



**Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps History
1939-1945**

R.C.A.M.C Medical Officer in the Field Overseas

An Incomplete Manuscript

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R.C.A.M.C. OFFICER IN THE FIELD, OVERSEAS - 1939-45

My challenge is to write a history of a M.O. who served in the Field, mostly 1st Canadian Division, from 1939 to 1945, or from first overseas contingent in 1939 to Rotational Leave 1945, or a total of active service from September 1939 to September 1945 - i.e. 6 years; therefore there is material from my experiences that should be recorded mostly from my personal diaries and memories.

It was in July 1938 that I started the general practice of medicine in my home town, Sarnia, Ontario, having graduated from the University of Western Ontario in 1937. I set up in the office of my father who had practiced medicine in Sarnia from 1898 until his death just prior to my graduation. At that time my Winnipeg fiancée and I made a pact that we would be married after I had earned sufficient money and I estimated that to be about one year. We, of course, at that time did not contemplate the possibility of a second world war.

Not long after starting the practice of medicine, I joined the local militia as a M.O. to a Co. of Fd.Eng. and Bty. of R.C.A. It is but natural that a few days before war was declared, at the request of the D.M.O. of M.D.#1 I volunteered my services to act on the local Medical Board together with M.D.s from Brigden and London, Ontario. These were busy, uncertain days, complicated by my determination to get married in September. After a few weeks of service on the Medical Board, I found it was interfering with my general practice, so I phoned the D.M.O., stating that I would appreciate being excused from my duties on the Board or his finding me an Active Duty appointment with the 1st Canadian Division, the only Division at the time being mobilized for overseas (O.S.) duty.

On 28 September, 1939, we were married in Winnipeg and returned to our new apartment in Sarnia. In subsequent weeks the D.M.O., M.D.#1, London contacted me twice: the first time to offer me the position of M.O.

Essex Scottish but I refused his suggestion because this was not 1st Canadian Division as requested and I also felt that surely out of the number of M.D.s in Essex Co. they didn't need a volunteer from Lambton Co. His second call was an invitation for an interview with the Commanding Officer (C.O.) of the Royal Canadian Regiment (R.C.R.), warning me that my acceptance depended entirely upon an interview with the latter.

My appointment at Wolsely Bks. was prompt. The C.O. Col. Holloway, a veteran of W.W.I, and I hit it off quite well. He explained that there were 46 ex- W.W.I physicians with experience, rank and drag who were lobbying in Ottawa for the position, but from his experience in W.W.I, he wanted a M.O. who was young and healthy. It seems that what he saw he liked for near the end of this half hour interview, he picked up the telephone, phoned C.M.H.Q. and informed them that he had picked his M.O. who was seated in front of him at that moment.

That did not set me 'home free', as the D.M.O. warned me that there were some members of the Medical Board who had applied for this vacancy and might find it within their power to find some picayune physical weakness sufficient to have my M.Board at least delayed. He advised me to say that I should tell them that I hoped to serve with the R.C.A.F. or R.C.N. His advice was followed and the medical was a breeze and a sort of reunion as many of the Board members were my teachers in medical school.

I was only to have a few days to hand over my duties in Sarnia, close up practice and secure a uniform (the hardest of all). A pair of breeches and tunic from a head doctor who served in W.W.I and happened to be my size, almost, but there was no time to have it altered; the rank of Captain was worn on the sleeve as was custom in the previous war and although I was only to be a Lieutenant, this was overlooked by the broad-minded Royal Canadian Regiment (R.C.R.). A hat was borrowed elsewhere; R.C.A.M.C. badges scrounged; and I'm proud to say the Colonel presented me with his Sam Brown belt, stating: "I wore this throughout W.W.I and I hope you will do the same in W.W.II." Anyone who knew this C.O. realizes that that belt was under severe strain even in the last notch. Fortunately I owned a trench coat which was none too adequate for Quebec weather in Dec. All I had to buy was a pair of shoes!

While my detachment was being assembled, my commission was being processed and it read in part, "B. Command and with the signature of His Excellency the Governor General Lord Tweedsmuir, I was appointed an Officer of the Active Militia from 28 August, 1939 with the rank of Lieutenant."

After one day in Wolsely Bks., London, I was told we were moving out to Valcartier Camp in 48 hours. So amusingly simple was I regarding the organization of the Army, that I suggested to the C.O. that the medical supplies for the troop train were so inadequate that did he not think I should take along the traditional badge of a G.P. - namely, my little black bag! He agreed whole heartedly and it proved a great boon, to be mentioned several times again in this narration. So off again to Sarnia for my last farewell with my wife and my mother.

I only slept in Wolsely Bks. one night and in this brief time became supposedly an experienced Army M.O. No militia unit could ever be as kind to inexperience as this historic P.F. unit. They accepted the fact that I knew next to nothing about Army R&R but they respected me as their physician and never attempted to question any medical advice I gave. At the same time, they gave me patient Army instruction and protected me whenever protocol might be in question. Throughout my happy two years with the R.C.R., I had only one 'boss' despite my inferior rank and my dealing directly with the C.O. was respected greatly by all senior officers. The only person upset at times was the Adjutant who naturally felt all official matters should be vetted by himself prior to submission to the C.O. but that isn't the way I understood our rules, and the C.O. never objected, so the Adjutant, although annoyed, acquiesced and I can not recall any unkindness or recriminations from any Adjutant.

We boarded train for Valcartier and the Adjutant (later a well-known C.O. Toronto Irish in Italy) kept me close by his side so presumably I could learn something about this unit as quickly as possible. To start, we had only C Company and H.Q. Company with us, soon to be joined by B Company from Toronto, D Company from St.Jean, Quebec and, in a few days, A Company from Halifax.

Prior to boarding train, I had been assigned a Batman and I hadn't the slightest notion of what his function was to be. I soon learned at 0600 next a.m. when a cup of tea, which I swear floated the spoon, was shoved under my nose and he mentioned the time; I was too sleepy to say anything at the time about what seemed a barbaric custom, as I had never been faced previously with "early morning tea". Nevertheless, I adjusted to my indoctrination

advice; "accept and act on all Army procedures and ask questions afterward." May I add now this tea ritual, as well as many others, was later appreciated and carried over into my civilian life after the war.

Well, Valcartier Camp was something else again: cold, barren, and I'll swear unused since W.W.I except possibly in the summer. We had difficulty making just about everything work from heating, to plumbing, latrines, and cook stoves. There was even an insufficiency of medical supplies so my 'little black bag' was first made use of. The Regiment, which had been scattered across Eastern Canada, was to concentrate here and did so from 15 November to 16 December. During this time, this efficient Regiment not only put this neglected camp into good shape but fully prepared themselves for overseas service as a simple fighting unit. This involved, in Officer personnel, a C.O. declared medically unfit because of W.W.I war wounds and the appointment of a famous soldier, who had previously won a Victoria Cross, as Second in Command (2 I/C). Then two important officers, an N.C.O. and O.R., were sent to England on courses or as advance party. Also several officers were found to be under-age for overseas duty and were sent to what became known as "Boys Town".

