



fainted during the ordeal but this I think is probably an exaggeration. The father of one of the girls, an ex-gaol warder married to a Tamil wife, saw this going on from his hut in our quarters and went to our camp commandant, one Dr. Glynn Evans, to lodge a protest and to demand that something be done about it. Glyn Evans refused to interfere stating that nothing he could do would be of any avail, which was probably true enough, so the warder decided to take the law into his own hands. He marched into the women's camp (without a permit, a very serious crime in itself) and up to the Nip interpreter and made some verbal protest or other, and the Nip promptly turned on him. He (the father of the girl) was beaten on the face with the Nip's fists until he was somewhat stupified, then he was ordered to kneel and while staggering on to his knees he was set upon with a stick and beaten almost unconscious. While all this was going on the Tamil wife and the children of the couple (of which there are many) were screaming with fear and shouting out 'he is killing daddy', and I am told by eye witnesses that the scene was a very harrowing one. The commandant of the women's camp now appeared and protested to the Nip, who then desisted. The warder staggered back to his own part of the camp and the incident closed, whether for good or not I cannot yet say. The general feeling is that a formal protest should be lodged with General Saito but we have a pretty spineless committee who will probably take no action for fear of reprisals on themselves. We shall see.

Then another regrettable thing happened yesterday about which we shall probably hear more. A group of men outside the camp on fatigue were allowed by their Nipponese escort to shelter from the rain in a small kedai (shop) owned by an old Chinese woman. After some of the party had left, but before they had all gone, the woman complained to the Nip sentry that someone had stolen two katties of sugar from the shop. The men who still remained in the shop were there and then searched but nothing was found on them. I now hear that four men are under arrest waiting trial by our own people, so I presume they have either been discovered, given away by others, or confessed. This particular crime is regarded by all as a particularly mean one and it is the hope of all that if the accused are proved guilty they will be well punished. Drooglever's name is mentioned as one of the accused, which doesn't seem possible. I shall have more to write about this in a day or two I expect. Scrounging things around the camp, such as wire, wood, nails and the like, is not considered unsporting - if you're caught it's just too bad, but there is no loss of honour attached to such a crime - but to deliberately steal from a poor woman who is probably having a harder struggle than we are to maintain life, is looked upon with some considerable horror, even by the tougher members of our community.

A man has just joined us in internment for the first time after serving two years in gaol, a sentence passed on him by the Japanese soon after our capitulation. He was one of a number of five men who remained 'out' when we all came into internment, these five making up what was then known as a 'body disposal squad'. I presume they buried the unidentified dead round about the time of the fighting in Singapore and soon after. Apparently they had a difference of opinion with some Japanese officers (or soldiers) when they were in their cups in some bar or other, and a rough house resulted. The five were arrested and in due course tried and awarded punishment. Two of the five have died and this is the first release; presumably the other two have received longer sentences.

Tuesday, 12th September, 1944.

I have had very bad luck during internment in my betting and have gone down quite a lot. I have lost and paid out nearly £100 to date and stand to lose another £100 if



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Germany has not capitulated by the end of this month. Against this something under \$100 can be offset. I have all along been optimistic and a mild bet now and again has helped to keep the interest in life alive. \$20 went on the war not being over by the end of 1943 - these bets were made about the time of our large invasion of French North Africa - and another \$20 on Germany not having capitulated by the end of June last. The balance went on repatriation hopes and disappointments.

On the top of all this I have spent something in the region of \$800 on just existing here. It sounds dreadful but with prices what they have been on the black market, and my struggle to keep well ever since I last returned from Miyako Hospital, it is not unreasonable. My policy has always been that it's much better to keep alive than to deny myself the expensive articles offering and retain a bank balance to the detriment of my health. I could not afford to allow butter, cheese and milk pass, however dear, and trust to luck without. That, I think, would have been putting too much strain on Dame Fortune. There is an old proverb "God helps those who help themselves", which is very apt here. And, after all, it is not unreasonable to say that had circumstances been more normal and facilities been placed at our disposal to cash cheques in here, I should very probably have spent on an average about \$20/30 a month, so that today, after 30 months, I should probably have drawn something around the same sum as I have actually borrowed from friends and others during internment. I have about \$100 in hand at the moment and am hoping that this will see me through.

I am now full time doctors' receptionist and put in from 2 to 3 hours each morning and from 1½ to 2 hours each afternoon at the game. The other man chucked his hand in as he wangled some other employment with pay (25 cts. a day!). My job does not come within the pay or extra food category. In short I am just one of the lowest of the low - a sort of "sweeper" class. The other day I had to register a patient's name in one of my books: I asked him "What's your name?" He replied "Eagland", I said "How do you spell it?" and he started E I G which I began to write down. He stopped me at the second cypher saying "not EYE but EYE". I said "I've got EYE" but he said "No. Not EYE - EYE". By this time we were both getting a bit hot under the collar, he wanted to take the pen from me and write it in himself when I had a brainwave, I said "Oh! You mean A?" to which he replied, much relieved, "Yes, that's it, EYE" and by this time I had got him so we were both happy and finished up by having a good laugh.

There is a craze going the round, to eat rubber seeds extracted from the rubber nuts which drop off the trees at certain seasons of the year. They say they are just like roasted chestnuts when cooked. I have not yet tried them and rather hope that I shant be driven to such a state of hunger that I shall want to, as they don't sound at all appetising to me. One of the occupants of our hut was shelling some of the nuts the other day when Stringfellow turned to him and said, "They say you never need a cushion after eating these things as you develop an upholstered backside in time"!

Drooglever and the others involved were found guilty of stealing from the old Chinese woman's shop and received mild sentences, being deprived of their next two camp issues of gula-malacca and severely reprimanded. I think it was a pretty low sort of crime and it all goes to show to what depths some men have fallen after two and a half years internment. I was amazed at Drooglever; he is an English public school boy, brought up to play the game, and is presumably classified socially as a "gentleman".

Tuesday, 19th September, 1944.

Two or three of us generally gather together of an



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evening for about an hour or so before lights-out which here is at 10 p.m. and by which time most people are in bed as it is not considered wise to remain outside much later for fear of mosquitos and malaria. Those few are usually Stringfellow, Mike Turner, Scott, Jock (Penang) Sutherland and myself and we manage to pass the time very happily together.

The other evening one of the party was saying that a fellow Miles had been having some difficulty in passing water for several days and relief only came when he had successfully passed a small piece of rubber tubing, an aftermath of some recent internal operation. Stringfellow, not to be outdone, added "But that's not so bad as the man who accidentally swallowed a needle which later came out of his fiancée's elbow!"

Thursday, 21st September, 1944.

Pretty Perry of Boustead & Co., a brother of the Pretty Perry of the Bank, has just been returned to our custody by the Military Police in Singapore in a dying state. He has dysentery, amongst other complaints, and hope of saving his life has been abandoned by our medical men. He was removed on the famous double tenth as one who had operated a radio receiving set in Changi Prison.

Our new camp commandant is Collinge of George Travers & Co. who replaces Dr. Glyn Evans who has been commandant for the last six months.

Monday, 25th September, 1944.

