems unbelievable to them. Paddy is so much like you – even in her actions.

Everyone here is so interested in when you're coming home, etc. – wish they'd give us more details. All I have to go on are the newspapers and some radio news. I'd love to be able to meet you somewhere, but I have no news to go on. I've kept a newspaper scrapbook since you went away in '41. I'm sure you'll find it interesting. Blackwoods have been very nice to me. Mr. Blackwood has phoned from Regina anytime he received any news he thought I mightn't have received. They're a lovely couple. I hope to see them again soon. Also, Noreen has written me.

Guess I'll close for now, my dear – will write again soon. I still find it hard to write you a letter that sounds the least bit interesting. Bob & Vi, Edie & Reg, Jack & Carole Rooney, Ronnie & Isabel – they all want to be remembered to you. Also the Dunlops – George always asks for you.

*All my love,
Glad*

October 2 – (Tuesday)

Well we are at the fag end of what has been a tedious journey. The approach to civilization finds me a bit down at the heel mentally, the result I suppose of my pent-up emotions associated with the thought that we're at the end of this particular long road. We'll soon be finding out just what's cooking. This idea of hurling obstacles that persist in remaining in the background is definitely unnerving. I'm afraid my letters to my wife have reflected this uneasiness of mind which predominates at present, but I've been unable to lift the depressiveness since we left Manila.

Our swing back up north has done things to the weather which are not altogether pleasant for we warm weather boys. Three successive days of rain, which has today given way to fog, find us very susceptible to the slightest lowering of temperature. From here it looks as though we're not going to see much of 'Frisco and

environs. Wouldn't that be just our luck? Half way around the world and the extent of our travels has encompassed only one city, Hong Kong, and some didn't see very much of that.

Have I mentioned that Dinah Shore is scheduled to meet us in the harbour tomorrow, where she is to serenade us from a tugboat? Why, is hard to say. These people seem to love their publicity.

I'm hoping there will be word from Gladys at 'Frisco as we understand that our draft lists were to be sent from Manila to Canada. I'm also hoping that she will be meeting me in Vancouver though I have no reason to think the idea would suggest itself. Tomorrow seems eons away but I guess I'll manage to live through.

Later Tuesday – Time to pen a line or two while we tie up to Pier 15. Our day was somewhat spoiled from a sight-seeing standpoint, by a heavy veil of ground fog and smoke, a combination which rendered it difficult to appreciate the grandeur of the Golden Gate Bridge as we crept in beneath it. The natives of 'Frisco, however, were going to see that we weren't let down and we steamed up the harbour to our berth to the accompaniment of shrieking whistles and screaming sirens. An escort of tugs and fire-boats bore down on us as we approached the dock, and a small steamer crammed with femininity joined our escort – from that point in we were regaled with popular music supplied by a Negro dance band accompanied by those sounds which we had missed for so many, many months, women's voices. As we approached the dock, we were able to pick out the distinctive red tabs which adorn staff officers and big-wigs of the British and Canadian armies and found that our welcoming party included the Canadian Adjutant General and members of his staff, among them Colonel Clarke, father of one of the Rifle officers who was with us.

Still later Tuesday – I'm disgruntled. Many times in our monotonous camp life we of the "West" had verbal clashes with our cousins from down "East" and, to be perfectly frank, I must say that we Westerners were never quite as impressed, as we

perhaps should have been, considering the financial and political power represented by our compatriots. My personal opinion, based on observations of the offspring of some of these “Tai pans” is that the parents are so busy cultivating the good things of life that they never have time to teach their children such elementary things as manners, thoughtfulness, etc. Today we had a lovely example of the boorishness which can be fostered under these peculiar circumstances. The Adjutant-General, accompanied by his staff, came on board as soon as the ship was tied up and we Canadian officers were called together to meet him. At the conclusion of a little speech of welcome, we of the Grenadiers were greatly surprised to hear the A.G. extend an invitation to the “Rifle” officers to come to his suite in the Mark Hopkins Hotel, there to enjoy a bath and dinner. Comprising only one third of the total number of officers present and therefore too few to cause any serious disruption to the party in general had we been included, we Grenadiers were, to put it mildly, taken aback by the manner in which the invitation was extended. It came to light later that the A.G. had made arrangements for the Rifle officers to speak to their wives in Canada over three specially-leased direct wires, at the expense of the Canadian taxpayers. We of the “West” were left twiddling our thumbs aboard a deserted ship, with no word of disembarkations arrangements, meals or the length of time we were to remain in ‘Frisco. Three of us, by utilizing the friendship of one of the ship’s officers, managed to get on to the dock and from a pay-booth made our own arrangements to communicate with our families. Two of us, due to our having to wait for almost an hour while the other chap’s call when through, found on our arrival back on board, that the remainder had departed for the station at Oakland and we too were left high and dry. A sympathetic Red Cross man commandeered a car for us and after being assured by the woman driver that we still had an hour or so until train time, we accepted the advice of our chauffeur and saw as much of the town as we could in the limited time.

Our driver proved to be a typical Yank woman whose Flying Officer husband had been in the Pacific for three years and she gave us an entertaining commentary as we travelled. The Mark Hopkins crowns ‘Frisco’s highest hill and the tower twenty stories

above presents a marvelous view of the city and environs. Unfortunately, fog and a film of smoke from distant forest fires somewhat curtailed the picture for us. The top floor of the "Mark" contains a beautiful cocktail lounge so while there we sampled some of Uncle Sam's liquor. Driving back to the pier we found that our train was to leave from Oakland, which presented the opportunity of crossing the Oakland bridge. What a massive tribute to engineering. Simply colossal! We arrived at the station with twenty minutes to spare to find that the departure time had been set back an hour. We also learned that the train was "all-Canadian" and our party was to number nearly 400 POW's a number of our lads from Japan having been centred in 'Frisco awaiting our arrival. After partaking of American grub for the past two months, we found these boys the picture of health. The average weight increase had been a pound a day since their release.

We left 'Frisco about 5:30 which brings this up to date. We are now entering the Pine country and the hills are beginning to assume some size, so we must soon be entering the mountainous areas. Our boys are really travelling in class with each man occupying a Pullman berth. We have also a Canadian hospital car attached, complete with nursing sisters.

Future plans are – train to Seattle, boat from Seattle to Victoria and our processing at Gordon Head. It is planned to have the gang return home by regiments as much as possible because of contemplated civic arrangements, in both Quebec and Winnipeg. The old, old Malarky!

Portland – Tuesday, 11 p.m. – Horrors! We had half an hour here so I traipsed downtown a few blocks for a look-see. Passing a scale I just couldn't resist climbing aboard. I nearly fell through the floor as I watched the arm swing around to the 190 mark. Almost forty pounds increase since our release. Shameful ain't it?

This Oregon country looks like the ideal spot to live. The terrain is much the same as that of our northern foothills and the booming lumber industry provides a bustling activity that lends an attractive air of self-sufficiency to an already beautiful country-

side. A small city like Eugene would be grand to settle in, judging superficially, of course.

LETTER FROM LEONARD....

San Francisco - Noon Tuesday, October 3, 1945

Dearest Glad,

Just a few lines to give you our last developments. A grand welcome here this A.M. But, from our point of view, a little disappointing due to heavy fog which obscured 'Frisco. Met by Adj. General of Canada and staff, his plans entail our leaving by train at 5 p.m. for Seattle, from where we will go to Gordon Head for re-fitting. He thinks we shouldn't be there more that a day or so. We are to proceed east from Victoria by regiments because of plans of civic reception at Winnipeg and Quebec. However, individuals living west of Winnipeg may drop off at their homes if desirous of doing so. Do you wish to come in to Wpeg or shall I drop off in S.C.? I'll phone from Victoria and you can let me know. Personally I think we'll have a few days in Victoria as they're waiting for the remainder to arrive from Manila.

*In Haste, Love,
Len*

SPECIAL TO THE WINNIPEG TRIBUNE....

GRENADIERS LEAVE 'FRISCO FOR HOME – by Peter Inglis....

San Francisco, Oct. 4

Deep in one of the bunk-packed holds of the big U.S. transport Admiral Rodman one of the most dramatic reunions of the war's end took place at noon Wednesday. There Col. F.W. Clarke, of Quebec and Ottawa, special assistant to the Adjutant-General and founder of Canada's directorate of repatriation, met his son Capt. W.F. Clarke of the Royal Rifles of Canada, a prisoner of the Japanese at Hong Kong for four years.

Both were almost speechless. Col. Clarke said only "I can't put into words" and his son: "Oh boy, this

certainly is grand". Around them were packed 25 officers and 79 men of Canada's Hong Kong force.

The Admiral Rodman which was packed with 4,000 United States troops and 1188 Britons, as well as the Canadians, was delayed by fog off the Golden Gate. And the Canadians were taken direct by ferry to Oakland pier to board a train for home joining 244 others who docked Tuesday on the "Ozark" and had been taken to Fort McDowell in San Francisco Bay for rest. Down in the steaming holds, officers and men told their stories.

Capt. Uriah Laite, of Vancouver, who was a Marine missionary on the west coast of Vancouver Island for the United Church before the war, and became Chaplain of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, said: "The Japs set out to break us. They said at the end they were amazed at our spirit."

George Porteous of Saskatoon, Y.M.C.A. auxiliary services attached to the Grenadiers told of his struggle with the Japanese to permit education and recreation for the prisoners. "I tried to get recognition as a welfare officer, but word came back that I was a prisoner of war."

Cpl. Guy Faulkner, of Winnipeg, a former Tribune reporter, was more interested in getting

news of his home office than in telling of his experiences. Of them he said only: "We made the best of it, but I can tell you we didn't have much straw to make our bricks. The food situation was chronic and the medical situation was bad. I can't say too much for the officers. They did a marvelous job in a very invidious position."

A merchant seaman, Wireless Operator Ozzie Collett of Winnipeg, was in the same camp but has not been shipped home yet. They were the only Canadians at Kawasaki No. 1 near Tokyo. The rest were British, Indians and Chinese.