My early baptism of protocol was an order from the D.M.O. Quebec City, to report to him at the earliest. The C.O. loaned me a car and this lowly person reported for the first time to a domineering full Colonel D.M.O. who insisted on questioning me about the state of inoculation of the troops under my care, refusing to listen to my explanation regarding my being an army neophyte, had only set eyes on 2 Coys. in the past 24 hours and a 3rd Coy. had not as yet arrived from the Maritimes. He refused to listen to my general request for needed medical supplies and seemed to delight in my discomfiture as he engaged in self-satisfying reprimands. On return to Valcartier, our C.O. wanted to know how I made out. On acquainting him of my experience, he said nothing except I was to accompany him on a return journey to the D.M.O.'s H.Q. in Quebec City. We drove in practical silence; on arrival, we stormed into the D.M.O.'s office and what followed was the worst tongue-lashing I ever heard handed out to another officer. He in essence informed the D.M.O. that he would co operate with every request made by Lieut. Bell and assured him that all the necessary stats would be supplied in good time. From that day, I never saw nor heard from the D.M.O. again and, considering the restraints, had no difficulty with medical supplies. He even sent a Deputy out for final inspection of our lines before entrainment for Halifax.

Some other episodes related to Camp Valcartier should be mentioned. When the Regiment was concentrated, it was possible to investigate the state of inoculation and to our horror, every man required the needle. So, with 3 or 4 trusty S.B.s, we set to work to inject approximately 900 arms, having been supplied with ample vaccine but only a dozen needles and half a dozen syringes, with one spirit lamp sterilizer. Each Coy. was marched into the Recreation Hall on the appointed day and time; with each jab an entry had to be made on the man's individual Immunization Card. This whole operation was not easily accomplished using inexperienced S.B.s with the minimum of even First Aid training. They quickly gained experience in reviving the casualties who fainted while waiting in line. To give me some relief, I taught my Corporal and L/Cpl to give some shots (when the intended victim did not object). We got this ongoing job done without one infected arm of any kind.

Disaster struck me at the end of the first week when my full platoon of 20 S.B.s was decimated by an order stating that anyone who had been a member of the Regimental Band did not have to proceed overseas as greater use would be made of these musicians at home. In the P.F., all S.B.s were Bandsmen by custom; my Sgt. was also Band Sgt. and each was given First Aid training whether they liked it or not; thus they were primarily Bandsmen and secondarily First Aiders. I was left with a Sgt. - an Englishman veteran of W.W.I who just wanted to get home, my Batman who later became leader of the R.C.R. Band in peace time, and two others. I lost a Batman who was elevated to Cpl. and in less than a year, became Sgt. on removal of the former because of age. I chose a L/Cpl. and Batman from the two remaining. The method of filling up the ranks was not done by calling for volunteers, but each Coy. "appointed" a certain number and these were usually the less desirable riflemen. It wasn't easy to teach First Aid to those who weren't particularly interested. Also, in the beginning, we were not proficient as soldiers. Eventually, however, we got some help but it took 6 months before they looked half decent on parade.

My amazing new wife had settled our affairs in Sarnia and drove to Quebec City in the only asset we possessed, namely a Plymouth coupe. The Chateau St. Louis was her H.Q. and it was a joy to have her close by. We both fell in love with Quebec City whose citizens showed us great kindness in a 3 week period. Transportation was at a great premium and I'm greatly indebted to the ^{R. de C. 4} ~~Chadaire~~ ^{Chadaire} (?) Regt. who did garrison duty at neighbouring arms dump and kindly taxied me from Valcartier to Quebec whenever I could get away.

We left Valcartier for Halifax on December 17, the batallion entraining in 2 "flights". A M.O. was assigned to the first flight and I brought up the rear (as usual) in second flight. Unfortunately, the first troop train was derailed at Amherst, Nova Scotia with several members of the Regiment injured and our first war casualty. I knew nothing of the casualties until the next day and had to accept that the injured who were allowed to proceed had been examined and discharged as fit for overseas duty.

At first light we boarded the S.S. "Almanzora", a Royal Mail Line ship normally running between Southampton and Buenos Aires, and not designed for service on the North Atlantic. She was a venerable old ship, commissioned before W.W.I, had some Battle Honours in that war, was due for retirement September '39, and her replacement, the S.S. "Brazil", was in our convoy. Our ship was rescued and put to work again as a troop carrier and we were the first so honoured. She still had all her peace time fittings and crew. The Sick Bay was in process of conversion from peace time luxury to sterile utility of an Aid Post with half a dozen cots for patients. Everything medical had been removed and the Directorate of Medical Services, Ottawa supplied me with 5 panniers of assorted medical supplies suitable for a sea voyage to take care of over 1000 men. As previously stated, my S.B.s were completely untrained and several a little squeamish at the sight of blood and some not particularly happy taking care of the sea-sick soldiers. To organize that Sick Bay was a monumental task and I sure would have welcomed some assistance but none was forthcoming. The C.O. informed me that a surgeon had been detached for our troop ship and was already in Halifax, but he didn't report to the ship until the day we put to sea, December 22. There were two very large suites or staterooms on mid-ship on the "Almanzora"; the C.O. was on port side and I had similar quarters on the starboard side as senior medical officer. This stateroom had a sitting room for 6 or 8 to sit in comfort, a larger bed room with two large single beds, bureau, table and chairs - all well anchored - then the "John" which was something else again, complete with huge bathtub and shower, plus bidet - which supplied several of us with great amusement. After the first night, I felt very selfish as my confrere, the Surgeon, had to bunk in with three other officers in a very small stateroom. I felt that if we were to work together, he should share my luxury so I made this suggestion to the C.O., who didn't care for the idea but said I should do what I thought best. What a mistake! I worked like a skivvy, he was the Surgeon - partied nightly and was of minimum help to me there being no major surgery necessary. He had his friends among the other odds and sods

aboard ship plus the money to spend on liquor, which I did not possess. The C.O. thought he should speak to this Capt. as he realized that I was of lower rank in Army parlance, but I asked him not to as it would only stir up animosity. How often I have wished that if only I had requested our 2 I/C to enjoy my luxury.

Instead I spent most of my time in the Sick Bay, entertainment with O.R.s and occasional fun with our officers. We spent that Christmas mid-Atlantic and a splendid meal, plus entertainment was provided and up until then, I had never heard such lusty singing. The weather was a bit stormy, seasickness was our greatest illness but I'm happy to say I was a good sailor and also happy the surgeon was not.

Unfortunately, there were several injuries from the train derailment that required attention; a couple I kept in bed. One in particular was a back injury and I felt he urgently needed an X-ray but in the confusion of disembarkation and eventual settling in Aldershot, we lost touch of him temporarily and when I sent for him, he had gone off on Landing Leave. Subsequently, I learned he felt much better latterly but while on leave his back became very painful so he went to see a chriopractor, had an adjustment and immediately after was admitted to hospital as a paraplegic - our first severe permanent war casualty.