Pretty Perry died the same day as his return to camp, and today Alan Ker of Lewis and Peat has died. The latter was returned to us with Hugh Fraser some time ago and it was thought that he would pull through, but no. I have said all I need to say about all this. I pray that these unnecessary deaths will come to an end. There are several more still in Military Custody in Singapore, including one woman (Mrs. Nixon), and nothing whatsoever is known of their plight by our camp authorities.

I don't allow myself to get despondent but I must confess to little bouts of depression now and again. They are not, however, of very long duration. We get nothing but rumours and do not know what exactly is happening in the outer world, so we cannot look ahead with any real optimistic anticipation. How much longer, Oh Lord, how much longer? I have been having intermittent headaches a lot recently which the doctors say are due to the deficiency diet we have to put up with. In other words I guess we are all more or less anaemic. I am doing this doctors' receptionist job at the moment and see all that goes on in the surgery, and it has not been at all uncommon for patients to just flop out while the doctors have been examining them. We are all undernourished and what is to happen if it goes on very much longer I dread to think. The problem of keeping us adequately supplied even with the miserable food we get now may become increasingly difficult as time goes on. Still we keep on hoping!

On the other hand the Nipponese interpreters and guard have become more and more reasonable and their treatment of internees as a general rule is very fair. Beatings and kickings are things of the past. The Japanese are having their troubles and, after all, we are only a handful of civilian internees in a war which is actively affecting millions. I have always maintained that the Japanese have not, on the whole treated us too badly, except for individual incidents of cruelty and sadism and the October 1943 visit of the Military Police and its consequences. Had we fallen into the hands of certain other Asiatics I have no doubt we should have had our



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louder peals of mirth. It struck me as being funny but perhaps, after all, it wasn't really very funny; which all goes to show the state of our minds! The real implication was that some dirty dog had stolen a march on his pals and pinched the "PEE" for the fertilization of his private garden. And so the question remains - who stole the garden "PEE"?

Tuesday, 10th October, 1944.

Today is the anniversary of the disastrous descent of the Gestapo on Changi Camp. A year ago today this dreadful thing was inflicted upon us, and the tragic results are still manifest. God knows how many more poor innocent men are to pay the supreme penalty. One woman (Mrs. Nixon) and, I think, 14 men remain in the custody of the Military Police in Singapore.

I am informed that the number of deaths in Changi Camp over the 2 years and seven months we were interned there was just over the hundred mark (110 odd I think the figure was) while since our arrival in this camp on the 1st May this year there have been 43 deaths. We have had much more serious illnesses in here; I mean that we have had malaria and typhus, two ailments practically unheard of in Changi, and dysentery here has been of a much more serious kind. Everyone is working very hard in here and the food is very deficient in all that the normal human body requires. The backbone of our diet these days is vegetables (the greater part of which is sweet potato leaf) and rice, and the Japanese have been clever to extract the utmost effort out of everyone by holding out the temptation of more rice for the heaviness of the work done. The Central Committee were foolish to have agreed in the first instance to accept wages and the differential scale of food for work done, as the Japanese are using this handle now to extract the maximum effort from internees who are all in a very low state of health. Some of the men one sees working in the fields around here are just walking skeletons. The latest inducement to get their last pound of flesh is to give an extra 100 grammes of rice to 100 volunteers who will work all day outside the camp, from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. with midday meal sent out to them, and a similar amount of extra rice to 200 men who will undertake to do extra heavy chunkling (digging in other words) during the same hours inside the camp. And there have been applications considerably in excess of the numbers called for by men both fit and unfit for the work involved! Hunger can drive a man to almost any lengths. A man was caught the other night stealing vegetables from the communal gardens and I have no doubt that there are others who have been fortunate not to have been caught. The situation will almost certainly get worse if this country is to be fought over again inch by inch.

Wednesday evening, 18th October, 1944.

Sam Middlebrook was returned to camp this afternoon in much the same dreadful state of health as the others who have up-to-date come back from Gestapo custody. I am told by two men who have actually seen him that he is literally skin and bones and is suffering from a particularly virulent type of dysentery. The camp doctors say he has a fair fighting chance of living. His mind is quite clear and he appears to have the will to live, so I think he will pull through all right. I know Sam and I am sure he will fight to the end.

I had a long talk with Robinson of the Great Eastern Life Insurance Co. last night when he told me that he had ascertained from the Japanese custodian of enemy property that their records had been sealed and were in the possession of the Custodian. He wrote to the Custodian in 1942 from Changi Camp and received a reply to this effect. I, too, have a similar assurance from Mutch of the Yokohama Specie Bank,



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so it might almost appear that we are to be fortunate in finding our books intact on our return to normal life.

Thursday, 19th October, 1944.

Middlebrook died in his sleep last night. My hopes for his recovery were wasted. I have just returned from his funeral service.

It is positively uncanny the way the Japanese seem to be able to gauge to a nicety the death of the men they return to us from Military Custody. One after another they come back, revealing suffering and neglect which we Westerners cannot understand, and quickly die. From the condition in which they return to us it might almost seem that they are not serving normal sentences for misdemeanours, but rather that they are being slowly done to death by starvation and neglect. When they are ripe for death, back they come to camp. It must have been evident to any Japanese medical man who might have seen either Fraser, Ker, Perry, Coulson or Middlebrook, any time within weeks of their return to camp, that their chances of life were very remote, and so, had it been their intention that an effort should be made to save them, they would have been sent back when their condition was much less critical. On the other hand, it is possible that no Japanese doctor was allowed to see any of them until death was certain. Would it not have been more humane to have just shot them all out of hand instead of making them go through such terrible suffering? I really cannot understand it all. I have searched in my mind for an excuse for the Japanese behaviour, as I believe in being fair, but I can think of no possible one. They may have had something against Middlebrook and one or two of the others, in which case they should have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment and then treated in a reasonable manner compatible with a prison sentence. But no, they must be scientifically tortured to death. It's amazing behaviour for a country which misses no opportunity of advertising its civilization and courage.

I had been sitting here in my hut, depressed after the service and filled with morbid thoughts, when a letter was delivered to me from Helen. The darling - it might almost seem that she had been aware of my misery and had run to comfort me. This particular letter was dated 24th Sept. 1943 and is the first of the new 25 word series to reach me. It started off "Only 25 words to say ..." and then proceeded to give me 33 words! That made me laugh! The service today made me think of Graham and I was really very low when I got back to my hut, so her letter was a real solace. Normally I am pretty perky and refuse to allow myself to get down but there are moments, as there must be in everyone's life, when the outlook is bleak. With me these moments don't last long.

Monday, 23rd October, 1944.

The Japanese seem to be getting a bit nervous round about here. They are holding intensive manoeuvres judging by the noise of traffic one hears, noises which resemble the movement of tanks or armoured cars. I cannot remember anything similar taking place during our whole term of imprisonment and there is a lot of running about of soldiers during the night in the vicinity of the camp. They probably consider the golf course a suitable or likely place for the landing of para-troops.