There was a brief flash of humour during the welcome ceremonies, when Gen. Walford announced: "I have a message here from the Minister of National Defense," and a voice from among the repatriates called out "And who would he be now?"

Gen. Walford went into conference with Lt. Col. William Home, who became senior Canadian officer at Hong Kong on the death of Brigadier J.K. Lawson and Pat Hennessy as was Maj. George Trist of Winnipeg, second in command of the Grenadiers.

October 5 – (Friday)

Today we arrived in Canada. Maybe I'm a sentimentalist, but it did seem good after four years. We are now almost face to face with the problems that have been bothering us for so many months.

Disembarking at Victoria provided joyous scenes of reunion as our boys singled out loved ones and friends in the milling crowd that gathered at the pier entrance. My first link with that distant past came with the meeting of Oley Thompson, his wife and Levane, - former Swift Currentites who were kind enough to be there to greet me. Packed aboard buses our happy crowd was soon on its way to Gordon Head and it was thrilling to note the reception we received from passers-by along the route. Arriving at the camp we were immediately given a meal, then jumped right in to the formalities of processing. I must confess that later in the day and, not I'm sure intended as part of the processing scheme, I fell afoul of some good Canuck rum that didn't do much to help my own readjustment policy.

TELEGRAM TO GLADYS....

*MRS. GLADYS CORRIGAN 1945, OCT. 9
185 SPENCE STREET WINNIPEG MAN*

*YOUR HUBBY ON SPECIAL TRAIN 675 ARRIVING
WINNIPEG TUESDAY 5:45 P.M. HAVE EVERYTHING
READY HE LOOKS LIKE A MILLION STOP*

*JIMMY MILNE
RED CROSS CONDUCTING OFFICER*

FROM THE WINNIPEG TRIBUNE

*HOME AT LAST
After being prisoners of the Japanese since the fall
of Hong Kong in December, 1941, 108 Winnipeg
Grenadiers detrain from a special troop section at the*

C.P.R. depot Tuesday evening. They were wearing the new HK red and gold flashes and all looked healthy and fit.

“BEST WE ’VE HAD YET”

GRENADIERS GET RIOTOUS WELCOME

Some 4,000 Winnipeggers Tuesday evening jammed their way into the C.P.R. depot and overflowed to the street outside. They argued with service police, got pushed around and did a little pushing around themselves.

THEY WERE THERE TO WELCOME THE LARGEST GROUP OF WINNIPEG GRENADIERS TO RETURN TO WINNIPEG. WELCOME THEM THEY DID, IN THEIR OWN STYLE. IT WAS ANYTHING BUT ORGANIZED. NO ONE CARED.

No one, that is but train reception committee members. A small man at the public address microphone pleaded and threatened. Second battalion Grenadiers and service police had their hands full.

The crowd gave – only sufficiently to clear a portion of the floor space.

AND THEN THE GRENADIERS CAME MARCHING IN. THE CROWD REPLIED WITH CHEERS. THE LINE OF GUARDS FOLDED UNDER PRESSURE. THE ROTUNDA WAS JAM-PACKED WITH GRENADIERS STRUGGLING TO REACH RELATIVES STRUGGLING TO REACH THEIR MEN.

Two bands blared but not loudly enough to drown out the cries, the laughs, the yells.

ONE ELDERLY WOMAN IN THE RELATIVES’ WAITING ROOM FAINTED.

Representatives of the province, of the city and of M.D. 10 were present. No one cared much about that either.

The Grenadiers were grabbed by their families and hustled out the front entrance to the 150 cars placed at their disposal by the Young Men's Section of the Board of Trade.

There was much noise. Much confusion. It was like a good reception should be....completely uninhibited.

The special C.P.R. troop train left Vancouver with 101 men and seven officers aboard from the Grenadiers, and 187 men and 16 officers from the Royal Rifles.

NINE OF THE GRENADIERS MISSED THE TRAIN AT BRANDON. FOUR OF THEM, F.J. LAVALEE, W CHAVOYER, W. COATES AND N.W. KOWALCHUK WERE ALL FROM WINNIPEG. THEY ARRIVED ONE HOUR LATER AT 6:45.

Trying to get hold of Grenadiers to talk with them was like trying to catch fish with bare hands. It could not be done.

But a question would be half asked, and a reply half given. But this much was gathered, and it was said by Sgt. E. Neil of Fort Francis.

"BROTHER! WINNIPEG HAS GIVEN US THE BEST RECEPTION WE'VE HAD!"

Most of the boys could think of their experiences both ways: Some could laugh them off. Others couldn't bear to speak of them.

Pte. Steve Yormula, Molson, Man., attracted attention by his hearty laugh; he was blond, little, grinning and he had beautiful teeth. What was the joke?

"THEY CALL ME SMILER. YES? I MADE 'EM LAUGH IN CAMP TOO. ALL I HAD TO DO WAS GRIN AND THE BOYS GRINNED WITH ME. I GOT CRACKED A COUPLE OF TIMES BY THE JAPS FOR DOING IT. I'D LIKE TO SPIT IN THEIR EYE!"

Col. Trist came up the stairs and was instantly surrounded by a score of people. He was almost bodily carried from the station.

Capt. Leboutillier of the Royal Rifles cried "Anyone know Mrs. John Park. I've got a message for her." Half a dozen people were eager to take it. It was this "Love, dear".

There was a Capt. D.G. Philip, 74 Hargrave Ave., Sgt. Gordon McKinnon, A.J. Neault of Dauphin, who said that Joe Skworak also of Dauphin, "is fine and will be home soon".

With Neault was J.F. Robinson. "Say we saw Harry." "Harry who?" "Harry Atkinson. We worked together on the docks."

AND THERE WAS HARRY, FIRST GRENADIER TO RETURN TO WINNIPEG. PUSHING HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD, SHAKING HANDS WITH OLD FRIENDS.

Cpl. E. Dickie, formerly of Dauphin, now of Winnipeg said "Oh, I drove a steam engine for the Nips."

Pte. Mulvaney, 553 Elgin St. joked about a finger stump. How did it happen?

*"IT WAS HACKED OFF BY A SPADE BY ONE OF THEM **** NIPS. I STOPPED TO PICK UP A CIGARETTE BUTT."*

A MESSAGE FROM KING GEORGE

The Queen and I bid you a very warm welcome home. Through all the great trials and sufferings which you have endured at the hands of the Japanese, you and your comrades have been consistently in our thoughts. We realize from the accounts which we have already received,

how heavy these sufferings have been. We know too, that these have been endured by you with the highest courage. We mourn with you the deaths of so many of your gallant comrades. We hope with all our hearts that your return from captivity will bring you and your families a full measure of happiness.

SHELAGH REMEMBERS....

Vividly, I recall being awakened early in the morning by my mother, and being dressed to go by train from Saskatchewan to Winnipeg where the troops were to come. I remember my coat and hat my grandmother McDonald had made for me. I have no recollection of arriving in Winnipeg or staying at my grandparents' apartment.

But again, vividly, I remember being in the train station with my grandfather Corrigan while my mother, sister and grandmother went off to look for my father. We were standing in a huge crowd when suddenly I was swept off my feet by a very tall man (I was six years old). A photographer captured the moment when I realized I was seeing my father for the first time. I remember the rough texture of his army uniform. He is a total stranger.

My mother, sister and grandmother returned to us and I'm sure there was laughter and tears. But being six – and short – all of the emotion was carried on above my head. And what do you say to a six-year old after four years away. There was so much going on. We obviously returned to Spence Street to the apartment.

At some point I started school at St. Mary's Academy in Winnipeg. And I only remember this because – in a strict Catholic school of black uniforms with white collars and cuffs, I showed up in a red sweater and plaid skirt. Not a good beginning. But they did have the greatest doll house with proper furniture (to scale) and even tiny dishes and cooking utensils. I have no idea how long I was there – I probably didn't make a big impression on them either!

A close friend of my mother and dad wrote to say that the reunion in Winnipeg was “not a too satisfactory one – due in large part as I remember it – to an attitude on the part of the senior Corrigan’s.” My mother and I went back to Swift Current while my father stayed in Winnipeg for debriefing. References in the diary to problems that my father was not looking forward to facing most likely had to do with tension between his parents and my mother. My mother’s friend continues in her letter “I loved them both and they loved each other each in his/her own way – and the war has a lot to answer for.”

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The reception of the Hong Kong veterans was overwhelming. In the days that followed, Leonard spent time visiting friends and relatives who also wanted to express their relief at his return and their good wishes. Then, perhaps to remove himself from all the socializing, he and his father decided to visit Leonard's younger brother, Chuck, in the United States. He and his father set off for St. Paul, Minnesota. And the letters between Gladys and Leonard began again.

*From St. Paul, Minnesota –
Dear Gladys,*

Father and I have been cutting us a merry caper since we escaped the dominance of our women folk; in fact for a pair of not too ardent picture goers, we haven't done at all badly. Our score to date includes the following: "Bells of St. Mary's, Weekend at the Waldorf, The Very Thought of You (definitely "not appropriate") and Alaska". I might record here that the last mentioned extravaganza was directly responsible for the decision on our part to forego any future dubious pleasures which the cinema might have to offer.

Later, Leonard and his father "braved the bitter elements" going to Minneapolis for a symphony performance and also a hockey game where his brother Chuck Corrigan was playing. Father and son attempted shopping. Leonard describes his father standing in a "nylon line-up" for an hour to bring home something special for the women back in Winnipeg. His father "just about froze while doing so, but he was overwhelmingly outnumbered!"

Gladys stayed in Winnipeg with Paddy and Shelagh at the home of the senior Corrigans after Leonard and his father returned from the U.S. By now, Leonard had started to worry about his

future and decided to set off for Ontario in hopes of finding some kind of job. On January 21, 1946, Gladys received this postcard -

*Still coasting through the frozen wastes of
northern Ontario. Three hours late now. If this keeps up,
I'll have to wire for reservations again!*

Love Elsie (a play on his initials, L.C.)