On December 30, 1939 we sailed up the Clyde and landed at Gourock. Official pictures were then taken, the same as before departure, and I'm always amazed in subsequent years when these appear in the Press because I'm easily identified as the only soldier with a trench coat - after all, I had no other. After disembarking, we entrained for Aldershot, establishing ourselves in Barossa Barracks, December 31.

Our orders were to take the 5 sea medical chests with us and turn them over to stores; however, due to some ball-up between the War Office and C.M.H.Q., we didn't have anything with which to look after our sick except one medical haversack. Initially, my "little black bag" came in handy again, but eventually, because the troops were dropping like flies due to an influenza epidemic (due to one of the coldest winters on record - frozen plumbing, inability to dig latrines because of asphalt parade grounds, drafty and poorly heated barracks) I disobeyed orders and dipped into our sea panniers. This caused my first run-in with the A.D.M.S. but I truly believe I was forgiven.

From my diary Monday, 1 January, 1940 - Barrosa Bks. Aldershot. "The train cars last night were like match-boxes and we travelled through Glasgow and Edinburgh in blackout. Snow on ground and very cold in Aldershot,

no central heating, windows and doors won't shut properly, plumbing freezes up, fire-places smoke, no medical supplies, rotten telephone service, no one seems to have any answers as everything is S.N.A.F.U. or someone else's "problem" and everyone drives on the wrong side of the street - what a country! - besides, I've got a cold!"

On January 2, I took R.M.R. sick parade as our R.A.P. was organized. That day I was informed that my wife and several other R.C.R. officer wives would be arriving in Liverpool aboard "the Duchess of York" on January 4 and would be met and escorted to London by an R.C.R. officer. Sure was and he later was to become a Major General.

That Thursday I went to see the A.D.M.S. re: my taking Landing Leave to-morrow in order to meet Patty. While waiting for the A.D.M.S. appointment, a Major with the kilt of 48th Highlanders emerged and took a seat. Not knowing one another, we did not speak but I did not notice an R.C.A.M.C. badge. The Col. called me in, listened to my request for leave, asked who would replace me and I replied that McKenzie M.O. of R.M.R. in the next barracks to ours had informed me that he would be happy to look after the R.C.R. in my absence. The Col. then asked me if I knew the Officer who had just left his office and I truthfully answered that I had never seen him in my life before. Whereupon the 48th Officer was immediately summoned back in, was formally introduced to me and without further words, was carefully informed that his request for leave was cancelled, he was dismissed and told to wait. Then the A.D.M.S. kindly informed me that my request for leave was granted. The Col. informed me that the Major from 48th Highlanders had stated that I had agreed to look after his Regt. while he took leave starting to-morrow. When this proud Lieut. passed the Major in the waiting room, I should have been killed by his look, but instead I saluted him sharply and was off. That Major never forgave me even when he became a Brigadier.

I returned to duty Jan. 11th and found that McKenzie had taken good care of the Regiment and later that month I returned the favour. Unfortunately, our C.O. was sick with flu, several officers sick "at home" and many O.R.'s confined to barracks sick. All our medical supplies, which wasn't very much, had to be drawn daily from Cambridge Hospital. I recall drawing a 16 oz. bottle of liquid Aspirin daily, from the hospital, to ration out to those sick in the Regiment. My S.B.'s were overcome with sympathy for their fellow soldiers to the extent of buying ASA at Boots to supplement the Army supply and they bought several thermometers when one of the two

provided became a casualty. Of course, I had mine in the "little black bag". The ADMS was making threats regarding the non-return of the sea chests Medical but I continued to hold out until our regulation RAP Medical Supplies became available.

By Jan. 11th even our Col. was sick with La Grippe and next day I took him for admission to Cambridge Hospital where he remained 4 days. Sick Parades were running 100 men per morning. Nearly all my days were taken up with the sick and lectures on gas warfare, V.D., Medical Routine in the Field and medical lectures at local hospitals. Most evenings I was able to travel to Farnborough (3 mi.) by bicycle to see my wife. A funny war at this time because all was quiet across the Channel with the French snug behind the Maginot Line, the Finns resisting the Russian juggernaut, the "prison ship" Altmark being intercepted by our destroyers off Norway with release of 400 British seamen.

Enjoyed ourselves with a couple of weekends at the Savoy Hotel in London (L1-10); beautiful room and dinner thrown in (a special rate for Cdn. Officers) and saw a play each time. In March we made a dash through Bournemouth to Sandbanks for a night at "The Haven". Not a great success as it rained most of the time and I worried about money. Got back to Bks. with 2 shillings!

During the early months of 1940 I acted as physician to several officers and their wives who were living in homes or hotels near Aldershot. An unexplained obstetrical phenomenon happened as we had three P.F. Officers who had consulted Specialists in Canada about their inability to become pregnant. However these three, having followed their husbands across the Atlantic all became pregnant. Was it the result of stress re: departure, a realization that they might not see their husbands again, a release from the strictures of peacetime army, change in environment, or a complete alteration of diet?

As spring approached the war was gathering momentum. In April the Danes capitulated and the Germans made landings in Norway; Chamberlain kept on bungling along but was at last replaced as Prime Minister by the old bulldog Winston Churchill on May 10 and at the same time the war became truly brutal as the Germans invaded the Netherlands, Belgium and north France and in a month the British and some French troops were driven to the sea at Dunkirk. France surrendered on June 25. At first we celebrated the remarkable feat of evacuating 200,000 British troops and 140,000 French, with the help of the Royal Navy and an armada of small

craft operated by all manner of civilian seamen. The BEF came home but the sobering effect was the loss of all their armour and equipment so that the only fully equipped soldiers in England were those of Cdn. Corps. England and her Empire stood alone against the power of Hitler's Wehrmacht. Luckily they stalled because they found that treacherous ditch, the Channel, which had helped to defeat the Spanish, French and Dutch in the past, was a huge obstacle. England's chief assets at that moment were the the plucky R.N., brave Air Force and the inspiring rhetoric of Winston Churchill. A sleeping Lion woke up!

On April 29, the R.C.R. were inspected by our 90 year-old Colonel-in-Chief, His Royal Highness, the Duke of Connaught. Several official pictures were taken and these are highly valued by those who like to remember. In the afternoon after the inspection we attended a Garden Party on the lawn of the Mess at Barrosa Bks. Music was provided by the R.C.R. Orchestra and Bugle Band. A Mess Dinner was held in the evening and I've never attended anything as lavish and correctly conducted before or since. From my Diary "Dinner lasted over 2 hours and consisted of soup, fish, turkey, peas, potatoes, olives, buns, ice cream, fruit, coffee, sherry before, sherry during, champagne, port and Benedictine. Music throughout and a few chosen words from our C.O. The decor enhanced by fresh flowers, silver candelabras, new dishes and silverware - all rented from Silversmith's of London." A feast for young lambs before the slaughter. A day to remember forever!