On top of this they have issued grave threats to the camp of punishment for contact with the outside public. I am told that the camp commandant, Collinge, has been told that if any internee is discovered contacting outside subjects,



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the latter will be executed and the internee will be very severely punished. I cannot vouch for the truth of this story. I do know, however, that grave warnings have been issued to Collings, which warnings have been promulgated to internees, that the Japanese will take a very serious view of any such contacts and that there may be another "double tenth" with its dire consequences. Four men were dismissed from a permanent outside fatigue the other day for having conversed for a minute or two with the Chinese boy of some outside resident. The internees were drawing water to make tea and seem to have passed the time of day with the boy in question. We certainly need not expect any mercy if anyone is caught red-handed again.

When we arrived in this camp the fence which runs along between the camp and Sime Road was screened by attap screens so that we could not see outside on to the road. These screens have suffered from the ravages of wind and rain and are now in a pretty dilapidated condition, so the Japanese have ordered the mobilisation of all our carpenters to repair them. For weeks they must have seen them rotting but ignored them; now they have suddenly discovered the necessity for repairs. Why, I wonder? I hope things are at long last moving in this part of the world - the good season, November to May, should surely invite an attack by the British forces.

Dr. Diamond, whom Helen and I met at the Berquists at tiffin one day in Singapore, has been convicted of gross negligence and other charges in connection with his duties as head of the hospital commissariat, and sentenced to five months deprivation of privileges on each of two counts. There had been a leakage of sugar from the hospital out of the rations drawn from the quartermaster's store for the patients, and during the two monthly period which the charge covered over 130 lbs. of sugar had been pilfered! Sugar had no doubt disappeared over a much longer period but the investigations were limited to the two months only. The modus operandi of the pilferers apparently was to indent at the beginning of each 10 day period for an approximate number of patients, the exact number admitted or remaining in hospital over that particular period naturally being unknown, but at the end of the period no allowance was made in the next indent for the unused portion which in many cases was quite large. It is amazing that this was not discovered sooner. It has at long last been brought to light and it goes to support my contention that some internees have sunk to a very low ebb of morality. The charge might perhaps have been one of criminal negligence but the 'attorney general' did not know that he could altogether prove that so he framed the charge to make the verdict certain.

Thursday, 26th October, 1944.

Two days ago four more internees were returned from Military Police Custody in Singapore - Pensellaer, Cherry, Earl and Dr. Boyer, all in a bad state of health. Today the dead body of Rendle of the M.C.S. has come back. I met Rendle at a dinner party given by Capt. Back in Singapore just before the outbreak of this war - Air Marshall Brooke-Popham was also present.

Saturday, 28th October, 1944.

Rather a dreadful thing happened this morning. A Military Police waggon arrived in camp to TAKE BACK poor Cherry who has only just been returned to camp in a dying condition, and in spite of pleadings and warnings from our hospital doctor, the poor sick frame, looking, I am told, more like a cadaver than a living body, was actually carried out to the waggon on a stretcher. Further protests by Dr. Winchester, however, persuaded the Japanese officials who had come to take Cherry away, to ring up Military Headquarters and put the situation before them, and so the poor man was returned to his



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bed in hospital in a complete state of collapse. I understand that he was to be taken into town to stand trial and that this is only postponed. If this is true then the chances of his recovering from his present ailments will be small, as he will have no incentive to live. Poor devil.

I haven't been feeling too well these last few days; I think I've had a mild go of influenza as several others in the hut are suffering similarly. It's not good to be ill in here. The hospital is a lousy place and one is just as likely to contract something much more serious than the complaint one went in with if one is sent there. The orderlies are not up to much and bed coverings cannot be sterilised as far as I know, nor can a wooden hut be kept properly hygienic.

Wednesday, 1st November, 1944.

Two days ago Birse and Macintyre returned from Military Custody, the former swollen up with beri-beri and the latter in some way or other paralysed in the legs, a state he is said to have been in since last March. Now they say that Macintyre has gone off his head. I do know that Earl had a 'crise de nerfs' the other night and was shrieking out at the pitch of his voice "You're killing us, you're killing us". Dr. Boyer died last night.

I am still not feeling particularly well but have not given up hopes of throwing off whatever I've got. I suspect that my lungs have slipped back a bit - after all, what can one expect on the diet we are having - but I'm damned if I'm going to investigate them too thoroughly. I have a holy dread of going into hospital. Some men are getting very despondent as we approach the end of our third year's incarceration with few signs of activity in these parts. What is happening in the outside world?

Not a remote sign of even a British reconnaissance plane; not a suggestion of a shot fired in anger! What has come over our navy and our army? Are they impotent? Since the fatal Sunday, 15th February, 1942, except for the sight of Japanese troops and planes, there has been nothing happen here to indicate that the war is still going on. We seem to have been abandoned to our fate - the cohorts of the damned. Surely this favourable monsoon weather will bring something. Even our own bombs in the vicinity (but not too close proximity!) would stir us out of our depression and lethargy.

The workers at the pig farm in the camp are getting fat and it is suspected that they are eating the swill intended for the pigs!

There is a case starting today of interference with a small boy under 16 and other unpleasant charges in this connection. The man and the boy both live in our hut. As a natural result of this, fantastic stories are going around, such as that the father kept himself supplied with gula malacca out of the immoral earnings of his son! The child is the Eurasian child of an Englishman and a coloured mother, also interned. The accused is a Eurasian.

Saturday, 4th November, 1944.

Pensalaer died two days ago. Birse, Earl and Cherry are very ill.

Good health is truly a wonderful thing. With it one can face almost anything; without it nothing seems to be right. This is a preface to the fact that I haven't been feeling so good these last few days and so life has been darkly overshadowed and fears begin to cloud my outlook. This



brings with it depression which causes worry, and so the vicious circle goes on. I am now better and feel that I shall live but there have been moments when the outlook couldn't have been blacker and then my imagination would run riot. I began to doubt if I was to see my darling wife again, and that prospect brought me down to the lowest depth. Then I dreaded going into this camp hospital for the reasons which I have earlier stated. And so on. It's amazing how one depressing thought can lead to another. I am better now or I couldn't write about it.

I hope someone will write an honest story of our internment, one which will not try to show us up as having gone through untold suffering. Apart from the treatment of the Military Police prisoners which will never, I am certain, be explained away, we have suffered no terrible hardship; in fact, I think, considering everything, that we have fared pretty well as prisoners of war and that the Japanese have done a fairly reasonable best for us. They could have done more, but as prisoners of war we cannot expect to be treated as honoured guests. Up to the double tenth they allowed us considerable liberty inasmuch as we were able to buy eggs, coconuts, fresh fruit and many other things. We were allowed for a long time to send our badly sick to Miyako Hospital. I have no doubt that these privileges would have continued had not the Japanese discovered that we were indulging in what they imagined to be subversive activities, and from the double tenth on all our privileges were withdrawn (many of them have since been resumed). There is little doubt that outside contacts had been established; letters appear to have been passing out and in and money was coming in. This was all perfectly innocent, but were the Japanese to know it? They dropped on us unexpectedly on the double tenth and the consequences have been very disastrous.

We seem to forget that we are at war with Japan and so are enemy subjects, and that in consequence we should be doubly careful. Many have, apparently, indulged in activities which, in the eyes of the Japanese, have not been altogether above board. Middlebrook, Ker, Pensalaer and Rendle are said to have been on some sort of reconstruction committee which was assembling information about conditions etc. in Malaya. This, I think, was definitely fraught with danger, particularly as the information obtained must have reached the camp from outside.