From Ottawa, dated Friday, Gladys received the first of letters written each day from Ontario. He describes a long and tiring journey from Winnipeg and an attempt to contact a person at the Parliament Buildings. While waiting for the gentleman, he tours the buildings and sees the Provincial Premiers leaving a conference – including Saskatchewan Premier T.C. Douglas, whom he plans to meet at a later time in Regina. He finally connects with Roy Graham at 3:15 p.m., who promises to look around for him. Leonard has no specific idea of what he wants to do but suggests the position of Foreign Trade Commissioner Assistant.

His letter, written at 11:30 p.m. to Gladys that night, says he has decided to leave for Toronto in the morning – an eight hour trip by train, where he will visit his sister, Nina.

Tuesday – Toronto – Chorley Park Military Hospital

On Sunday afternoon, Leonard had contacted George Prendergast and the two of them met up with John Reid, (Major Reid was one of the Hong Kong Medical Officers) on Monday. Reid was undergoing treatment for amoebic dysentery and told the two men that 30% of the Hong Kong boys had been found to have dysentery. Tests done in Winnipeg were described as “rather skimpy”. When Reid told the two men about the specialists and the slightly more comprehensive analysis than experienced in Winnipeg, they decided to seek tests in Toronto and were admitted to Chorley Park Military Hospital – as Leonard says, “to embark on a five day course of stool tests (six per day prompted by the liberal use of salts).

Tuesday

Prendy and Leonard are situated in a four bed ward in Chorley Park. He writes to Gladys,

“If you recall the rather turbulent era of Mitch Hepburn, Premier of Ontario, you will probably remember the disposition of the home of the Province’s Lieutenant Governor – on the grounds that it constituted “unnecessary expense”. That was Chorley Park and what a grand residence it must have been. Our room is on the third floor and we enjoy all the amenities. I think the week’s enforced rest will do us both good. Our M.O. seems a particularly efficient chap and is considered one of the two M.O.’s who is fully qualified to handle amoebic dysentery. Evidently he has considerable experience with it both in Italy and Holland. It will mean that, if we are given a clean sheet, we can rest assured by his judgement. Incidentally, a lot of the staff have contracted the “bug”. I might mention here that the serious part of dysentery is that, if it is disregarded, it results in abscessed livers – for which nothing can be done.”

By this time Leonard has also developed a head and chest cold.

Wednesday

This letter describes the hospital routine. Prendy has been offered a job with the bank, transferring to Jamaica. Leonard also questions Gladys’ stay with the “in-laws”.

He goes on to describe a visit with a couple of Hong Kong lads convalescing at Malton Military Hospital.

What a gyp we of the west are taking! These lads describe special balanced diets, vitamin shots, organized physical training and all types of games such as badminton, volleyball, etc., to get the boys in shape. And I thought I was being clever transferring to Winnipeg. I seem to have a penchant for doing the most stupid things.

Thursday

This morning received the heartening news that the results of our first two-day stool tests produced no unusual results. If we can just hold out until tomorrow, we should be able to rest our mind as to the final result.

Nina (his sister) was up for an hour or so last night and brought books which will help to pass the hours a bit. Nurse Christie, who you will probably recall as one of the Canadian nurses at Hong Kong, was in also. She had worked with Viola (Leonard's cousin Viola Barry) prior to the Hong Kong jaunt.

He continues....

An odd thing. Our M.O. happens to be named Longmore and when I inquired whether or not he had relatives in the west, he replied that he had – in Swift Current. A.E. Longmore is an uncle. Another M.O. who has been working on the H.K. lads has just moved in to the ward with us, completing our complement. He too is a “bug” suspect.

Friday

Leonard writes...

I don't know what the trouble was yesterday but I did feel low. I had just finished reading Benny Proulx's "Underground from Hong Kong", so that may have been responsible. Some of the passages brought vivid recollections of those four years and, of course, the logical train of thought continued on into the present. I can't seem to accept the new status without reservations and apprehension.

He continues...

I don't know, of course, just when I'll be back but I think we should be leaving here Monday night. Our tests so far indicate nothing, so if we're able to maintain our average we should be discharged Monday morning.

Saturday

Writing daily letters has become hard for both Leonard and Gladys but each continues a daily exchange of mail.

Leonard writes that there has been an added complication –

“...an oversized liver, exhibiting tenderness when it should not”

Other than that, he still registers negative results.

Sunday

Leonard admits to sleeping late after being allowed to go out for the evening on Saturday with his sister, Nina, and sister-in-law Hazel Corrigan, Chuck's wife.

Monday

Prendy obtains his freedom as from noon today and I get my ticket on Thursday, providing all goes well. The M.O. tells me I should be able to rest assured if by Thursday nothing has turned up, but I should have another check in six weeks or so.

Wednesday he begins making plans to go home by train to Winnipeg.

Tuesday

Leonard notes that Tommy Dorsey is playing in Toronto but the train departure of 10:55 p.m. doesn't allow him and Prendy to hear him play. They leave for Winnipeg.

By this time, Gladys has left Winnipeg, taking Shelagh with her. Leonard admits she has probably had a hard time living with her in-laws. Paddy stays in Winnipeg where she attends St. Mary's Academy and takes piano lessons. Gladys first goes to Regina to see her mother and step-father.

Letters begin daily from Winnipeg where Leonard says he hasn't had much luck with job hunting. His contact suggests it might be best for him to return to Swift Current and the Post Office – for the time being at least. (He is reluctant to do this.) But he does get a civil service application. He finds it difficult to push himself. He also has to start looking at civilian clothes – a suit sells for \$70.

Wednesday, March 6

Missing Gladys and getting nowhere with job prospects, he also learns from the W.T.P.B. that he's not eligible for a car priority. He writes Gladys to see what she can do about a car in Swift Current.

Thursday

He has to go to Deer Lodge Hospital for follow-up tests. What was an attempt to see if a fellow at the Knights of Columbus office might have any job suggestions yesterday instead turns into Leonard buying a membership in the K. of C. Then a fellow Hong Kong lad borrowed money from him. So he begins to feel that “*yesterday was a wash-out*”.

Later on Thursday, he writes that he's “*the loneliest guy in town, craving the simple home life and all that it entails. Maybe I got a bit too much sun in Hong Kong*”, he concludes.

A letter from George Dunlop in Swift Current brings suggestions of a job apparently at the Post Office in Swift Current, but involving night and weekends which he's not sure Gladys will like.

Friday, March 7

Leonard writes of going to the hospital tomorrow morning to have his stomach pumped – so it will be an early morning and no food. His mother is leaving next week on a trip so Leonard, daughter Paddy and his father will have to manage on their own. He expresses his loneliness and frustration.

Saturday

He describes having the test at the hospital – very unpleasant. Monday there will be a stool test and Friday he is to see the M.O. “*I hope in the meantime that something in the job line turns up*”, he writes.

He missed an Oscar Peterson concert which he later regrets since the press notices said the music was good and the audience highly appreciative (nearly 4,000 attended).

Monday

He missed writing a letter Sunday because he wasn't feeling well. Paddy played at a recital at which everyone seemed to think she did well.

Wednesday

Nothing further to report on the labour front here. I gallop out to the hospital every second day but aside from that I do nothing. Paddy comes home for the noon meal now and as I think I mentioned, the evening session will be held at the Homestead Restaurant.

(Leonard's mother is away.) *I need to get my teeth into some good stiff work.*

Friday, March 15

Paddy's birthday and Leonard says he thinks she is pleased with her present of a jacket. Aunt Flo (Gladys' sister) has sent her a book.

Leonard makes his plans to return to Swift Current and writes to say that he'll probably be with Gladys before the letter arrives.

CHAPTER TWENTY

When the debriefing and hospital checks ended, Leonard went back to Swift Current, hoping to get his family and his life back in order. Housing was the immediate concern. The “Corrigan House”, an elegant two storey home in which Leonard had grown up, had been for sale. For whatever reasons, Belle, Leonard’s mother, sold it before his return – removing the possibility that he could have purchased it for his family. Housing in the town was very scarce but he and Gladys were able to find a place on Second West that was available. Paddy returned home after her school year was finished in June and the family was together for the first time in five years.

Pat.....

I had been persuaded that it was very important for me to finish the school year at St. Mary’s Academy, so I didn’t arrive home until nearly the end of June. When I got to the house, which was at 470 Second West, I remember sitting down at the piano to wait for Dad to come home from work. It was quite dark when I finished the piece I was playing, and I remember being rather startled when I turned around to find this tall man with a full black beard staring at me through the screen at the front door. He had been listening to the music. Although I didn’t know it, because of the July 1st celebrations, all the men had grown beards. Here was the Dad that I hadn’t seen for more than a few days when he first came back to Winnipeg now looking like a sailor off on leave, with this full black beard. Quite a revelation!

Shelagh....

My first recollection of my father was that he was a tall, handsome man – that in his world children were

seen and not heard, and that you did as you were told – no explanations necessary.

I probably spent the least amount of time with Dad after he got home. I quickly fell back into my routine of going to Regina to be with my maternal grandparents for every school holiday. I wanted to be with them – I had a connection there. In Swift Current, my parents were trying to get their lives back together. Where did a seven year old fit?

Despite his thoughts of looking for new employment, the Post Office job was waiting for him on his return, and with a wife and family to take care of, he decided to continue there. In fact, despite offers of promotion to other cities in Canada, Leonard stayed with the Post Office until his retirement. He had started in June, 1927 as an assistant – the war years intervened – and from 1946 until 1972 he advanced from his earliest position through Postal Clerk 2, Postal Supervisor 2, Postal Officer 2, and in 1957 became Postmaster of the Swift Current office.

Activities that Leonard spoke of in his diary, golfing and music, began again. Gladys played the piano and Leonard the saxophone in a seven-piece group called the “Serenaders” and they would play for dances every weekend in Swift Current and the surrounding district. Later on, Leonard joined the military band of the 14th Canadian Hussars, based in town and they played regularly in Swift Current for various functions.

Shelagh....

When the dance band, “The Serenaders”, held a practice, I often got on my bike after Mom and Dad left the house and went to the Elks’ Hall. I could sit behind the screen at the main door and listen to the music being played – without anyone knowing I was there. Then, after a while, I would get on my bike and return home before my parents got back. I guess it’s why I know so much of the music from that era of dance bands.