During early May we played trench warfare games in the style of W.W.I at Pirbright and Salisbury Plains. The weather was foul during the latter exercise and the lads had a tough time digging even shallow trenches in the hard chalk. The big laugh came when the enemy (the 48th Highlanders) launched a tank Mark I (obtained from Military Museum, I'm sure) which lumbered up to the first line of trenches and was supposed to go over it but instead stalled much to the anguish of the crew and the Higher Command, so that part of the exercise was a SNAFU. We have to remember that our troops even up to this date had never fired a shot of live ammunition, such was the shortage. The bright spot was to return to Barracks after a week in the open, and be issued our first tot of rum; previously I hated even the smell of this demon, but on this occasion it pleasantly lubricated every ligament and tendon in my body.

On May 23, we made our famous "Dover Dash" by train to the port and even onto the ferry when fortunately for us, our own Maj.-Gen. McNaughton having flown over our destination, Calais, decided that the

situation was hopeless and that our troops and equipment were more important to the defense of England. The War Office was very upset but his historic decision was praiseworthy. An incident here always causes me to smile as at that time we had a fine R.C. Padre who by the end of the war was a Brig. but at that time he was not treated too kindly by the Regt. as his responsibilities were to look after R.C.'s in the 1st Brigade and they didn't feel he belonged like the "attacked" padres with other units. Thus he was never informed of what was taking place and I was detailed to look after him. We climbed into an empty section of the passenger car and at intervals various officers would open the door, look in on these two pious guardians of body and spirit and quietly close the door. When the train started to move we chuckled and each produced a "micky".

After our return to Bks. we had several alerts per day and you tended to sleep with your boots on as we seemed sure there would be an invasion. Then during the night of May 30 we made the "Rushden Rush" to the Midlands where all the troops lived in private billets and were spoiled by the good people of Rushden. All this while the poor BEF was being withdrawn as a broken, defeated Army from Dunkirk.

On June 6, we returned to the Farnborough area and encamped at Mytchett Lake. At this time the War Office decided to mount another BEF to consist of 52nd (Lowland) Div., 1st Cdn. Div. and later the 3rd Br. Div. On June 12 we were reviewed by His Majesty the King. Then we route marched 4 mi. to entrain at Farnborough Stn. for Plymouth. At the latter port most of my unit were loaded on a French ship "El Mansour", and since all toilets soon clogged we felt the name should hve been "El Sewer". Thus we set out on what was popularly called the "Brest Bust".

On disembarkation we formed up and promptly marched up a very steep hill paved with cobblestones, yours truly bringing up the rear carrying his "little black bag". I had decided that since we were going into battle immediately and had been supplied with minimum morphia in Med. Haversack, that my own G.P. equipment would be useful again. Gratefully it was not used. At the top of the hill I suddenly realized that I was carrying my Diary and this was a Military "no-no" so I hailed a Br. RPO and requested him to do me a great favour and mail it back to my wife in Farnborough. Then we promptly marched down the hill again to be entrained on W.W.I boxcars marked "40 Hommes - 8 Cheveux". Off we went presumably heading for Paris. The train trip was slow with many halts. In the country some people passed us a mouthful of cognac from a small glass and this helped us

digest our only food, bully beef and hard tack. At the stations, it was pitiful to see the hundreds of refugees and the occasional bemedaled French officer in tears. We heard many rumours that France had given up. We passed through Le Breux, Rennes and Laval, travelling as far as Font Jusette close to Le Mans which had been bombed that night and a bridge in front of us knocked out. An engine was hitched on the other end and we started back toward Brest. Somewhere along the line the engineer and fireman decided to join the refugees. Some volunteers from among the Regt. were former railwaymen and brought us back to Brest by evening and we embarked on a ferry, the S.S. "Canterbury". We were attacked by a single Nazi plane at 10:30 p.m. We became crammed with other soldiers besides R.C.R. to the number of some 2000. We were held in port because the approach to the harbour had been mined and was being swept by minesweepers. When we arrived 2 days ago, Brest harbour was crowded with every manner of ship from trans-Atlantic liners, freighters of various sizes, a considerable portion of the French Navy including battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and U-boats and 2 hospital ships but on departure there were only 3 ships, our own and 2 tramp ships loading some worn-out vehicles of the BEF. Our new Canadian equipment had been blown up so as not to fall into enemy hands. This involved all my medical equipment plus personal belongings except my "little black bag".

I attended an O Group midafternoon and the Capt. of the "Canterbury" told us he would give them until 4 p.m. to pull down the flag on the Goot(?) Bldg. which was the "all clear" signal re: the mines, but he said we would have to ram the boom and risk a run for it as he did not have enough bunker coal to wait longer. Moreover, how did anyone know but what the Fifth Column "weren't active or at least a Nazi sympathizer in charge of the flag". At about 4 p.m. we cast off, the flag came down and by 5 p.m. we were clear of the boom and being escorted out of the narrows by 2 French Q ships. On reaching the Channel proper, we were met by a British destroyer, signal lights flashed and the "Canterbury" took off like a high powered speed boat. I remained on deck until midnight; then went below deck into what was a stinking hole because of overcrowding, blackout and no ventilation. Plymouth was a welcome sight at 0530 hours, June 17. We lay at anchor in the basin until 1100 hours, then entrained for Aldershot, arriving in Tournai(?) Bks. at 0300 hours. I was met by my wife together with several other wives, and would you believe it, she had received my Diary by mail yesterday morning. (Canada Post cannot match that these days.)

We suffered no serious casualties during this invasion. It got us used to existing on bully beef and biscuits. We were very fortunate to get out of France without harm. Nothing had been accomplished in our part of Second BEF and we had lost all our brand new equipment. The RCR now belonged to a mobile force defending S-E England and the 1st Can. Div. became part of 7th Corps. under the command of Maj.-Gen. McNaughton.

During the summer of 1940, we bivouacked and "dug in" in the environs of the village of Charlwood. Our roll was primarily to repel the invader and to get ourselves reorganized. We had ring-side seats to watch the great "Battle of Britain" in the air. Near the woods where HQ was hidden I pitched a marquee for our RAP only to have to tear it down as it could be seen from the air! I then settled on some servant's quarters near a greenhouse close to the barns associated with the manor house and although just beyond HQ Co. boundary it was approved by the C.O. At this point too, I spent my spare time looking for a billet for my wife. I was having poor luck until I approached the local Constabulary and they were so obliging that they took over after I stated the approximate area in which I wished to live. They found a large house whose owner had a business in London and he and his wife were the sole occupants. Applying positive persuasion they agreed to have a colonial wife billeted with them. You cannot imagine my horror to find the house less than 100 yds. from the R.A.P. - how convenient! But would the C.O. blow his cool. Eventually I'm sure he knew, but never said anything.

On August 25 at 0005 hours, our area was bombed. I'm sure the Luftwaffe bomber just dumped his load but as a result I was urgently called to the R.A.P. where 5 casualties from "B" Co. were quickly brought in. One, I pronounced DOA; the next was seriously wounded and I decided if he was to be saved he must be sent to the nearest civilian hospital which was in Redhill. Unfortunately, he subsequently died of his wounds. Two others I sent by ambulance to the Cdn. Hosp. (?) at Bramshot under the direct care of a Major RCAMC. The fifth casualty who had lost the tip of his great toe, I kept and treated in the R.A.P. at his own request.