So, taken all in all, what has happened since the double tenth we have brought upon ourselves to some extent. But again I repeat that nothing can excuse the appalling treatment of the internees in Military custody, nor the individual acts of sadism which have now and again been practiced upon internees by certain of our camp custodians. Two men are outstanding for their fair and reasonable treatment of internees - Lieut. Okasaki and Colonel Asahi. Now, too, we must thank General Saito and his staff for a genuine effort in our interests. I feel that these men are doing their best in difficult circumstances. Food is hard to come by nowadays but we seem to get a reasonable share of what little must be available.

I had an inward laugh this morning - I don't know what made me think of it. When I was stationed in Harbin (1925/28) I used to beat it up a bit with my messmates, Hugo Foy and Lassie Hunter. We would often play whiskey poker after dinner and then about 11 p.m. we'd visit a nearby cabaret at the expense of the winner. Hugo and I found that we would begin to tire around 2 a.m. just when things were looking up, so we decided one Saturday that we'd turn in to bed about 10.30 p.m. Hugo would set his alarm clock for 1 a.m. and then he'd call me and we'd both get up and dress and trip along to the Alcazar. It sounded like a good idea when we discussed it but



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when, in due course, I was rudely awakened at 1 a.m. I simply hated the idea of getting up and I told Hugo in no uncertain terms where to go. However, Hugo was determined that as he was wide awake by this time I, too, should be made to arise, so up I got and we both dressed and went along to the Alcazar somewhat doubtful as to the prospects of the evening. When we arrived there everyone was gay and foolish and we were stone cold sober and so somewhat critical of the behaviour of the others: however, we settled down to some rapid drinking to try to overtake our fellow guests, but the more we drank the more irritable and critical we became, and in the end we returned home unanimous in our views that the evening had been a complete flop.

Sunday, 5th November, 1944 and a day that I shan't soon forget.

I have been complaining that we had been neglected by our own forces. Well, this very morning Singapore was visited by about 50 big bombers which sailed across our vision between 10 a.m. and, say, 11.30 a.m. calmly maintaining their course in spite of anti-aircraft fire. It was a grand sight and one which has given us all a new lease of life. I gather we shall probably get the excitement I have been longing for in pretty large doses before very long, and perhaps in larger doses than we bargain for.

We could see nothing of any bombing, nor did we hear anything of the kind, but then that may have been mixed up with the anti-aircraft explosions. However, as I say, we are all feeling a bit happier for the visit.

Thursday, 9th November, 1944.

Mrs. Nixon and Dunlop have been returned to camp by the Military Police, both in good condition I am told although they have been received into hospital as is usual in such cases.

The Japanese have given permission for six trained hospital nurses from the women's section of the camp to work in the men's hospital, two to be on duty at a time. This is a great concession and one for which we are extremely grateful. It is not at all improbable that cases of death have occurred which might have been saved by careful nursing by a trained nursing sister. I may be quite wrong but from what I have seen of the nursing in our hospital by the amateurs they have there, I should say this is quite possible. There are, naturally, the strictest orders as to the conduct of patients and the women nurses; no conversation other than that which concerns the ailment is permitted. I am sure this will be respected by all.

Another plane came over yesterday, flying very high, and was fired at by anti-aircraft. We seem to be on the map again, thank God! For over two and a half years I thought that Singapore had been forgotten for good and all. I wonder if we shall be free men again by the middle of next year? Anyway, we seem to be back in the news.

The bad man of our hut who was making passes at small boys has been duly sentenced. He has been convicted of 'grossly indecent' practices with a boy (also a resident of our hut) under 15, and sentenced to three months deprivation of privileges, three months extra heavy fatigues under police supervision, three weeks solitary confinement (but this is suspended so long as the prisoner does not associate with boys under 15 for the duration of internment), and sundry other minor punishments which I have forgotten. Stringfellow says that



when non-residents pass our hut they go by holding their noses!

This typewriter has been a godsend to me in here. When the spirit moves me I just hoick it out and begin hunting and punching. It doesn't matter what rubbish enters my head, down it goes. I don't suppose anyone will ever read what I have written. Anyway, I am sure they will never get as far as this, so it doesn't really matter. I should certainly like Helen to give it the once over as I think she will be interested to know what has happened to me these last three years, and I know that I shall not be able to remember all that I have written.

Saturday, 18th November 1944.

I'm like a dog with two tails again! Three letters from my darling wife reached me last night; of December 1943, February 1944 and March '44. And what's more the March letter acknowledged receipt of one of my broadcasts of early this year, probably the one handed in in February addressed to Morse but picked up and forwarded by Fuzzey, Bombay. On top of this we are being allowed to hand in another radio message today, and mine reads:

'Many letters to March 1944 received am well optimistic ever thinking loving you hopefully looking ahead to reunion stick it little longer my darling love'

and I shall pray hard that it will reach Helen whom I have this time addressed direct c/o our New York office.

Four pigs were slaughtered yesterday, so today our area had some 70 lbs. of pork to flavour our food. The result was very disappointing as the soup tasted no different from the soup of any other day. The vegetable soup of every day is made in this way: a few sweet potatoes (very few, I may say) are chopped up into the kwalies (large iron pans) for cooking rice in this country) and then fried in coconut oil. The kwalies are then filled with water. To this is then added chopped up spinach, sweet potato leaf, bayam, some salt (very little) and pepper or curry powder, and the lot boiled for the required time. I may say that the resulting soup is pretty lousy, but with the addition of some sugar, more salt (which one can sometimes buy at \$2 an ounce) and a very small quantity of Marmite (which I have been fortunate in procuring at \$125 for 8 ounces) it is quite palatable.

Here is the blackmarket price list of date - there is no other market incidentally! Sugar \$2 per oz. Salt \$2 per oz. Local condensed milk \$30 a tin. Marmite or Vegemite \$125 for 8 oz. Butter \$100 per 1 lb. tin. Gula Malacca \$20 a katty. Red Palm Oil \$10 for a Pascal sweet bottle (this was \$30 a bottle until quite recently). Corned Beef \$75 for a 12 oz. tin. American Red Cross butter \$30 for a 3 1/2 oz. tin. Halvite \$75 for a bottle of 50 tablets. Hen eggs \$7 each. Jam \$30 for a tin of American Red Cross grape jam (6 oz.) Locally tinned chicken curry \$45 for 12 oz. Klim unobtainable but the last price I heard of was \$4,000 for a 5lb tin!! Clothing and shoes, most of them very much second hand, also fetch fantastic prices but not quite so fantastic as food-stuffs. So from this it is evident that living, if one wishes to fend off disease, is darned expensive.

There have been several air raid alarms in recent days but on only one occasion have I noticed any of our planes. I was buying some gula malacca from a bloke in a hut nearby when some anti-aircraft bursts sounded unpleasantly close overhead. I went out, and sure enough there was a plane right overhead with high explosives cracking in its vicinity. It moved nonchalantly on, never altering its course. It was a grand sight.



150.