Mom and Dad and The Serenaders played for our school dances which proved challenging for a teenage girl. Was I doomed to be a wallflower or did the fellows not ask me to dance because they didn't want my father's eyes watching us?

Leonard never resumed competitive golf – he had won several trophies locally before the war years – but he and Gladys were active members of the Elmwood Golf Club. Gladys, on the other hand, continued to play in tournaments yearly until 1978, consistently winning prizes and trophies. At the age of 60, she decided to see whether she could win a spot on the provincial golf team – won a place and went on to compete in the national tournament in 1973 representing Saskatchewan. She was also an avid curler, joining a team every winter season. Her great sense of competitiveness and sportsmanship resulted in her being named to Swift Current's "Sports Hall of Fame".

Pat.....

I went golfing with Dad fairly often, but it was always a test of wills as he demanded perfection. Any mistakes that were made meant an angry flare up. I fared much better when Mom or George Dunlop, one of Dad's golfing buddies, were along, as he managed to keep his temper in check when others were present. Dad didn't confine his criticism to me, as he often critiqued Mom's golfing style. It frustrated him to realize that she was able to win competitions, and that it was no longer possible for him to do so, even though he had won a number of championships before the war. His swing was still powerful but his nerves were so frayed that he couldn't control his shots and his putting was always unpredictable. I had first played golf with Grandpa Corrigan and Uncle Bert in Winnipeg, and I think the pleasure of those early games resonated through the trials and tribulations involved in my lessons with Dad, so that golf remained an interest for me for many years after I had left home.

Shelagh....

Golf never appealed to me. Paddy had the good luck to be introduced to the game by Grandpa Corrigan. But being that I was younger, I just never had the same connection to the sport. I did, however, sense that it couldn't be much fun as there was so much arguing and fussing when people got home.

In 1946, Kathleen was born and, in 1948, the fourth daughter, Michelle, arrived to complete the family.

Kathie.....

I was the third Corrigan daughter, born in December, 1946, after the war. My really early years bring back memories that are generally pleasant – such as hearing my sister Pat practice endlessly on the piano and getting a great appreciation for classical music that has lasted my lifetime. My sister Shelagh babysat us a lot and occasionally enlightens us about those times which she claimed (typical teenager) were hard on her. I don't think it was unique in those days, but growing up Mik and I went to Mom for all our emotional support. In later years, I understand why. Dad did not offer that level of love. He was like a soldier in that he had a number of rules to follow and discipline was important. One look from him – with his big, black eyebrows said it all! We always thought he was so crabby, but in retrospect he was a very unhealthy man with lots of pain and discomfort. Probably he didn't have the energy to deal day to day with all that was going on. Today he might even be described as suffering from a type of post traumatic stress disorder.

Mik.....

“You have another girl, Len”...the fourth, to be christened Mickey but shortly thereafter amended to Michelle by our French parish priest...and nicknamed Mike by a father destined to spend the rest of his life in a house full of women. It seemed an ironic twist of fate for someone prepped to behave as a more traditional male, a leader of men.

Pat.....

The early years were full of tension, although to the people that Dad knew at the office or in the town itself, he was a hard-working, conscientious kind of person who played for dances, along with our Mom, almost every weekend, and golfed whenever he could. For us at home, it was often quite a different story, in that he was very exacting in his approach, and brooked no dissension when it came to his wanting things done in a particular way. He and Mom sometimes had arguments that lasted a considerable time, often at full volume. These would be followed by a day or two of chilly silence, where all of us had to tiptoe around the house so as not to disturb Dad too much.

Shelagh.....

There was a great deal of tension in the house, understandable when you look back at it from an adult perspective, but not as a child, listening as Pat and I did through a vent in the bedroom floor. Years later, it took me a long time to realize why I couldn't stand to watch television programs where the voices started to be raised – or that I moved away from arguments beginning in social settings. The tension from those early days was being repeated.

Kathie.....

Mom and Dad had what we felt was a stormy relationship and at a very young age, I remember listening to them argue in the basement while my sister and I were upstairs. As a couple, they lost so much time in their relationship with the five-year gap in their marriage. It must have been difficult to regain lost time. But they persevered, playing for dances, golfing and being involved in many community groups together.

The other memory that is still vivid is the amount of sleeping he did. It forced us as a family to always be

aware of the noise level, which was hard on all of us. Looking back, I suspect Dad certainly didn't ever feel well, but I also wonder about depression in addition to his stomach and other health issues. I still, to this day, feel annoyed when my husband has a nap and I have to tip-toe around. We laugh about it now, but it's a vivid memory.

Shelagh.....

There are a lot of memories of tip-toeing around the house because Dad would be sleeping. I know there were many times when he was not well – stomach problems mostly. He would come home from work and be doubled up with pain. The doctors diagnosed ulcers, but I doubt that they really knew, no matter how skilled they were. We always believed it related to Hong Kong.

Pat.....

Much of our real communication came through Mom. He would tell her what he wanted us to know, and she would pass the message along. Even in situations where I was performing in public on the piano, such as a Kiwanis Festival, he would never come in and sit down at the performance, but would stand at the door and tell Mom afterwards to let me know that he thought I had performed well.

Shelagh.....

I felt he was honourable – people looked up to him as a leader and if he gave you his word, you could count on him. He was not good at expressing emotions (except perhaps on paper), you never received a compliment or praise from him – rather he would say to Mom “tell Shelagh that....”. Once after he'd heard me play the piano in a very fine restaurant in Toronto, he commented that “he never thought he'd see his daughter play in a “joint” like this”. I took it as a compliment.

What a complex man! He seemed able to write his feelings but never speak them. It wasn't that he didn't

care, or didn't love us, it was just never verbalized, at least in my growing up time. As all of us grew older, Kathie brought "hugging" into our family greetings. But it wasn't something that happened in the time I lived at home.

Early in 1959, I decided to leave home to find a job in Ontario where Pat and Bernard were living. Dad took me to the train and carried my bag on board. And when he turned to say good-bye, he kissed me on the cheek. It was the first time I ever remember him kissing me.

Pat.....

In my teen years, I would often sit and talk with my Dad after he came home from playing for a dance. The talks sometimes escalated into arguments, fuelled no doubt by the drinks he had had to help him wind down after playing. After one particularly grueling session, he kept getting more and more irate, as I was disagreeing with him about a particular topic. There was so much tension that I finally burst into tears, telling him that I was sure he was trying to "break me" psychologically. He hugged me then and became a little teary himself. That was the one special hug I remember in those years.

Kathie.....

Dad had a very strong value base – which made him reluctant to give praise. To him, with his expectations, what you did wasn't extra ordinary, but what you were supposed to do anyway. I think all four of us have grown up conscious of doing the right thing because of the values we have carried on all our lives. But still there were scars that we can now recognize, as mature women, who looked for credit for what we had done.

Mik.....

Ours was a disciplined childhood – no tantrums for this crew – and we experienced the spankings and smacks (that were accepted in that era) from our father,

which resulted in a tendency for us to give him a wide berth if he was in a black mood or not feeling good. Consequently, I never thought he was much fun and have virtually no recollections of goofy times with him. Of course, I was doing the self-absorbed kid thing, so I also had no inkling of the type of worries he had, trying to make sure his family was taken care of. He succeeded because we lacked for nothing growing up.

Dad was a natural athlete, and had he not leaned towards always testing the limits in his youth, he might have found a career in sport. I think he occasionally played badminton at the armouries after his Hussar band practice, and I knew he was a smooth golfer, but I had never seen him play tennis, which I had been toying with at university. So, I challenged him...in no time, I was running all over the place, and he looked so collected and cool that I decided to drive a zinger at him and get him jump started. My enthusiasm overshot my skill, with the result that I missed the ball entirely, and followed through straight into my left eye with the racket...POW! Dad was at my side in an instant, but not with sympathy...he was chuckling at my comeuppance, which further embarrassed me and promptly ended our game. I only asked for his guidance on one other occasion in the sports field, and that was when my fiancé discovered he had a natural affinity for golf (my parents gave him golf shoes as a wedding present – they bonded ever thereafter), and I wanted to join him. Kath and I had caddied for both parents a great deal in our growing years (cheap babysitting!), but neither of us harboured any real desire to learn the game. I was probably past my learning prime when I asked Dad to be my teacher, and it seemed impossible to get it right. It was only after I followed through with a back wrenching stroke that literally brought me to my knees, that he finally praised my efforts. I didn't ask for help again.

Shelagh....

I don't remember Dad ever going to a movie. His dislike of pretension and phoniness was likely the reason.

He loved good books, music and golf and his need for quiet and sleep time didn't allow for child play. When I was a little older – 10 perhaps – we were outside at 627 when I asked him to play catch with me. We threw the ball back and forth a few times and then, in despair, he said “You catch like a girl!”

The growing family necessitated new accommodation and the Corrigan's moved into one of the first Veterans' Houses built in Swift Current. The familiar designs were springing up all across Canada as returning veterans needed houses for their families. Only Kathie, age four, wasn't sure about living in the new house. She disappeared one afternoon on her tricycle – she was located shortly after, heading down the hill to the old home.

Both Leonard and Gladys became involved in volunteer and civic groups in Swift Current. Their contribution generally started with an involvement in music and ended up with them joining the organization. Leonard joined the Lions Club, serving as President in later years, was an Elk, a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Knights of Columbus and the Chamber of Commerce. He served on the Catholic School Board and the Emergency Measures Organization and was an active board member of the Prairie Pioneer Lodge, a residential complex for seniors. Gladys joined the Lioness organization and the Royal Purple Lodge along with her golfing and curling activities.

Kathie.....

Dad was a loyal and respected man, sought after by many local organizations because he was thorough and would work until the job was done. Fulfilling his need to be a leader, to do the right things and to influence people was all part of that.

Mik.....