After dealing with all the casualties, I walked to Br. HQ Mess to report to the C.O. The urgent question at that time was what to do with the deceased. Simple matter to those who had fought in W.W.I but we were not in No Man's Land. The C.O. decreed that the disposal of the deceased was a matter for the Q.M. and I was sent to get the Q.M. who was asleep. When I told him wherein his duties lay, he turned deathly pale and I think this was the beginning of his peptic ulcers which henceforth plagued him. As a true officer, he arrived at the R.A.P. shortly

and relieved me of the deceased. The latter remained in the Q.M.Stores until removal to Charlwood, undertaken the next morning. Since these were the first Cdn. battle casualties and taking place in England, there were many regulations that had not yet been formulated. As I understand it, Bn. (229) applied to Bde. (?) for answers to Disposal of the Dead and Bde. had to apply to Div.H.Q. Finally it was cleared for our Private to be taken by the Charlwood Funeral Home to Brookwood (?), the Cdn. Cemetery for burial. Another problem had arisen from this as I had signed the Death Certificate but this proved illegal because we Cdn. Medical Officers had not been granted courtesy reciprocity whereby our Cdn. licence to practice medicine was granted and recognized in England. Such a licence was subsequently posted to each of us. By the way, the casualty I treated in our lines subsequently became a valued S.B.

The next day the DADMS came hustling in to the R.A.P. to belittle my actions of directing a Cdn. ambulance to a civilian hospital. From a humanitarian and medical viewpoint, I knew I was right and I told him that I didn't much care what the Army Medical Corps. thought. It was embarrassing to have to disagree with a Senior Officer. Thus it was not surprising to me that I was ordered, next day, to appear before the ADMS post haste. During the next 24 hours, I turned over in my mind what they could do with a recalcitrant doctor who refused to abide by certain army orders. Frankly, I was very confident because I knew I had the support of every Senior Officer in the R.C.R. So I danced up to confront my ADMS. We got along like old buddies and there began a long and lasting friendship. Egad, I wasn't even reprimanded.

An amusing side was provided by our Dental Officer who decided the greenhouse was ideal for his clinic because it provided so much light and beauty. I warned him about the danger in view of the increasing number of air raids but he paid no attention - until the night bombs were dropped in our own field. From that night he not only evacuated the greenhouse but spent considerable time digging his slit trench and occupying it when the Alert was on.

September 4 to 8, my wife and I spent in London and Oxford. The trip was primarily for my pregnant wife to be examined by an obstetrician in Fulmer Chase and for us to examine the beautiful facilities provided at this mansion which had been converted to a maternity hospital for wives of officers of the Colonial Forces. We spent 3 nights in London at the height of the London blitz. We remember vividly the great raid on the East End

Docks. We walked into the Park Lane about 11 p.m., sat down in the foyer and ordered a drink, being a little surprised that no one else was present. The waiter brought our drinks then very politely asked us, "Sir, would you and your lady please drink this in the other room as you are sitting under a glass roof painted black." The raid that night was so concentrated and prolonged that we remained in the shelter until 0500 hours.

Near the end of September, 1940, we moved north to Reigate-Redhill area and my wife billeted with a local Doctor and R.A.P. close by. On November 1, we set off for one month's P.G. training at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. We stayed at the Braid Hills Hotel close to the golf course which was closed and fairways blocked by cement implacements to prevent glider landings. Our hotel bill was 8s each per day. This P.G. training was granted to those Medical Officers who had not taken their regulation leave during 1940. Although the weather wasn't the greatest, it was an immense relief to the both of us to get away from the day and night bombing in Sussex. At the end of November, I returned to Reigate and moved with the R.C.R. to Brighton early in December.

We were now manning the water-front defences and took over our R.A.P. from the previous British unit. It was right on the esplanade with only the shore, a road, and sand bags between us and the water or, as we thought, the invading forces. Incongruous, I thought, for a R.A.P. to be in front of the defending forces. Perhaps the thinking was that the Nazis never would be able to wade ashore and that the attack would come from the landward side perhaps by gliders and paratroop invasion. Ours not to reason why. The Aid Post was an ample and stoutly built house belonging to a row of houses. Many of the shore front houses had been vacated but Brighton in general functioned close to peace time normal with its cafes, bars, hotels, and night clubs operating and rationing not felt as acutely as London environs. The boys were well billeted and BrH.Q. in an evacuated boys' private school. On December 10, my wife came down from Scotland and we settled in a small private hotel in Hove.

December was a strange month as the soldiers on duty manned their Bren guns, patrolled the beaches or kept continual watch on the Channel for landing parties. When not on duty, the lads had a good time and morale remained high with numbers on Sick Parade low. Two notable features this month was a change in Command and the celebration of Christmas. We had received several boxes from home which we saved for opening on Christmas Eve. Christmas Day, at 1100 hours, I met with all the S.B.s in the R.A.P. where we had beer etc. and during which my wife presented them with a huge basket of fruit, wine, meats, gum, candy, nuts, etc. My Sgt. and Cpl.

made sincere speeches and personal gifts were exchanged. A regular turkey dinner with all the trimmings was enjoyed in BnH.Q. Mess at 3pm.

On December 29, we were relieved by the Essex Scottish Rgt. of the recently arrived 2nd Canadian Division and returned to Reigate where our billets had been retained but needed warming up and cleaning. The month of January was back to the old routine but included one scheme which was a 3 day, 60 mile route march during which the boys stood up very well and my greatest thrill was to finish it with the O.R.s

On February 4, my wife and I rode into London in the "Sally Anne" en route to Slough and Maternity Hospital in Fulmer Chase but prior to admission to the hospital she was to spend a few days in a home provided for this waiting period. I returned to Reigate that day and 48 hours later I was father of a healthy daughter, the first Canadian offspring born in this special hospital. I didn't receive the joyous news until suppertime and celebrated by setting a dislocated shoulder in the R.A.P. Spent aft. next day with my brave wife and beautiful daughter, who although her given Christian names were to be Patricia Anne, we called her "Vicky" because she was born amid the bombs, "Ack Ack fire", and smudge pots of Slough and the furniture in my wife's room bore brass plates stating "Donated by Vickers-Armstrong". Happy as I was there was no time to celebrate as I rushed back to the unit via 15 CWT truck to take part in a Scheme that night which lasted most of the night.

On February 17, moved a few miles north of our winter quarters to a dispersed area around Chipstead and organized our R.A.P. in a vacant house and this was probably our best Aid Post thus far. Spent a few anxious days trying to find, without much success, lodging for my wife and new daughter. My agony was suddenly relieved by an invitation from a kindly lady to have my new family come and live with them until a suitable house in the area should become available. Wife and daughter moved from Fulmer Chase to Chipstead on 23 February. A week later we moved into the "thatched cottage", the home of a retired Naval Officer who had been suddenly called back into service. This then was to be our first home and we lived in it for nine months. "C" Coy.H.Q. was in a large house next door which had been vacated; "HQ" Coy.H.Q. in another big house just down the street. Bn.H.Q. Officer's Mess was in none other than Merstham Lodge owned by H.R.H. the Princess Arthur of Connaught.