Lots of Jap air activity yesterday when some of their planes went up after the alarm had sounded in camp here, but that, I'm afraid, was the extent of the excitement. Things are hotting up in this part of the world I am sure and we may even see some fighting soon. Rumour is rife.

I have reported how John Long returned and was taken away again by the Gestapo. We thought he was to come back the same day but instead back came the stretcher and the blanket which carried him out, but no John Long.

Wednesday, 6th December, 1944.

On most people cuts and sores just won't heal - 75% of the camp is bandaged on some part of the body. At this moment G.G. Thomson, Jock Sutherland, Doyle, Davenport, Robertson, Raikes, and Scott are all off work for some ailment or other, and when it's not them it's some other member of the staff.

James Wilson of Frazer & Co., Singapore, was in seeing the doctor yesterday, looking like a walking skeleton with a foot and a half in the grave. The doctor said to him "why don't you get yourself some milk and eggs?" and James replied "what! At \$25 a tin and \$5 each! Not on your life." and the doctor replied that if he wanted to see freedom again he would be well advised to dig into his savings to re-establish his health. I am arranging to give him a loan of \$100.

Tuesday, 12th December, 1944.

One man who was found in the Japanese guard house late the other evening was bashed by a drunk Japanese who found him there, but he hasn't suffered much. He was scrounging left-overs from the cook who cooks for the Japanese mess! Our relatives meeting for last Sunday was cancelled because some woman had shown a light in her hut after 9.30 p.m. We had an air raid alarm yesterday which came to nothing. And so life goes on.

We are going through a bad time now, and the death rate is rising; people who struggled against some constitutional weakness or hereditary trouble are going down. It's tragic to think that they have fought so well for so long and now, when things must be improving, they succumb. Several good chaps I have known reasonably well since internment, men aged between the 50s and 60s, have died since we came into Sime Road Camp.

Word has reached us in two letters to staff that Sir Vandeleur Grayburn is dead. If it is true then it is a great tragedy. He was the strong man I was looking to to build up the bank again after peace, but I've no doubt someone else will do that very efficiently - Morse probably as he's a youngish man and definitely efficient and he has some good underlings to assist him. Great speculation amongst the younger members of the staff here as to the filling of jobs after the war! That, of course, is very understandable. I, a blase senior with indifferent health, disassociate myself from these discussions or adopt a detached attitude.

Friday, 15th December, 1944.

It has just been officially read out in the hut that John Long was executed as a spy on 27th November last. Everyone is deeply shocked at the news. Whatever he may have done I am pretty certain that he could never have obtained information of any military value and even if he did I cannot think what use he could have made of it. How the patients in hospital who have returned recently from military custody feel I dread to think, the poor devils.



Monday, 26th December, 1944.

Since Sunday the 17th I have been in the T.B. ward. It is all very distressing. I had hoped for better luck but at the back of my mind there was little doubt that all was not well. The area doctor did not appear to think that there was anything wrong but I asked to have a sputum test and the result was positive. However, since coming in here, my temperature has dropped to normal, both morning and evening, so maybe I shall stage my usual recovery. I hope so. One thing I do not propose to do and that is to worry. In the meantime I must rest, which is all very boring but if I have to rest somewhere it might as well be here. I might just as well kill time in bed in this ward as sit around my hut doing damn all.

And so another Xmas has been and gone and over it all my mind was filled with nothing but thoughts of Helen. I pictured her going to midnight service on Xmas Eve and I prayed that I should be with her to attend next year's service.

They did their best for us all yesterday and the only fault I have to find with the arrangements is that they gave us too much to eat. We started the morning with gula-malacca kungu and a large bun made of maize flour; then at tiffin we had duck soup (our farm provided 70 ducks for the men's and women's hospitals), boiled rice, spinach and sweet potato hash; and for our evening meal 2 oz. of corned beef, a salt fish rissole, honey kungu and a large piece of Xmas cake made, I should say, of maize flour, ground cocconut and cinnamon, with a sort of cocconut sugar icing on top. In all it was a very worthy effort on the part of the hospital kitchen, but for we invalids far and away too much. I had to pass over a lot of stuff; for example I passed the tiffin rice, the spinach, the fish rissole, and the honey kungu, and still had as much as I could cope with. I also gave away to a fellow patient a good quarter of my bun. Incidentally we in this ward (12 of us) get 2 oz. of corned beef every evening which is a very welcome addition to the diet. A 12 oz. tin of corned beef costs in the black market of the camp from \$60 to \$90 according to the demand and the state of the money market. I am spending rather heavily just now, buying eggs and local condensed milk at \$5 each and \$30 a tin respectively. It's the very devil!

There was a big meeting of the men and women yesterday in a neutral part of the camp called the Orchard, where relatives meet every Sunday. Each woman was allowed to invite 3 men friends and I am told that there seemed to be over 1,000 present. Freddy Bloom is coming over to see me today between 3 and 4 p.m. It's a good day today, the first for about two weeks, so I am quite looking forward to it; we are to sit out on the verandah.

This is a dreadful ward. It is dirty and one or two of the inmates are dirtier and nobody appears to be able to do anything about it all. Remember that this is a communist camp and so it is hard to maintain any sort of standard of discipline. If a doctor speaks roughly to an orderly or demands of him something of which the orderly disapproves, then the latter just chucks his hand in. He can always get work in the garden where he can do just as he likes. The floor of the ward is dirty boarding, and our towels and mosquito nets and odd pieces of clothing, all in varying states of repair and cleanliness, are tossed on to overhead wires strung in no sort of organised manner across the ward. It would absolutely horrify anyone trained to a modern hospital at home. In short the whole thing is just ragtime. I have an empty chutney bottle to urinate in and a covered Marmite jar for sputum. In the week I have been in here I have already managed to spill each once over the wooden floor. God, what a mess! But I still retain my sense of humour and I have to laugh at it all sometimes.



152.

Sunday, 31st December, 1944.

And so the old year rolls out to give place to the new one which I hope will bring with it renewed hope. I must confess to a feeling of sadness tonight. The year opened with such promise, at least I chose to believe so, and here we are at its close no nearer, so far as I can see, to relief. I long to be reunited with my wife, God bless and protect her. Today three years ago we parted and my heart nearly broke. It is a sad, sad heart this minute but it will mend when we are once again together. I can think of nothing but her.

Tomorrow I shall feel better. I haven't been feeling too well all day; woke up with a temperature of 100 and a beastly head. This has improved as the day has progressed but I am still a bit under the weather. Tomorrow, however, I shall be alright again.

Wednesday, 3rd January, 1945.

And so we enter into a new year encouraged by fresh hope. But nevertheless the optimism which has ushered in the past two years is not anything like so apparent this year. Are we all drifting into a sort of despair and becoming to some extent lethargic about it all? It has been so long and I can see no sign of imminent relief, which is bad enough without having to fight illness as well.

However, I am certainly feeling much better today than I was when I last wrote in this diary. Yesterday my temperature was down to 99 and this morning I feel that it is normal. If only I could keep it down to normal I should be much encouraged as I should then know that I was recovering.