I have some flash thoughts – walking down the streets of Swift Current, a pre-teen trying to match her dad's long strides, and being proud of his handsomeness and his assertive take-charge demeanor...my hand in the crook of his arm; waiting for him to give me a ride home

after band practice...sitting in the back of the post office, watching him skillfully slap the letters into mailboxes, an easy camaraderie with his co-workers and their discernible respect for him, which did not falter when he became Postmaster; leaning over the front seat in our car, listening to his stories about the war as the miles stretched endlessly, surprised that he could find humour in many of the incidents that occurred in camp; interviewing him about his years as a prisoner of war for a public speaking contest in my Grade 9 year – a unique topic that took me to the finals, but not a win; having him as a guest in my grade 4 classroom to speak about being a soldier, as part of the Remembrance Day recognition – I was so proud and the kids treated him like a celebrity...what fun!; realizing that he was behind the scenes supporting all our endeavours, whether we were in singing festivals (yuck), at dance recitals, on trips with our Junior Band, or sharing the spotlight at our school musical productions; watching he and Mum dance together, so fluid and practiced – who taught him?; dancing with him myself, held so firmly I could barely breathe, and me fighting the urge to lead; waiting for the back porch light to pop on after we arrived from up north, knowing that, whatever the hour, he would not sleep until we were safely home.

Another of Leonard's appointments was that of Justice of the Peace – which meant hearing cases involving traffic violations and various other charges laid by the city police and the RCMP, who were the provincial police in Saskatchewan.

Pat.....

My husband Bernard and I were attending a party in Ottawa in the mid-'60s, and at one point several couples gathered around, and began to tell some funny stories about travelling across Canada. Following one person's encounter with the police while driving out West, a friend of ours decided to tell his story as well.

He described being stopped for speeding by the Mounties near Swift Current, Saskatchewan. No matter how he put it, he couldn't convince them that he shouldn't

receive a ticket. When he persisted, they informed him that he would have to go into town and appear before the Justice of the Peace who would decide on the appropriate fine.

Our friend then began to describe the situation once they got to the building where the official was to be found. He was directed to a particular office, where he waited for the JP to arrive. A few minutes later a fellow with piercing blue eyes and a black bushy beard walked in the door carrying a set of golf clubs. At this point in his story, we added a few more details, was he 6 feet tall? Dressed in casual clothes?

It turned out that this gentleman was indeed the Justice of the Peace our friend had been waiting for....our Dad. The beard had been grown for Frontier Days, and he had just come from the golf course. Needless to say, the gentleman with the story was flabbergasted – and the whole group convulsed with laughter.

Shelagh.....

The highlight of my teenage years? Dad was named a Justice of the Peace. He asked me to do the paperwork involved. And because in Saskatchewan the RCMP were the provincial police, it meant that any warrants or other official business often brought handsome young men, recently graduated from the RCMP training centre at Regina, to our house. Swoon!!

Education, which Leonard felt so strongly about, caused a bit of an uproar at the local Catholic Church when Leonard and Gladys decided that Paddy, instead of heading off to the nearest Catholic High School some 100 miles away, would go to the local public Collegiate. Leonard was denounced from the pulpit and threatened with excommunication by the Pastor. After being separated from his daughter for four years, Leonard felt strongly about another dislocation in his family. The matter was settled between the Priest and Leonard over a bottle of rye.

Mik.....

Considering that Dad was expelled in Grade 9 (caught smoking by the principal's wife behind the school), he was eloquent and articulate in his diary and letters to his family/friends; he read voraciously, watched educational TV and loved a good argument (discussion!) where he could test the waters. It was frustrating to have an opinion, because his was always right! When reading the diary, it isn't obvious how young he was, because it illustrates such depth of character, a clear-headedness and focus not in keeping with his age – but above all, it was the way he put words to paper without an educated background to guide him that is most astonishing.

He also continued his flair for writing – composing long letters to the daughters away from home and writing poems and limericks which Gladys would find waiting for her after an evening out.

Kathie.....

Something special that Dad did for all of us was to send a letter at least once a year. Dad did very little writing so the letters were either typed on his Olivetti or printed. He captured on paper what was going on with him and Mom, but would also talk of events in Swift Current or what was happening with golf, family, friends or we sisters. For someone who was reluctant to be chatty, he seemed so in his letters – as shown in his Hong Kong diary. I've saved every letter he ever wrote. Even though his formal education was cut short in his youth, he was a very smart introspective man.

Music was the real glue that allowed the family to blend together. Paddy continued her classical piano training and after completing her Conservatory courses and competing in local music festivals, she earned her ARCT at 16 years of age and began teaching music. After finishing High School, she attended the

University of Saskatchewan, completed her teaching degree and returned to Swift Current to teach school at the local High School. Later she went east to obtain her Bachelor of Music degree and continued teaching in Ontario.

Pat.....

Music was an important part of all our lives as we children were growing up. If it wasn't our parents playing for dances, our taking piano lessons, or, later on, our two younger sisters playing in the Community Band, we would often have singing or playing sessions in the house. Dad had bought a Webcor Wire Recording machine in 1946 that he used quite often, more than we had realized. In 2004, we discovered how much he had recorded of our playing and singing, and the parents' dance band called "The Serenaders", when we had the ten wire recording spools we had kept all those years edited and turned into CDs. What a wonderful keepsake! The CDs will give the family many more opportunities to get the flavour of those musical moments in the years to come.

Shelagh began music lessons but ultimately ended up playing as Gladys did – by ear – and was involved in music throughout her school years, sometimes playing with her parents' dance band. She continued to play the piano professionally after moving to Ontario.

Shelagh.....

Music was so important in our family. Dad had purchased a wire recorder (forerunner of tapes) and, thanks to brother-in-law Bernard Turcotte who found a source to retrieve these recordings just a few years ago, we rediscovered some precious family moments – Pat playing classical music, age 15, me playing, age 10, and the two younger sisters singing at ages probably two and four. But I had completely forgotten one segment where I was singing "Now Is The Hour" and Dad's voice comes in to harmonize with me. What a keepsake!

That recording also brought back another memory. I loved dogs and I remember coming home one day with a beautiful collie dog called "Major" who had "followed me home". I remember opening the bathroom door while my mother was having a bath and shoving the dog through the open door saying couldn't we keep him because he didn't have a home. My mother screamed at the sight of this animal and Major and I quickly left the scene. But Major became embedded in our family history. On the wire recording comes the two very young voices to the tune of "Farmer in the Dell", singing "Major's at the door, Major's at the door, heigh-ho the major-o, Major's at the door." Later there was an Irish setter puppy given to me which became sick and died and to replace it a Golden Labrador, which also didn't last. Each time, Dad would stay with me through the night as we tried to save them. No more dogs after that.

Perhaps those moments stand out because we didn't have a lot of common ground, Dad and I. I was six and a half when he returned home and I don't think either of us knew what to do with the other.

Both Kathie and Mik were very involved in music in Swift Current, singing and performing in dance recitals with Gladys playing the accompaniment to the dancers. Both Kathie and Mik played the trumpet with the Swift Current Junior Band, a well-recognized group of young people from the community. They took part in a band trip to Ontario and performed at the CNE, as well as a number of other events.

All four girls sang – four-part harmony without music – and were well known in Swift Current for their musical ability.

Kathie.....

As we grew older, my younger sister and I were very involved in singing and dance, both at school and in the community. Music epitomized who we were as a family and I think Mom and Dad got a lot of satisfaction from all that we did. Except on one unhappy occasion when Mik

and I, at about 10 and 12 years of age, with Mom accompanying us on stage at the Experimental Farm auditorium, started to sing our duet and froze! No explanation as to why and after a minute or so of awkwardness, we started again and successfully completed our song. Dad, with his need for perfection, was very upset with us for quite awhile that week. Expectations placed on us to attend school or music practices were the same, even if we were feeling ill. I suppose no matter how under the weather we were, it would never have been as significant as what he had experienced in prisoner of war camp. To this day, I generally dismiss how I'm feeling when asked, choosing not to dwell on problems or talk about myself.

Mik.....

Music was the constant and the comfort, and probably the ingredient that we shared best as a family...we four girls harmonized without deference to age, an inherited natural talent that we took for granted, and enjoyed immensely. I have few early flashbacks of Paddy, except a pride in her exceptional skills as a pianist.

There wasn't much discussion about Hong Kong in the early days following Leonard's return. Probably it wasn't a subject you could talk to young girls about. And in any event, it seemed that Leonard and Gladys just wanted to get on with their lives. The daughters all remember tension at home, having to be quiet in the house and very few meals with Leonard. His eating habits revolved around eating his food cold after everyone else had finished their meal – or making a sandwich of the food (which one of Gladys' friends said he did because he couldn't stand the sight of food – so he covered it with bread). His favourite meal was a raw onion sandwich – a taste his whole family developed.

Pat.....

There were many times when Dad would not sit down and eat with us, and when he did our behaviour was very carefully scrutinized. In one situation, I didn't want to eat a vegetable put in front of me, and made a face about

it. He very quickly smacked my face, and reminded me that it was good food and that I should eat every bite before leaving the table. Needless to say, we were happiest when eating separately from him. He would often just make himself an onion sandwich, and eat it nearby, either before or after we had had our meal. His food habits were quite unusual, and had a lot to do with not being able to be used to having proper meals for such a long time. The one meal I do recall when he enjoyed a sit-down meal with us was on the occasion of his 80th birthday when we had company, and a full turkey dinner. Quite a pleasant surprise!

Kathie.....

Dad had such strong principles and once committed would not relent. I remember my loathing for porridge, which Mom and Dad felt we should have before going to school. When Dad said I could not leave until I finished this awful stuff, he meant it! At the same time, I couldn't be late for school, so I remember to this day the gagging I did until I finished the bowl. Today if my husband cooks oatmeal porridge, I almost have to leave the room. Just recently, I learned from my sister Shelagh that when my Dad was sent to St. Boniface to school at age five, he also struggled with having to eat porridge. He solved the problem by stuffing it into his pockets.