This spring and summer period was one of unpopular but necessary individual P.T. exercises and collective Br. exercises, including long marching manoeuvres. It also saw a change in Command, ushering a new active routine

for everyone. At the same time our new location presented us with a greater amount of bombs at night, because the Luftwaffe, losing the war in the air, tended to unload their bombs on the south border counties of London when repelled by our defense system.

As an R.M.O. I felt frequent frustrations as Sick Parades increased in numbers as the morale of the troops declined. Unsatisfactory Bn. conferences and Corps. inspection (with a report to C.O. which contained very unfair criticism of the R.C.R. which I felt showed a strange bias on the part of the G.O.C.) prior to our change of Command (July 13), many changes in Officers and Sr.N.C.O.'s, petty jealousies between officers beginning to surface, frustrating manoeuvres that never seemed to improve in execution. Finally informed the A.D.M.S. (on August 7) that I was no longer happy as a R.M.O.

On August 25, I walked into my R.A.P. to find a replacement M.O. waiting for me unannounced to either Bn.H.Q. or myself. I was to report the next day to 4 Cdn.Fd.Amb. A very inadequate, too abrupt a severance from a unit that I served with, loved and that had trusted me so well for nearly 2 years. The C.O. Fd.Amb. sent me to serve in "A" Coy. Almost immediately exercise "Tiger" was held and I quickly learned the operation of an A.D.S. Got some G.C.M. experience by defending a couple of private soldiers. On September 15, I was ordered by the C.O. to take leave the next day. Transferred to "B" Coy. under a poor C.O. and started off on exercise "Bumper", the longest so far in England. My new C.O. chose the worst sites for A.D.S.s - couldn't map read; I had to straighten out his convoy for him on several occasions; we ran out of petrol; serving under an egotistical nincompoop depressed me greatly but I got some relief by returning home and renewing acquaintances with my old friends, the officers of the R.C.R.

On October 6, the above ineffective M.O. was replaced by the ex-M.O. of the P.P.C.L.I. who was slightly senior to me and here began a lasting friendship. His transfer to 4 Fd.Amb., and transfer of M.O. 3rd Fd.Rgt., together with myself marked the removal of the last of the original unit M.O.s in 1st Cdn. Div. The three of us at this stage were asked to make a choice now of remaining in the field or being transferred to serve with Gen.Hosp. Both myself and the M.O. of P.P.C.L.I. chose to stay because we joined up to fight this war in the field and not serve under almost peacetime circumstances in a Hospital. A grave but correct decision was made. Now the two of us set about whipping "B" Coy. into shape because it had become very lax.

In October, I filled in as M.O. to 2nd Fd.Rgt.R.C.A. while their M.O. took a week's leave. During this time too we were able to move out of the "thatched cottage". Moved our A.D.S. to Terry's Cross, Henfield; my wife moved to Hassocks on December 12. December 21, I attended the 58th Birthday dinner of the R.C.R.

August 26/41 to May 5/42: with 4 Cd.Fd.Amb. (8 mos.)

January 1942: one month's Study Leave - Br.Postgraduate Med.school, Hammersmith. (Lived in a rented room and one week at "Cavalry Club", Piccadilly.)

February 1942: Acting Company Commander while Capt.Corrigan on month's leave.

May 5/42: reported to A.D.M.S., Div.H.Q., as Staff Learner - Knepp Castle.

May 6&7/42: exercise "McGill"

May 19/42 to June 3/42: Corps. exercise "Tiger" (17 day absence from home)

May 27/42: Patty moved from Poynings to "Thatchly": Fulking

March 1/42: Vicky baptized in Hassock's Church by Capt.East (P.P.C.L.I.) Patty and Vicky move to "Forge House", Poynings. New Company Commander - Corrigan to Div.H.Q.(Staff Learner).

March 12/42: moved from Terry's Cross to Brighton; A.D.S. to operate hosp. for mumps and scabies cases in Brigade.

March 22/42: transferred to H.Q.Coy.

April 6&7/42: course on chemical warfare at Bordon.

Spring: took part in many F.G. Court Martials

April/42: mastered the Harley-Davidson

April 20/42: took over command "A" Coy. from Capt.Bastedo temporarily.

May 5/42: became Staff Learner in A.D.M.S. Office, Div.H.Q.

A.D.M.S.- Col. McCusker D.A.D.M.S.- Maj. Corrigan

June 6/42: Gala party at #9 Fd.Amb., Dale Park

July 4/42: Lt./Col. W.Boyd takes over Command #4 Fd.Amb. from Col. Sinclair

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- July 10/42:** one of nicest dances at Off.Mess #5 Fd.Amb. at Rosing's Farm
- July 22/42:** became D.A.D.M.S. when Maj. Ed Corrigan went to corps as Staff Learner
- July 24/42:** 1st Div.Med.Society dance at Dale Park
- August 8/42:** Div.H.Q. moved to Heathfield
- August 19/42:** Dieppe (#4 & #6 Inf.Bde.) Weary all-night vigil at Div.H.Q. awaiting any emergency calls for ambulances
- August 20/42:** our losses at Dieppe extremely heavy; it appears security had been poor and the enemy were waiting. "The Press hails it as a great success. I wonder!"
- "Over 50% of Combined ^{to} Aps men did not return"
- "This fracas was worse than Hong Kong" "Germans claim 2000 captured, of whom 600 were wounded:
About 500 in our hospital"
- "Of 8 M.O.s who landed at Dieppe, only 2 returned and only one, M.O. of Sask.L.I. unhurt, and the other seriously wounded"
- August 25/42:** inspection new Fd.Amb. set-up at #5 Fd.Amb., Bexhill. Inspection new Fd. Dressing Station at 2 C.C.S.
- "Wicked battle raging between D.D.M.S. and A.D.M.S. re: acceptance of new proposals; my Col. not very happy."
- August 30/42:** "Div. party for Maj./Gen. G.R.Pearkes who has been recalled to Canada."
- September 7/42:** helped to draw up scale G1098 for new Fd.Amb.
- September 8/42:** Maj./Gen. Salmon becomes G.O.C. 1st Cdn.Div.
- September 11/42:** with A.D.M.S. viewed demonstration of new 7 Light Fd.Amb.
- September 16/42:** Patty and Vicky moved to new home "the Old Farm", Wallson Rd. Cross-in-Hand.
- September 25/42:** "Nazis being defeated by Russians in and around Stalingrad"
- October 1942:** mostly lectures and inspections
- October 29/42:** "Poor organization of Med.Services in England with closest Cdn.Surgical facilities for 1st Cdn.Div. 60 miles distant. E.M.S.Hospitals much closer but our orders were to discourage our using them."
- November 1942:** paperwork continues

November 3/42: took part in T.E.W.T. in State Hall, Heathfield

November 15/42: "Church bells rang out in thanksgiving for our massive victories in N.Africa this past week."

Mother died.

December 14/42: 4 Cdn.Fd.Amb. leave for Combined Ops.Trng. in Invernary, Scotland

December 19/42: Majority (239) came through.