This is a dreadful ward. There are 12 of us in it and five of them look like bad cases. Two men are just alive and are the nearest thing to skeletons that I have ever seen. They are directly opposite me and so in my line of vision all day long. Depressing to say the least. I have a very nice man in the next bed to me on one side, and an impecunious Ipoh lawyer on the other. The nice fellow is a batchelor of 42 and has been hit with this disease for the first time. He is engaged to an American girl, now in the States, and is very concerned about the future; he feels that this setback will upset things and perhaps it will.

Wednesday, 17th January, 1945.

I have been a month in here and am only now beginning to show signs of improvement. Tonight for the first time my temperature has been under 99. For a week or two it has been ranging between 99.6 and 100.2 and I have been right down in the depths. My imagination has been running riot and I have even dropped so low as to permit myself to think of never getting out of here alive. God, I have been depressed!

One man in here who has helped me no end by his encouragement is Dr. Tweedie of Ipoh, an old friend. He has visited me almost daily and revived my spirits with explanations of just how little I really have to worry about. He has left me daily assuring me that I have nothing to fear, that I am suffering from a fibroid tuberculosis of the lung which has always healed in the past and which will follow the same course now. Anyway, I am very much better and if the improvement continues it will all go to show that in spite of an inadequate diet over a prolonged period I still have some resistance and power of recovery. I am now more optimistic and my depression has lifted.

Freddy Bloom and Katherine de Moubray have sent me



153.

over a 2½ lb. tin of Klim which is worth its weight in gold in here. I am reluctant to accept it as they themselves may find the need of it some day, but I feel I would be a fool and ungrateful if I did not use it under the circumstances. I shall perhaps be able to make this good to them some day.

We have had a little excitement recently. On four days in about six we've had British planes overhead, once as many as about 16 having been counted. One of our planes was seen to be brought down in flames. I saw nothing of it all as I am at present confined to bed. A piece of shell casing came whistling down from above on one occasion and you should have seen the immediate reaction inside this ward. O'Reilly in the next bed was under it in the flash of a second and so were most of the others who could move. O'Reilly's bed is a solid wooden affair and might have afforded him some protection, but one or two of the patients dived under canvas beds which made me laugh a lot. I was sitting up talking to Stringfellow who was visiting and, not meaning to boast our courage, neither of us flinched.

Tuesday, 23rd January, 1945.

I saw a sight last Sunday that shock me a bit. Archdeacon Graham-White's wife died last Saturday and was buried the following morning. As you know, the Archdeacon is a very good friend of mine and himself has suffered from very indifferent health all during internment. His wife was a very sweet woman and they appeared, on the few occasions when I saw them together at relative's meetings, to be devoted to one and other. I should say they were both of an age 63/65. Mrs. G.W. has been ill for a long time, suffering from sprue, and under the prevailing conditions little could be done for her. Well, the service took place on Sunday morning and, as the camp Episcopal church is visible from the ward here, I was able to see the coffin carried out to the lorry for transport to a cemetery near the town. It is usual on these occasions for a padre to accompany the body and this time who should I see sitting in the open lorry, bareheaded and in his clerical robes, but the Archdeacon. The poor old man, alone in an open dirty-looking commercial lorry, sat there beside the remains of his wife, which were carried in a plain cheap wooden coffin which was nothing more nor less than a glorified packing case. It was a tragic sight and brought a lump to my throat. My dear old friend - my heart went out to him in his grief and I thought how much he must have needed comfort and how utterly impossible it was for him to find it.

Deaths seem to be taking place with too great frequency. The main hospital ward is situated just above this special ward and it is almost a daily occurrence to see coffins being carried down from the hospital to the church, preceded by a padre in robes chanting some sort of burial service as the cortege slowly passes along. They all pass our door and it is beginning to get a bit depressing. The body remains in the little wooden church overnight and the church service is held the following morning.

I am doing well I think, at least I have no reason to think otherwise. I feel pretty good and have reached the restless stage when I want to be up and doing things for myself. I am bathed in bed still although I am allowed to go outside and perform natural functions, thank goodness. I hate bed bathing as the orderly never dries one properly and as a result of this, and the use of inferior locally-made soap which is 99% caustic soda, I now have an irritating itch. I always maintain that if you are admitted to hospital with one thing it won't be long before you catch another.



154.

Tuesday, 6th February, 1945.

We had some excitement on the 1st. About 100 of our big Liberator bombers sailed overhead and released a little inferno somewhere in the region of the Naval Base. They came over in small groups of from 4 to 18 and we'd lie here and wait for the bombs. When these exploded our hut shook to such an extent that I feared it might loosen a few of our supporting beams. All the while there was the usual anti-aircraft fire going on which is a little disconcerting as pieces of shrapnel are liable to come down and give one a nasty knock. We have no overhead protection in this camp, and, of course, no steel helmets. All we have above - between us and the falling splinters - is a roof of attap, a sort of palm leaf thatch. The Naval Base, I may say, is about 10 miles away as the crow flies. On one or two days since we have had reconnaissance planes over so I imagine there is more to come. In fact it looks to me as if this region is going to be in the news before very long. The signs are portentous.

We are to have several more huts erected in the camp but who is to occupy them I do not know. Rumour has it that Eurasians and neutrals who are at present on parole in Singapore are now to be brought in. If this is the truth it goes to support my view that things are likely to hot up in these parts.

Freddy Bloom was allowed over to see me yesterday afternoon with the usual Monday women visitors to the hospital patients. She brought over coffee in a thermos and a cake from herself and one from Mrs. (Justice) Aitken. What it was made out of God knows! We had a joint birthday party on our verandah; her birthday is today and mine was on Sunday.

Saturday, 10th February, 1945.

Tomorrow we are to be subjected to another somewhat more thorough roll call and speculation is rife as to what it is all about. We patients in this ward are to remain in bed but practically every man who is able to support himself on two legs is to turn out. The daily roll-calls have hitherto been nothing like so thorough, each hut having been done separately and then somewhat casually. Day after day we have been passed over without anyone checking us. Roll-call here is after all rather a farce as no one could get very far away from camp, anyway until our troops get near and I don't imagine they are as near as that yet.

Our rice ration has been cut 20% as from today. The daily rations up to yesterday were: full workers - 600 grammes part time workers - 500 grs: non-workers - 400 grs; with supplementary allowances for those who did unusually hard work. The daily rations are now 500, 300 and 250 grs respectively.

This ration cutting and roll-call may have some very great significance which we do not yet know about. I hope it has. The camp is full of rumour.

One poor fellow in the corner of this ward is dying: I should give him about 48 hours. It's unpleasant to have to sit in here and watch the wearing down progress of this disease. I give the orderlies full marks for their treatment of this poor chap who has reached the stage when he has lost control of his organs to a very great extent. They are very patient with him.

Otherwise we are all quite happy in here. O'Reilly, next to me, is a very nice Irishman and we have many laughs together so that life is not too bad.



155.

Sunday, 18th February, 1945.

Poor Haslar, the man in here to whom I gave 48 hours, died on the following day. We are now 11 in this ward, and a pretty mouldy looking crowd to boot. O'Reilly, my next door neighbour, said to me the other day: "This ward is like what the pore white trash must have lived in in the days of the American Civil War" and I said "Yes, either that or the French prisoners of Devil's Island". It's pretty filthy.