What to eat and how to cook food was a great challenge for our Mom. We were a meat and potatoes family like most people then, but routine got to be a big part of our life. Hot dogs on Thursdays, fish on Fridays (good Catholics) and hamburgers on Saturday morning after Band practice, then roast on Sundays. Choice of vegetables was limited by what did not have strong cooking odours. All the sisters entered the world of broccoli, turnip and cauliflower long after we were adults on our own. Dad seldom sat down for a family meal. He loved homemade bread and crackers with lots of butter on both. He ate onion sandwiches his entire life – not just any onion, but Spanish onions – which he cut and cubed, soaked in at least three tablespoons of sugar and cold water, and put outside, rain or shine, to ferment for at

least three hours. When they were ready, he would put butter on the homemade bread, sprinkle salt on the onions and press the bread flat before eating. Dad's food oddities will be remembered forever by the family. We learned later from a friend of Mom's that Dad ate mostly sandwiches because he couldn't stand the sight of food, after his prison camp experience. Another trait, that might have been more "Corrigan" than "camp", was not eating or drinking really hot food or beverages. Dad had his own way of doing things at meal times. He would mix his food around on the plate and let it cool for half an hour or so, joining the family but eating later. Mom felt maybe it was better for his digestive process. But habits linger, and to this day, my son and I enjoy eating onion sandwiches.

Mik.....

Kathie twigged a memory when she mentioned the onion sandwiches, which I also love. It was such simple fare, and Dad didn't cook, so because it was his thing – he "made" the onions into a delicacy – and we could share the eating experience, it became something special. It was part of the ritual to leave a hand print in the top of the bread when pressing it together, and truthfully, after Mum died we couldn't pull it off on anything less than her homemade bread. I'm the next generation that doesn't like to eat or drink anything hot, though I can't provide any clever rationale, like digestive problems. Genetics, I guess.

And there was Hudson Bay Dark Rum, and Buckingham cigarettes – a lot of those.

Kathie.....

Dad loved rum and coke, but being the disciplined person he was, he never drank until after work was done. After a few drinks, he didn't eat well, which got his stomach ulcers raging. The drinking exposed us to memories that he had of the war and camp in Hong Kong. Lots of times, he would laugh hard at the funny antics with the men, but generally he showed sadness and pain from that experience. Not wanting to show his emotions, he

would retreat to the bedroom hiding the tears running down his face. He always said there were things that he knew but could never talk about for fear of reprisals. Imagine ten or twenty years after a war still experiencing that fear!

Mik.....

I married a man who liked to smoke and drink rum along with Dad, and every visit over the years, that combination would invariably lead to stories of his life in the camp. It never mattered that, with the passing of time, many stories were repeated...often...because he had a terrific way of sharing his memories – a true entertainer. Sometimes he laughed with tears in his eyes, and he moved quickly past the hurtful elements, rather than spoil the mood. We came to recognize the names of those friends who made those long years survivable, and if we asked “whatever happened to...” then we were in for a long night. It never occurred to me there were households of returned soldiers who never spoke of those four years, and many others whose fathers remained steeped in hate and resentment for the rest of their lives. Somehow, Dad let those feelings go, but there is no question that harm was done to his health and his psyche.

Shelagh....

He never bragged about or embellished the war years. If there were stories – and in my days at home it didn't happen often – they would be anecdotes – not about himself.

Occasionally there would be a visitor to speak with Leonard in the early days – a young man trying to get his life back together. The two of them would sit in the living room in the dark, talking late into the night.

Kathie.....

He was always grateful and really enjoyed the visits from men he had served with in the Winnipeg

Grenadiers. I was enthralled to see Dad in the company of men with whom he had such a tight bond and shared so many memories – I realized the brotherhood that evolved in the camp that enabled them to survive.

Leonard was a little older than the regular recruits when he signed up. He spent his thirtieth birthday onboard ship going to Hong Kong. Some of the younger men – many were only 17 and 18 years of age when they joined the army – couldn't cope with surviving the terrible days of imprisonment, perhaps for poor health reasons that were not recognized. They faced enormous struggles to get proper pensions and medical care that was due them. The Canadian government signed away any rights to compensation from the Japanese government regarding slave labour the men were required to perform. And the significance of health problems was not understood almost until the Viet Nam Veterans returned to the United States with a host of diseases which Western doctors had not seen or dealt with before. Hong Kong Veterans began being tested in the late seventies for many things, including parasites which they had probably carried in their bodies for all those years.

Leonard's promise to help Eddo Da Silva and his family come to Canada had never been forgotten. Over the years after their liberation, Eddo had applied without success a number of times. Leonard often spoke of his admiration and fondness for his Portuguese friends in camp. Alzira Da Silva, Eddo's wife, had endured much hardship with the fall of Hong Kong. She had lost her father, father-in-law and a baby daughter during the years Eddo was in the prisoner of war camp. Eddo had been a member of the Hong Kong volunteer force when he was captured. Alzira was one of the many wives who were on the other side of the fence trying to be sure their men were still alive, and providing any food or other items that they could through the fence. After the war ended, they knew they didn't want to stay in Hong Kong. Leonard and Eddo had talked often about what they would do when they were free and when Eddo expressed his desire to take his family to Canada, Leonard agreed to try and help. Finally in 1957, approval came through from the Canadian government and the family – by

now including two little boys – left Hong Kong to live in Swift Current Saskatchewan – a town of 10,000 situated on the prairies.

Leonard's family never remembered him ever having a hammer in his hand, or expressing the slightest interest in building or woodworking. But with the pending arrival of the Da Silva family, Leonard set out to build a room in the basement of his house where the family could stay. To his credit, it was finished, furnished and ready for the new family when they arrived. But the tools were put away forever.

Mik.....

Eddo, a Portuguese gentleman interred in the same POW camp, was sponsored by Dad to start a new life in Canada, and within a dozen years after the war's end, we were sharing our house with his wife and 2 sons, while they searched for their own accommodation. The close friendship of these former prisoners of war lasted the rest of their lives, and the children of both families have recently renewed contact.

Dad actually built a rumpus room in the basement in anticipation of the Da Silvas' arrival, and truth be told, he did a commendable job, considering he really had no carpentry skills. He generally waited for my husband to arrive before attempting repairs, and he always had large, albeit unusable tools, as if he had read about them and figured every household needed them, so why not? He had the good grace not to try and be macho about his capabilities, and since he enjoyed learning new things, he didn't seem the least embarrassed.

Shelagh....

There was great excitement and a sense of urgency about getting ready for the arrival of the Da Silva family. Dad decided to create a room in the basement for them. That was a surprise to all of us because as far as we knew he'd never built anything in his life. But he did it and they arrived.

Considering the bustling culture and many family and friends that they left behind, Eddo and Alzira were remarkably calm and never lost their enthusiasm and sense of humour. Alzira was pregnant when they arrived and soon after their daughter Angela was born, completing their family with sons Philip and Michael. Alzira had a wonderful wit and when she heard there was a contest in Saskatchewan called the “Miss Wheat Queen”, she said she could be “Miss Puffed Rice”.

It wasn't long before Eddo had a job with the Swift Current Utility company and the family found a house. Soon they were very much a part of the community in Swift Current. The children all attended the local schools and after graduation all three went to work in Calgary. On their retirement, Eddo and Alzira joined their children there as well.

Pat and Shelagh left Swift Current in the late fifties just around the time the Da Silvas arrived so they didn't spend as much time with them as the two younger Corriganes. The families shared Christmases and other holidays and kept in touch always.

Mik.....

It took very little persuasion to convince my then boyfriend to come home with me at Christmas break, because it was such a hoot! We had a piano in the basement, which Mum would play, and she would be joined on the tenor sax by Dad, and on fiddle, drums or alto sax by other friends...which meant we had our own little dance band under the stairs. It was a particular treat to be joined by the Da Silvas, as Eddo had a beautiful tenor voice and loved to share it, so we would sing the old-time tunes in harmony or listen while he danced and serenaded his wife.

In 2007 in Calgary, where the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association held their Convention that year, the two families were once again together. There were tears and hugs and stories to share from all those years. For the Da Silvas, Philip,

Michael and Angela, it was also an opportunity to meet some of the Veterans who had been with their Dad in prison camp and to see memorabilia from those days. Like the Corrigan family, the young Da Silvas hadn't heard much about what went on in those wartime years. The parents and the children had never returned to Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Veterans' Commemorative Association of Canada has become a unique organization. It was first proposed in 1996 when it became obvious that it was difficult for the Hong Kong Veterans to carry on their own association, the HKVA, for reasons of age and health concerns. The sons and daughters of Canadian soldiers who fought at the Battle of Hong Kong in December, 1941, stepped forward to help out. Since then, the membership has grown to include relatives and friends who want the story of the Canadians in that war to be better known. There are six Regional HKVCA organizations in Canada, from coast to coast, who meet every two years in August to mark the day the soldiers were liberated. Each region has its goal focusing on the needs of the remaining Veterans, the widows and families. The need for education in the schools to teach young people about the Battle has been a major commitment. Many Canadians are not even aware that Canada sent soldiers to attempt the defence of Hong Kong in 1941 – nor that the men and women remained there for nearly four years as prisoners-of-war.

Pat became involved with the HKVCA and with her experience in Education helped to organize the “Ten Lessons” for use in the High Schools in Ontario and in other provinces. As Pat says in her introduction to the Ten Lessons, “It was thought that, perhaps for the first time, many young Canadians would begin to understand the important role these soldiers played at Hong Kong in exemplifying the very best that our country has to offer in terms of fortitude, determination and endurance.”

Kathie.....

In the late sixties, I left for the great beyond (Ontario) to pursue further education in nursing. While

living in Ontario, I met a man, married, and had a child. However, when my marriage ended, I found myself back in Swift Current in the early seventies with a year-old son in my arms. Mom and Dad were a strong support for me in every way and Dad's role as a father was rekindled. Having a grandson became important to him and he spent many long hours talking about the war and going through the "Life" book series that highlighted all the battles of the war. Sean (Kathie's son) now has the entire collection of those books as a memento of the grandfather he loved.

Mik.....