My "Learner" - (Don Young) departed for N.E.T.D. en route to Tripoli.

December 22/42: new "Staff Learner" (Capt. Mike Carleton) **December 25/42:** our 4th and best Christmas, spent at Brown's "The Old Farm", Cross-in-Hand.

December 26/42: Goose and all the trimmings at Whaley's with Mr. and Mrs. Gordon and Capt. Carleton.

December 27/42: to Glasgow, Scotland, on over-night train; travelling with 4 other officers to attend Combined Ops. course at Fargo.

December 28/42: at Fargo and billeted in a gardener's house. Opening address 1430 hours. "God forsakken place, but the view is beautiful, despite the beastly weather."

January 1/43: Fargo, Scotland. An old "friend" of mine, Senior Officer, R.C.R., making disgraceful showing as A & Q.

January 2/43: by bus to Dundonald Camp and Troon for demonstrations and exhibition of landing craft.

January 3/43: late aft. left for Glasgow; "No pubs on Sunday." Train for London pulled out 2045. Five of us had to sit up all night in a cold compartment.

January 4/43: London, Euston Stn. 0830 hours and home by noon.

January 5-10/43: very busy in H.Q. office and only home nights of 9th & 10th.

January 11/43: reorganization of Cdn.Army on basis of British W.E.'s announced and this meant drastic changes in Med.Services. Two Fd. Dressing Stns.(F.D.'s) added to Div.

January to April 25/43: doing a busy Staff Officer's job consisting of inspection of unit R.A.P.s and Med.Units; endless conferences, lectures, meetings, duty officer, and reorganizing the Fd.Ambulances and F.D.S.s; T.O.E.T.s; exercises, demonstrations.

January 24-26/43: many more examples of a blundering A&Q. "He demonstrated again his ignorance of man management. On Jan.25, our A&Q shows further stupidity and A/A.D.M.S. Col.Playfair was dissillusioned and not consulted once all day. If A&Q ran a business like this he would be bankrupt. I hope this is not an omen of our welfare in this war." (And I'm sure it is the opposite to what our Div.Comds. would wish.)

February 3/43: started 7 days leave, 2 nights in the Ritz and 3 nights in West Kirby. Had difficulty getting hotel room in London, but Capt.Sorby (Lady Cadogan's friend) arranged a suite for us at Ritz at no extra cost. We felt like Royalty and entertained some friends.

February 15/43: "A&Q slowly sabotaging our Div. and is a sly devil."

February 19-22/43: exercise "Present"

February 24/43: our R.C.A.M.C. 1st Div. hockey team wins Cdn.Forces Championship, winning 11-4 in Brighton.

March 1/43: attended Inter Allied Med.Conferences at #1 Wimpole St., London - excellent lectures; remained over-night at Savoy.

March 8/43: A.D.M.S. away for wk. acting as D.D.M.S. corps on exercise "Spartan".

March 30 to April 2/43: away on exercise "Past".

April 3-11/43: away on exercise "Welsh". Had to handle medical arrangements as Colonel McCusker away at Corps acting D.D.M.S.

I was very tired and dirty on arrival back at Mess about 6:30 pm. Immediately phoned home and found out that my daughter had broken out with measels a wk. ago.

Col. McCusker phoned and announced he was now Brigadier and D.D.M.S. Corps. He insisted I come over to "A" Mess and have a drink with him, but I pleaded that I must take a bath and then, because of the hour etc., I wanted to go home. Reluctantly, he understood. When I'm in the middle of my bath, comes a knock at the door. I yell, "Come in!", and who should enter but Brig. McCusker with a hefty drink of Scotch in each hand. This exhibits better than any words I could express the calibre and thoughtfulness of this great Doctor.

April 12/43: a long, busy day in office preparing for "G.O.C.Inspection" to-morrow.

April 13/43: G.O.C.Inspection - Gen. Salute and March Past.

0900-0930 in Fisle Park, Lewis.

Tactical exercise in aft. The general impression was that it was a "good show". All ranks were sure it was a formal send off for Brig. McCusker. An excellent tribute to our popular A.D.M.S.

April 15/43: at C.O.s conference, Brig. McCusker bade us all farewell and left to take up his new appt. as D.D.M.S., 1st Corps.

April 24/43: long extremely busy week without a boss(A.D.M.S.) **April 25/43:** G.O.C. conference 0700 hours - packed in a rush, drove to London, reporting to Norfolk House and started secret planning for our invasion of Sicily.

Thus began my planning as D.A.D.M.S. 1st Cdn.Division (at the moment without an A.D.M.S.) for Operation "Husky" (the code name). It had been decided in January 1943 that there would be a joint attack on Sicily at the conclusion of the war in North Africa. Later, in early May, it was decided that the assault would be carried out by the Br. 8th Army and the U.S. 7th Army; the former to attack on a 2-corps front and the 1st Cdn.Div. would be a part of the Br. 30th Corps and would attack the Pachino Peninsula with the 38th Highland Div. on its right and on the left, a Special Service Brigade (Commandoes) who linked us with the 7th Army on left flank or S.East side of Sicily. The 1st Cdn.Army Tank Brigade were included in the Eighth Army reserve.

At the outset it must be stated that medical planning for "Husky" was made extremely difficult because of the great physical separation of component parts of 30th Corps, with its planning staff in Cairo, 51st Highland Div. in North Africa, and 1st Cdn.Div. Planning Staff in London, England. The D.D.M.S. 30th Corps could not leave Cairo, the A.D.'s M.S. had to remain with their respective Divisions. Strangely, each Division sent liaison officers to Corps.H.Q. but a medical representative was not included. Information from D.D.M.S. for 1st Cdn.Div. was perilously slow in reaching us and in fact, some vital information - e.g. on malaria - reached us too late for implementation. Training of needed specialized personnel could not be undertaken because of lack of time. There was no time to provide M.D.s with anti-malaria routines: medical units could not become familiar with new equipment.

For an hour, one confused D.A.D.M.S. sat at his empty desk in Norfolk House. Our A&Q had completely neglected the Medical Corps and I was forbidden to contact either C.M.H.Q. or Cdn. D.D.M.S. offices. I felt I had

to do something so I stopped in to see the D.A.D.M.S. 3rd Div. who was an Irishman of considerable wit and went over the situation with me and later I was more properly briefed by his Colonel. At 1800 hours a Conference was held and 2 hrs. later I was concerned that I hadn't had opportunity to get a bed for the night. My Irish friend took me the Bailey's Hotel and obtained a room. After a hasty dinner, I returned to Norfolk House for more briefing by A.D.M.S.(Br.)

Next day the latter, feeling sorry for me, took me to his R.A.M.C. Mess for a fine lunch. I went to the War Office and had a discussion with some Senior Officers, all of which was depressing because of my lack of information and secrecy had to be carefully observed. In late afternoon I got a couple of breaks; the first was the news that our inefficient A&Q had been removed and I was sure his replacement couldn't help but be an improvement.

My second break was to get a call to visit the G.O.C. Maj.Gen. H.L.N.Salmon who was ill in his quarters. After diagnosing his sickness and giving him medication, he said to me, "Well, Ken, how are you getting along with the medical plans for "Husky"?"