Our planes are over nearly every day now; one day one only, the next maybe five, and so on. We have had nothing of a spectacular nature since the 1st. In spite of the falling splinters we all long for some more of the big stuff. However, the fact that we are being regularly visited is very significant, I think.

On the first of this month the Japanese authorities called for a detailed statement of funds in the hands of internees; they wish to know the number in possession of \$20, those with \$30, and so on, working up. At the time this return was made I declared myself in the group having between \$400 and \$450. Two weeks later anyone in possession of more than \$100 on the date of the submission of the first return (1st February) was called upon to hand over the amount in excess of \$100 to the Japanese for deposit in a Singapore bank, and withdrawals would be permitted (through the camp commandant) at a later date. Now I for one had in the interim purchased goods (eggs and milk etc.) to the extent of about \$250 and had also cashed a man's cheque for \$10 so I had nothing to hand over when the call came, and I was only one of very many. The total amount which should have been handed over was something around \$80,000 but only \$50,000 odd was forthcoming and the balance had to be made up from camp funds. This fact had to be revealed to the Japanese who, I am told, insist that internees refund the camp. Just how this is to be done, if it really has to be done, we shall see. I think the reason for the Japanese action is that they want to stop the illicit trading which goes on between the Jews and the outside world through the medium of the Japanese interpreters. In recent months lots and lots of gula-malacca, red palm oil, local condensed milk, eggs, cheroots etc. have been coming in regularly and maybe the Japanese want to stop the camp from depriving the local inhabitants of these supplies now that the food condition is so precarious.

We are anxiously expecting our rice ration to be cut again. The Japanese have intimated that we should have another cut this month and yet a further cut in March. If they go on like this we shall have to give them rice instead of them supplying us! The fact seems to be that no more rice is coming into Singapore so that if we are not relieved or get neutral assistance soon, the situation will become very serious. Something must have gone against the Japanese to account for such panic measures.

Sunday, 25th February, 1945.

Another big raid yesterday. One hundred odd planes came over and dropped incendiaries, causing a huge outburst of smoke to rise somewhere in the region of the docks. It was a cheering sight, great billowing clouds of smoke rising into the sky to mingle with the clouds. I nipped out of the hut for a second and saw nine of our big bombers haring across the sky. The Japanese anti-aircraft and fighters just don't affect them; they carry on as if neither were there.

We sit in the hut and listen to all the crashings and bangings going on, completely out of danger so far. Except for the one day when something sang down from above and drove one or two of our inmates under their beds nothing has disturbed us, but maybe our luck won't hold all the time.



156.

I feel that the end must at long last be in sight. All this bombing is not being done for fun; I am sure that it will be followed up by some sort of direct action before very long.

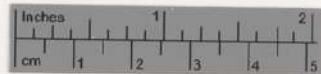
The raid on our funds by the Japanese has, I hope temporarily only, closed the food market and I can get no more eggs. In days gone by I laid in a certain stock of stuff to meet just such an emergency and I now have enough milk and butter to keep me going at the modest rate at which I consume it for a month or two. By that time the outlook may become clarified. The issued rations are thin and I must now confess to a pretty constant state of semi-hunger. The bully beef issue to patients in this particular ward was cut from 2 oz. a day to 1 oz a day about the beginning of January. I don't know how the workers manage to carry on with such totally inadequate fare - they don't get bully beef. For many months we have run a sickness benefit scheme, which I think is a pretty good effort. Workers who subscribe to the scheme, and the vast majority do, subscribe a percentage of their monthly Japanese pay ranging between 5 and 10% (according to the needs of the fund month by month) and out of this members who are temporarily put out of employment by sickness receive some relief. This relief runs on for some six or eight months, after which time, if a man is really destitute, the camp fund make him an allowance of about \$6 a month to enable him to purchase cheroots or gula malacca which now and again comes in by camp purchase. I have never been insured nor have I ever had to appeal to the camp fund for relief; I have always managed to raise the wind in here and have all along been fairly generously supplied with funds.

Thursday, 1st March, 1945.

1,200 lbs of fresh fish came into camp yesterday from the Japs. That evening I had a four course dinner; I started with the fish, a piece about the size of a lady's hand which I wolfed skin and all, then I had a hard boiled duck egg (\$6.50 worth!) accompanied by half of my evening bread ration, after that my 1 oz. issue of bully beef with the second half of my bread, and finally a banana about the size of my small finger. It was a feast fit for a king and I smiled a smile of contentment at the end of it all. It's so long since we saw fresh fish. I think this lot must have been brought to the surface by our recent bombing!

Dr. Glyn Evans, one time camp commandant, was routed out of his bed the other night to join the Japanese interpreters in their headquarters hut where they were having a bean feast. He was fed and wined, and in the bacchanalian atmosphere which developed was greeted by sundry Japs in a friendly manner and assured by each one individually that he had never been brutal or unkind to internees and that he hoped that this would be borne in mind. At least that's the story which is going the round of the camp.

I am now feeling pretty fit but Dr. Landor won't ease up on his restrictions as to movement and I am still more or less confined to bed as my temperature in the evenings still registers around 98.8. I try to argue that as I don't sweat much on hot days this may be responsible, but he just grins at my efforts and makes no concessions. Yesterday on his rounds he said to each of us as he always does in turn "Well, how are you today?" When he came to me I replied "I feel fine doctor, but what's more important is how do you think I am?" He laughed at this, made me take off my singlet and ran over me with the stethoscope, then he said "There's very little to worry about there but I shan't be satisfied until your temperature registers normal regularly."



157.

R. H. Scott was returned to camp by the Military Police yesterday suffering from dysentery and beri-beri but not looking too bad. The car which brought him back from Singapore stopped just outside this ward so I had a good look at him as he was carried on a stretcher up to the dysentery ward. I admit I did not recognise him as he had a long black beard when last I saw him in Changi and now his beard is shorter and a sort of sandy brown. I think he's alright, in spite of having been in prison since the 10th October, 1943. He's pretty tough.

Friday, 9th March, 1945.

I have just heard that MacLennan, my cell mate in Changi Prison, has today received a postcard from the Woman Commandant of the Palembang (Sumatra) Internment Camp advising him that his wife died last May after a long illness. Poor Mac - I know how devoted he was to his wife and how he was planning to settle down in Scotland with her after all this was over; we had many chats about our future plans in the old cell. He is a very serious and rather 'dour' Scot and will take this news very badly. They had no children to console him on his irreparable loss. This brings home to me the tragedy of my own separation from my darling wife. I have had no news from or of her for a very long time now and who knows what may have happened in the interval. I can only hope and pray for the best.

But life has its funny side in spite of everything. The other night, right in the middle of the night when silence reigned supreme, we were all awakened by the vicious squalling of two cats in the close vicinity of the ward. A few seconds later there was a wild scrambling of cats' paws along our front verandah and down they came, one after the other, through one door of our ward, slipping and scratching on the sharp turn in, across the ward and again more skidding out of the door opposite, then down the back verandah. In a couple of seconds we heard them pelting down the front verandah again, having circled round the end of the hut, and once more the skidding and scratching helter-skelter through our two doors and so away for good. I thought it darned funny and laughed like a closet. Whose blooming hut is this, I felt like asking?