He continued to protect and provide for us even as adults. When Kathie divorced and became a single parent, he made sure she had a car (twice) that would keep her and his grandson safe, and on every excuse possible he sent money to all of us. When my husband and I were initially married, he backed our first new vehicle – a Mustang! – and it was because of his contribution that my family could afford tickets to Australia for our year-long teacher exchange.

Dad's generosity was a tangible reflection of his love for us, a substitute for his reluctance to hug or kiss us at all stages of our growing up. I only saw him kiss Mum on the lips once...he was going away somewhere...and we teased him about it in an attempt to minimize our shock. There is likely some anecdotal explanation from his childhood and life experiences to explain his reluctance to be more hands-on with his kids, and though I always knew he could be counted on for a rescue, an unpremeditated hug from him would have been a treasure. Kathie worked on him to the point where he allowed us to hug him and peck his cheek in greeting or leaving, and I didn't hesitate to cry in his arms when Mum died.

Kathie.....

Dad still got a little upset when I hugged my son and showed a lot of affection, thinking that certain negative traits might evolve from that affection. What I

was doing was establishing a relationship with my son and getting and giving hugs became a more natural response from both of us.

Gladys and Leonard decided to make the 1975 pilgrimage to Hong Kong with the Veterans Association – an event that takes place every five years. As can be imagined, it was an overwhelming experience. As was his habit, Leonard wrote to the family about the trip in the form of a diary.

The thirtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Hong Kong prisoners of war provided the opportunity for Leonard and Gladys to travel to that city. This was the first time Leonard decided to attend – and the first time Gladys would have to see Hong Kong. Ironically, they would land at Kai Tak Airport, the airport that Leonard helped build during the war as part of the work gangs from the prison camp.

His travel diary begins with the plane ride – a stark contrast from his entry to Hong Kong by ship in 1941 – and although a tentative flier, he appreciates the speed and comfort of the 747.

As he and Gladys tour the city after their arrival, he marvels at the fantastic growth of Hong Kong and Kowloon. At “The Peak” they board a bus for the trip to Wanchai Gap – as he says “an area that was the scene of some of my “magnificent” wartime exploits, unfortunately the whole area has been built up to the point of making it almost impossible to pin-point exact locations”.

After Wanchai, it’s on to Repulse Bay:

Leonard....

...a pre-war haven for the Taipans (big shots), but now built up to community status. The last time I saw the place I had to climb the mountain immediately behind the hotel to investigate a rumour that Jap paratroops had landed at Tai Tam reservoir. Fortunately for me it was just a rumour.

While in Hong Kong, Leonard and Gladys were able to deliver Christmas items that Alzira and Eddo had given them for his mother and brother. Eddo's brother, Dick, lived in the general area of what had been the first POW camp at North Point, but the rebuilding after the war had been so intense that Leonard wasn't able to pick out old landmarks.

Dick took Leonard and Gladys the following day on a "Destination Unknown" trek – first boarding a bus to the Sham Shui Po area. While the camp was still there it was now a barracks for a regiment, complete with guards and warning signs. When Dick spoke to someone at the guardhouse and explained the circumstances of Leonard having been a prisoner of war there, they were taken inside and shown around. Nothing seemed familiar, however.

Sunday, December 7th was the anniversary of the Japanese attack 34 years previous, 1941, and Sai Wan cemetery was a lovely setting, high up on a side hill overlooking the harbour. The special service included the laying of wreaths at the Cenotaph, the Last Post, a lament on the bagpipes by a piper from the Gurka regiment and a firing party from the Royal Hong Kong regiment. As the only officer present, Leonard was given a part to play in the commemorative services. Later in the trip, Leonard had lunch with Colonel Botelho, an officer in the Hong Kong Defence Corp., and according to Leonard, was a highly respected and decorated member of the Portuguese community. While they were in camp, Leonard remembered teaching Col. Botelho to play the saxophone and laughingly assumed he hadn't played since.

Gladys had been experiencing health problems – sinus and chest congestion – so she saw a doctor and stayed at the hotel while Leonard was away with the group to visit Stanley Cemetery to lay a wreath for nine Canadians buried there.

Prior to the "going-away" party, Leonard and Gladys first met with Alizio Alves and his wife and youngest daughter at the hotel and were able to spend a couple of hours reminiscing about

camp life. Then it was off to the “Peak Restaurant” where the weather finally cleared and they were able to see the lights of the city below. But the highlight of the evening was the invitation from the Hong Kong Regiment to come to their mess after dinner, where their host was Col. Botelho. Leonard once again affirmed his feelings about the Portuguese whom he describes as “true friends to me in camp”. Another day brought dinner with Eddie Noronha and his family, where Leonard was impressed with the warm family atmosphere.

The next leg of the Pilgrimage took the Corrigan and the Veterans and families to Tokyo for sightseeing. By Thursday, December 18, they were in the Yokohama area for a visit to Hodogaya Cemetery and a short memorial service.

Leonard....

Some of the Canadians who were drafted from our camp for work parties in the coal mines and shipyards are buried here. We were joined today by “Harry”, a Japanese interpreter, who had been attached to the Canadian prison camp during the war. Apparently Harry was quite decent to our fellows when the opportunity arose and the men hadn’t forgotten it. He came down to the hotel prior to the bus leaving and it was rather heartwarming to see the fuss our fellows made over him. Later those who were actually in contact with him during the war took Harry, his wife, and his son and wife, as well as their children, out to dinner. A lovely gesture, I thought. Human nature can be pretty fine – if you let it work by itself.

The Commonwealth Cemetery proved to be a beautiful spot. Secluded in a rather steep valley, it seemed a most appropriate setting for such a commemorative event. Once again, names on the tombstones seem to evoke memories not produced by word or the printed page.

If I seem to go all-out for the Japanese people, I think my reasons stem from the association my father had with one of our Japanese families at home following the First World War. The father of this family lost an eye in

service with the Canadians and my father was evidently highly instrumental in obtaining a pension for him. In our last World War, three boys in the family volunteered for service, one of which was killed in action. A pretty fair contribution for one's adopted country. This "feeling" for the Japs persisted through our defeat and subsequent incarceration with its so-called horrors and, because I was inclined to give the enemy full marks for their military efforts, I was at times labeled pro-Japanese by my senior fellow officers. I still think that a people that can resurrect their country from the ruins of war and achieve the position they have in the world has to have something on the ball that we could learn from.

The diary kept by Leonard on this trip includes all the sight-seeing and tourist things that are provided. But on arrival back home, he confesses that "a jaunt like this is of such magnitude that it would really be an impossibility to summarize it in a few sentences. There is little more for me to add than the fact that it was a "Once in a lifetime thrill!"

By 1978, the Corrigan family had grown to include Pat and her husband, Bernard Turcotte and their three children, Kevin, David and Carole. Shelagh married Allan Purcell and they had four children, Mark, Sandra, Jo-Anne and Megan. Both families lived in Ontario. Kathie had moved back to Swift Current with her son Sean, and Mik and her husband Tom Bergersen were awaiting the birth of their daughter, Jessica in Slave Lake, Alberta. Gladys' mother, Jess McDonald had turned 90 and lived in a retirement home in Swift Current.

Gladys started to develop health problems in the fall of that year – diagnosed with a virulent form of lung cancer, although she had never smoked. By the following September, she died at the age of 66 in 1979. For the family, it was unthinkable. She had been the healthy one all these years as Leonard lived with the problems related to Hong Kong. She was athletic, busy, interested in her family and community. Her two younger daughters were only 32 and 30 – too young to lose a parent.

Kathie.....

Mom passed away, far too young, in 1979. I have one vivid memory of the only time I yelled at my father without fear and lived to tell the tale. Mom was diagnosed with cancer a year before she passed away. I remember how mad Mom was one evening when she complained to Dad about pain and he dismissed her complaint, indicating she needed to deal with it herself and stop complaining. I'm not sure Mom ever forgave him for that. After she passed away, Dad was in disbelief. He couldn't make funeral arrangements or go to the cemetery after the funeral. Weeks later, I went to pay my respects at the cemetery and I searched the entire area designated for Catholics, devastated in not finding Mom's grave. Beside myself with grief, I drove to Dad's house where I found him relaxing in the backyard. I told him what had happened with fury in my voice and tears in my eyes and on my next visit, a stone was in place. We never talked about it again.

For Leonard, who had never shared his feelings except on paper, it was a huge blow. He could never believe that she wouldn't get better. He endured without her, but he also stopped playing the saxophone and played very little golf after her death. He visited his children in Alberta and Ontario and was able to cope in his own home. Kathie was the one who always made the trip home to Swift Current to see that everything was alright. During Gladys' illness, she and her son, Sean, would make the trip from Lethbridge, Alberta so often – and regardless of weather – that she actually wore out two cars. She would cook meals for Leonard and build in support systems that made his life easier. The plus side of this caring of Kathie's was that her son Sean developed an even closer relationship with his Grandfather. When Sean married, he and his wife, Gina, named their first child, a boy, Corrigan. Kathie married John Carlson in 1989 with Leonard escorting her down the aisle. She and John continued looking after Leonard and with the help of Grace and Seymour Smith, excellent neighbours of Leonard's, he was able to stay at home until his own health gave

out. He also discovered that hugs were okay in the time he lived alone and welcomed his children and grandchildren with hugs. It was a long way from when children should “be seen and not heard”.

Kathie.....

In Dad's later years he was fortunate to have strong supports from his neighbour and from our family and he was able to stay in his home until four months prior to his passing. When his health deteriorated, he still proved what a strong will he had. He had smoked Buckingham cigarettes since the age of ten but when he was in hospital and told he could not smoke, he didn't. Despite two weeks in hospital without cigarettes, you think he might have suffered withdrawal symptoms, but he didn't complain or seem to be in distress. Yet as soon as he was home, he started smoking again which only made his emphysema worse. In his last few months he hesitated to ask for anything for pain and discomfort. You had to admire his fortitude.

Pat.....

In spite of the shortcomings Dad had in his relationships with the family, he was much to be admired for coming back from a dreadful dehumanizing experience and making the most of his post-war situation. For all that he had been through, it was truly amazing that he was able to lead what everyone around him would have perceived as a normal, happy life. For the most part, he was indeed a father to be treasured, with a sense of humour, a somewhat shy persona, a person of intelligence, who challenged his daughters to do the best they could in a world full of challenges.