Then again, a pig died the other day and a post mortem was performed on it to discover the cause of death. This revealed that its stomach had been burned by some strong disinfectant but as the chemist who did the post mortem considers that this has not affected the carcass at all, we hospital patients are to be allowed to eat it! This too strikes me as being funny. I also discovered from one of the pig farm attendants that the rats which are caught around the camp daily are cooked, skin, tail, entrails and all, and fed to the pigs. However, these revelations have in no way upset my appetite for the pork which is to be served to us today.

As from Sunday the 11th the rice ration is to be: full time workers - 300 grammes: part time workers - 250 grs: and non workers - 200 grs. This compares with 500, 300 and 250 respectively. A full time worker must do at least four hours labour in the garden or elsewhere, and a part time worker $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day, with only one half holiday per week, Sunday. Our medical reference committee have now advised workers when off duty to conserve their energies by lying in the prone position and not to wander off visiting elsewhere. It must be borne in mind that we are in the tropics here and working in the tropical sun most of the time.

Tuesday, 13th March, 1945.

Two stories about the Japanese guard: some few days ago a motor car rambled past our ward after lights out carrying



a noisy bunch of Japs. It stopped outside the surgery and there was a lot of chattering in Japanese. Cameron, our surgeon, was sent for and had to put 11 stitches across the face of the sergeant of the guard. The story is, and I think it is true, that a drunken orgy had been in session in the guard quarters when a row started up and the outcome was that the sergeant was hit over the face with a broken bottle by the corporal of the guard, which opened up the sergeant's face across the nose. And the funny thing about the whole show is that the corporal and the sergeant still carry on, the latter with a large plaster across the face. No disciplinary action seems to have been taken.

The other story is: A very drunken Jap sentry turned up in the women's camp the other night, hauled one of the women out of her room to the front of the hut and proceeded to beat her up good and proper. Several women attempted to interfere and they too were assaulted. The sentry then proceeded to drag the first woman off to the guard house followed by all the other women and an altercation in Japanese took place amongst the other members of the guard, most of whom were apparently sober. The names of all the women present were taken and they were then told to return to their huts. Nothing further has transpired.

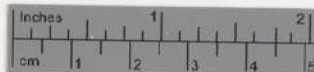
It appears that one or two of the Eurasian women internees are inclined to be amorous and yielding with the Japanese, and quite a lively trade goes on between them, the women concerned earning favours which the others do not. I understand the favoured few are generally good sellers of coffee, eggs, gula malacca and what have you. The woman who was beaten up by the Jap the other night lives in the same cubicle with one of the amorous ladies and has been known to have openly expressed her disapproval, and the conclusion drawn is that the fracas was brought about as a result of this. It's all very distressing and I know that it has made some of the decent British women feel very nervous. When I hear of all these goings-on I thank God that Helen is safely out of the way. Had she stayed on here and been condemned to live under such conditions I can't imagine what I should have done.

Freddy Bloom told me an amusing tale about the above. One of the cuties lives in her hut, and when her Jap paramour turns up the two of them proceed to an old kitchen shed arrangement adjacent to do their fondling. On each occasion the following banter in Malay is overheard - "Bully?" (which means "Can?") in a male voice, then "Ta bully" in a kittenish female voice (this is meant to convey "No can"). This "Bully" "Ta bully" goes on for quite a time until all resistance appears to break down and silence reigns. The particular girl concerned is now known to us as "Bully Ta Bully"!

Sunday, 18th March, 1945.

The Japanese have informed us that the Tokyo Red Cross have agreed to present us with three cows and some chunkils (native spades) but we have also been told that as the money from Tokyo has not yet arrived we ourselves will have to advance the money to pay for them! The cost of the cows is \$15,000 each which gives some idea of just how valuable the Japanese local dollar is. This news came to us some few days ago and last night we were informed that the Military Police had agreed to release the \$140,000 appropriated on the 10th October, 1943, when the great raid was made on Changi Camp, out of which we can purchase the cows and the chunkils and use the balance for purchasing foodstuffs (such as tapioca and maize) if any is available in town.

We have also been advised that the Japanese are going to send in tapioca to augment our daily rations, and that when



(and if) these supplies come in heavy workers will receive 200 grammes a day and others approximately 50 grs. a day out of this and what the garden should be able to yield. The food position is really becoming very serious and God knows what will happen if it gets worse - as it must do unless we are relieved within a few months time.

The beachcoming Ipoh lawyer who was in the next bed to me has moved across the ward to the place vacated by an old man who died about three days ago. We didn't see eye to eye and I was somewhat rude to him on more than one occasion. It really was quite excusable; he is such a complete fool. Anyway, I thought it would be a welcome relief until the next day when we received a new patient from the general ward to fill the place vacated. This new man is pretty poisonous - has been in the Army since the last war during which time he had been shifted from one regiment to another until he finished up, still a lieutenant, in the Hongkong and Singapore Artillery, which seems to indicate that no one wanted him. Just before the outbreak of this local war he was cashiered for, I am told, discrepancies in his company cash, and from then on I don't know what he did in Malaya. They certainly do not appear to have invited him to return to the Army, which is strange. So here he is now and every time I look at him I feel sick, he's in such a mess. He is about 6'5" and as thin as a rake. His elbows and knees bulge out in lumps. His mouth is a mass of wet sores. He has beri-beri and on top of it all he now is suspected of having T.B. In fact he looks like a picture of one of these dreadful cases one comes across in medical books. Ooch!

Some of our bank men are dreadfully thin. Stringfellow, Raikes and Davies are the most outstanding cases.

Thursday, 22nd March, 1945.

The daily roll call which was introduced with such a blare of trumpets some time ago is now a thing of the past. For a few days they were held twice daily, then once in the morning, then it dropped to the occasional morning and now we are advised daily that 'there will be no roll-call tomorrow'. They may spring one on us again but it's so long now since we had one it looks as if they'd been abandoned.

We have been advised tonight that some new internees are coming in on Sunday. The relatives meetings have been cancelled for next time so I shan't see Freddy Bloom on Monday. I enjoy these meetings: we sit outside on the verandah here between 3 and 4 p.m. and are generally joined by Dobie and Tweedie. We have a lot of fun.

We were weighed in this hut today. I am 147 lbs. All the others in the hut, with one other exception, have lost weight over the last month, some as much as 8 lbs., and it's rather tragic to see the depressed expression on their faces as they leave the scales. The diet now is deplorable and we are all, without exception, bound to lose weight as we are constantly hungry, never finishing a meal satisfied. One fellow in the ward drew our doctor's attention to the fact that he had lost as much as 71 lbs. on the top of losses in previous months, but the poor doctor got quite angry and told us ~~it~~ that all we should do was to lie in bed and take no exercise whatsoever as every movement used up so much energy and he could do nothing to replace it. In other words he is powerless to help us. He knows we need nourishing food but also that it cannot be obtained. For some of us it is a race between death and relief. I myself for the first time am really seriously feeling the pangs of hunger, and I am one of the fortunate ones in a position to raise money almost at will with which to buy eggs and sugar to augment my diet, but as