Shelagh.....

Looking back, I think my father and I had a distant but respectful relationship. There was not a closeness that I felt but I'm not sure I questioned that. I think it was fairly typical of men of his generation. I just assumed all families were like that. I don't think you could say we bonded in those days – I'm not sure parents and children even knew what that was when I was growing up. But I always respected him – maybe had some fear of him.

I always thought of Dad as a hero – defined by me as someone who has overcome difficult times and carries on with life. I don't think I thought much about whether I was loved or not in those days. It took another generation to grind out the self-help books on family dynamics. But I think you carry forever the effect of wanting to please your father, wanting to do the right thing.

For a man who never understood women and had to live with five of them, I think our lives turned out well.

Kathie.....

When we as a family talk about Dad's experience in Hong Kong, people are in awe of his story. I often wonder how our growing up years might have been different had it not been for the war years. I know that I'm a better person for having been his daughter and a stronger parent to my son because I wanted to set better examples of parenting. Dad always said, "Don't do as I do, do as I say." – which cut off communication and didn't allow for discussion. It was important to me that I listened well, that my son felt loved and supported, recognizing his strengths and supporting him in his challenges. I felt communication was key and forgiveness essential as part of my parenting role. Dad seemed to have neither in his growing up years.

When all is said and done, Dad did his best with what he knew. I am not sure where he gained his strong will to survive but it probably started in his earliest years

being sent from family to family. Imagine at age five to be the only English-speaking child in a French Catholic boarding school. He survived his troubled youth out of sheer determination and this strong will made him the strong person and great officer he turned out to be. Although this made it tough on us as his children, in hindsight it probably gave him the ability and fortitude to face incomprehensible odds in battle and to survive through 4 years of degradation, starvation, mistreatment and absolute hell. His propensity never to complain, reluctance to show affection or feeling and just to carry on had to come from all his early experiences.

I'm fortunate to have had the opportunity to live close to my Dad and share his last remaining years with him.

Mik.....

Had I been born 20 years later, I would have the chutzpah to hang on to my maiden name, as it reflects who I've always been. My heart soars whenever I see the Corrigan name, in print, on street signs, on Irish heritage cards, or movie credits...whatever...because I recognize the talented, articulate, generous, loving, solid offspring that have been generated from within that family structure, with all its flaws and strengths.

Thanks Dad.

On January 1st, 1994, Leonard got a phone call from Shelagh to say that he had become a great-grandfather with the arrival of Connor Allan Fox, Sandra's son. Two weeks later, Leonard passed away at the age of 83 years.

EPILOGUE

And finally, Pat writes a letter while flying home from her first pilgrimage to Hong Kong in December of 2005:

As many of you know, my father was a POW in Hong Kong for the duration of World War II, having been captured by the Japanese on Christmas Day, 1941. He and the other POWs were the last soldiers to come home after the war was over. My daughter, Carole, Shelagh's son, Mark, and I have been part of a group involving members of the Hong Kong Veterans' Commemorative Association (HKVCA) from across Canada who travelled to Hong Kong in the first week of December to commemorate the battle of Hong Kong, which began nearly 65 years ago on December 8th, 1941, as part of the same raid as the attack on Pearl Harbour.

Our journey began on December 1st, with a surprising route across Hudson's Bay to the Arctic Ocean and down across China until we reached Hong Kong on the other side. We landed at the new airport, since Kai Tak airport, which our POWs helped construct during their slave labour in the war years, is no longer used. The hotel we stayed at was in North Point, and, amazingly enough, North Point district was the location of the prison camp in which our soldiers lived for the first few months of their captivity. They were eventually moved to Shamshuipo, their original barracks in Kowloon on the mainland, an area which is now a small park with the appropriate plaques noting the site as a prison camp in World War II. The area bears no resemblance to the old camp, surrounded as it now is by skyscrapers, the common solution to accommodate the 7.5 million people resident in the city and surrounding territory. Although a large number of the

POWs were moved to other prison camps in Japan itself, my Dad was fortunate enough to remain in the Shamshuipo camp for all of the war years. Those moved were in even more difficult circumstances, but all suffered the same privations, little food, hard work, illness, tropical diseases, and dreadful treatment. All that is in the past now, and it was truly incredible to be in Hong Kong with six of the surviving 156 Hong Kong veterans able to make the trip.

Veterans Affairs helped finance this pilgrimage, although the idea originated with Mike Babin, a member of the Executive in Ontario. It is due to Mike's diligence that the trip became a reality. The objective was to learn as much as we could, to see as many of the battle sites as possible, and to be a part of the special ceremonies which would commemorate the Battle of Hong Kong and honour the war dead.

One of the highlights of our stay was the ceremony at Sai Wan cemetery on Sunday, December 4th, our third day there. Our 38-member delegation from HKVCA was impressed by a number of things. The site itself is rather spectacular, sweeping down from a hillside location, through the several hundred grave sites to the cenotaph located at the base of a series of stairs. As the guests descended the hill, on each side of these stairs were stationed Canadian students from seven Ontario High Schools acting as an honour guard along with the Hong Kong army cadets in their fatigues on the other side. The students, part of a 210-person delegation from Ontario, had just completed a four-city tour of China and were making this their very special final stop in order to bury a memorial capsule near the Canadian soldiers whose lives they had been studying in school this past year. Near the cenotaph a 120-voice choir from the Canadian International School of Hong Kong was standing by, ready to perform during the ceremony. In addition, Chinese Scouts, and more students from Ontario's Durham Region High Schools, were at each Canadian gravesite ready to

place on each grave the flowers and the poppy-decorated crosses they had with them. During the ceremony, many wreaths were laid, and the veterans themselves, including "Flash" Clayton and George MacDonell from the Royal Rifles of Canada spoke on behalf of the veterans, as did Phil Doddridge, the National President of the Hong Kong Veterans' Association. Canadian Senators Vivienne Poy and Larry Campbell also spoke, as did many other dignitaries. A most special time for us all!

It became obvious early on that the people of Hong Kong are very much aware of the part played by the Canadian soldiers in the Battle for Hong Kong. The government has been developing a hiking/walking trail along the various battle sites, and there are now a number of stations where boards and plaques have been erected to note which of the two Canadian battalions, the Royal Rifles or the Winnipeg Grenadiers, was involved at a particular location. We were privileged to be in the company of the six Canadian veterans for much of our stay, and learned many things from them about the specifics of their personal situation. There were three locations where the plaques had recently been installed. At each site, one of the veterans was chosen to unveil the plaque and speak to the dedication of that particular plaque. These were most touching moments because the veteran involved was chosen as one who had fought in that specific location.

The evenings were spent at special events honouring the veterans, and included a reception and dinner at the Hong Kong Jockey Club. This occasion, with wonderful food and speeches reflecting the importance of the occasion, overlooked the Happy Valley racetrack ten stories below, the place where the Japanese advance was halted when the surrender came those 65 years ago. One thing became very clear as we heard speakers at the various events extolling the efforts of the Royal Rifles of Canada and the Winnipeg Grenadiers in that difficult conflict. The two battalions were determined to fight

bravely to the end. In one situation, with some of the thousands of Japanese soldiers approaching, one group managed to hold off the advance for three days near the top of a mountain. The Japanese built a statue during the occupation to their soldiers lost in that encounter, claiming afterwards that the defenders must have totaled at least 400 men, as they sustained many casualties. In reality, there were 89 defenders.

A second very special evening was the Farewell dinner for the veterans themselves. The veterans and the Veterans Affairs team had arrived two days before us and were about to leave two days before we did. It was a splendid affair at the Repulse Bay Hotel, a wonderful spot facing the South China Sea. We had a reception on the front lawn early in the evening, with waiters proffering drinks as we chatted with veterans, Veterans Affairs personnel, and dignitaries from Hong Kong itself, surrounded by cloth-covered chairs and tables in white, and goodies to munch as we awaited the call to dinner. Once inside the Verandah area, which was a dining hall the full width of the hotel, we were seated at probably 25 tables of ten along the hall, with large TV screens mounted on the walls at both ends featuring the pictures that had been taken that day and during the earlier part of the tour. A most special time, for me in particular, as I had been seated next to Ed Shayler, the Hong Kong veteran who was my father's sergeant, and was with him through all of the fighting. He had much to tell me about the battle, and his relationship with my father. What an evening!

The next day was our turn to tour the battle sites. Our guide was an expert on the battle itself, a Hong Kong resident named Tony Banham. Tony was able to answer all of our questions about where our fathers might have fought, and to make very clear just what they were up against in facing an invasion force of up to 60,000 men, their own forces being no more than 14,000 soldiers and civilians. The energy expended retracing their steps on this

very hilly island, without packs, heavy guns and ammunition, made us appreciate in a very small sense, just how difficult the defence of Hong Kong must have been. In one section, we had to descend over 300 steps to get to the next area of interest, and without a doubt, even going down rather than up, it was difficult enough to do. Daughter Carole and I decided to retrace the trek the next day, our one free day before going home, so that we could take more pictures, and found those same 300 steps really exhausting, as we climbed up the steep slopes one more time.

All of those who made the trip have come away with memories which will never be forgotten. The most special of these has to be seeing the veterans so honoured, and to know that they are now aware that a growing number of people inside Canada, and outside the country as well, do appreciate what they achieved in those difficult years. Among their most joyous moments was the lowering of the memorial capsule into the ground just outside the gates of Sai Wan Cemetery containing the stories, poems, letters, and CDs which were the Canadian students' creative responses to getting to know the Hong Kong Veterans they researched at school before they arrived in Hong Kong. The six honoured at Sai Wan Cemetery, and Stanley Cemetery, will never be forgotten by Canadians. The trip of a lifetime for all of us!

Cheers!

Pat

P.S. If you are interested, and have access to the Internet, there is much more about the trip to Hong Kong and other topics of interest, on the website.

The address is www.hkvca.ca