There was no hesitation in my answer; "I'm not, Sir - because of lack of information and, Sir, you can not expect a Major to get needed information from strange Brigadiers and Colonels."

Gen.Salmon - "Well, where is your A.D.M.S. Col.Playfair?" My answer - "How should I know as I was not even aware that he had been promoted A.D.M.S. from O.C. 5th Cdn.Fd.Amb., and I suspected from the way things were being handled for the Cdn.Medical Corps., Col.Playfair was likely unaware of his promotion." Gen.Salmon - "Ken, get on the phone to H.Q. 5th Cdn.Fd.Amb. and tell Playfair to report here at once."

Well, I was so happy that I ran back to my office and had "Rusty" on the line from Eastbourne when I suddenly realized the complications in delivering this message without a breach of security. After making myself known to Rusty, the conversation went like this;

"Rusty, you are to come up to London at once on orders from the G.O.C."

Rusty - "Where do I go to report or should I report to C.M.H.Q.?"

Me - "No (with emphasis), I cannot tell you where to report over the telephone, but you tell me the time your train will leave Eastbourne and I'll meet you at the appropriate station here."

Rusty - "At this time, Ken, the earliest I can make it is to-morrow. Would that be OK?"

Me - "Yes."

Rusty - "I'll leave on the first train after 1000 hours." Me -

"That's great, Rusty. See you at the station." Was I ever happy! This had been quite an eventful day so I returned to Bailey's for supper and to bed early with my head spinning.

Met my new A.D.M.S. as arranged, worked all afternoon in the office, had supper with my boss at Georgian House, then returned to the office to find we had to write an Appreciation. Worked on it all night grabbing one hour's sleep on top of the table.

The next day was spent going around in circles. I was also stunned by the news that our G.O.C. Gen. Salmon and our new A&Q had both been killed when their plane had been shot down en route to North Africa.

The next four days I worked every night until 11 pm and then got a break by having my wife and daughter join me at Bailey's. They arrived to find I had been unable to get a room, so had to put up with my single and we arranged a bed for our daughter in the dresser drawer. We finally got a huge room, unique with its 3 large beds lined up so we were like the three bears. For security we took our meals in the room. I'll never forget the pink pluver's eggs! This had been a very enjoyable week-end break for me even though I still had to work long hours at Norfolk House.

All badges except for our rank had been removed and this led to interesting incidents and conversations. In central London it was impossible not to meet up with Canadian officers whom you knew and naturally they wanted to know whether I was on leave; if so, why had I removed all my badges and, in general, just what was I up to. All my answers had to be either evasions or white lies. They would ask me to visit them at their hotel or hospital and I would graciously acquiesce but never appear. I'm sure I lost some friends during this period in London as no one could understand my unseemly unsocial, uncommunicative actions and, in fact, never put it together with what was the correct answer.

Boarding in Bailey's Hotel, Knightsbridge, was a distinct advantage as it kept me away from the haunts frequented by Cdn. Officers who knew me. It also allowed my wife and daughter to visit on week-ends incognito.

My work at Norfolk House was interesting but complicated by some other factors beside lack of information from 30 Corps in North Africa. To our regular divisional medical units were added one 600-bed general hospital,

one C.C.S., one corps F.D.S., two field surgical units, one field transfusion unit and No.'s 1 and 2 Field Dressing Station and No.2 Field Hygiene Station. Besides, No.2 Light Field Ambulance was to accompany the 1st Army Tank Brigade. So much for the planning of the Cdn.Med. units in this force. Later I had to deal with only those units that came under Div. Command supplemented by two field surgical units and one field transfusion unit. The problem was to find shipping space for these extra units. Also, I had no experience in the deployment of Field Dressing Stations, Field Surgical and Transfusion Units. I'll never forget the day two surgeons (who became two of Canada's outstanding post-war surgeons - Major Mills in Command #1 F.S.U. and Major Roch Robertson, O.C. #2 F.S.U.) suddenly presented themselves unannounced, reporting for duty. Of course, neither the Colonel nor myself had a clue but after some evasive action, we sent them to Scotland to report to a Medical Unit to proceed with training and hopefully become familiar with a unit which was in the process of drastic change due to a lack of shipping space. The lack of communication was appalling! In a disorderly fashion, the medical service was gradually taking shape.

Because of having to take less vehicles in order to cram aboard extra units, it was necessary to ship large quantities of medical supplies to last one month based on expected casualties. These unaccompanied medical stores had to be packed in such a way for easy handling. They had to be itemized by unit and by ship, with master copies in A.D.M.S. H.Q. so that the loss of any ship by enemy action, which meant the loss of vital medical stores, could be immediately accounted for. All this caused enormous and complicated administration.

As I recall, we failed in only two regards; we took along more medical stores than were needed because fortunately our casualties were much less than expected, and we were inadequately trained regarding malaria precautions and prevention, with the result at the end of August we were struck by an epidemic of major proportions. The excess medical stores were turned over to the local Sicilian authorities and I'm sure this was manna from Heaven for them. Our historian blamed the malaria epidemic on "the inadequacy of anti-malaria training prior to the campaign and the consequent failure of non-medical personnel to appreciate fully the dangers of the disease." (Official History of Canadian Medical Services, vol.1, p.147)

The two months at Norfolk House were hectic, involving long hours of work (0800 to 1800 or 2200 hours, 7 days per week.)

On June 7, 1943, after an idyllic 3 day leave in the Savoy Hotel, I entrained for Div.H.Q. in Troon, Scotland. (By a strange coincidence, H.Q. was in a mansion where Patty had been the guest of the owner back in 1940 after we had our month's leave in Edinburgh.) My job for the week was to visit each Field Ambulance to ensure each was in a state of readiness to embark. At this point, no one but we "planners" knew where our destination was to be.

On June 14, we boarded our invasion ship, H.M.S. "Circassia", which was the stand-by H.Q. ship (or rear Division H.Q.). The "chiefs" were on board the H.M.S. "Hilliary". Our small state-room with 4 bunks was crowded with 5 officers, one sleeping in a camp cot on the floor - he was the official artist, Major Ogilvie, whose war paintings are featured in the National Gallery, Ottawa. My job for the week was to visit ships in the convoy in company with the Senior Medical Officer, Royal Navy (S.M.O.). Having heard that many Officers were off on leave, I visited the "Hilliary" only to find Col.Playfair was also on leave.

Believing that I had been treated most unfairly, I decided to go A.W.O.L. Thus I conferred with my affable Scottish friend - the S.M.O. - and he suggested it would be no problem. Without an official pass, it was impossible to leave ship but my Naval counterpart suggested that I be his guest at his home over-night. At supper time we had the naval launch drop us at embarkation wharf. Once there, we had to pass through two separate security guards but my friend answered all their questions and guaranteed my return without any breach of security. Having overcome this formidable barrier, he drove me directly to the station in Glasgow, wishing me well and advising that I take the civilian train to London, rather than the military train where I might be recognized.

On arrival in London, I immediately phoned Patty and asked her to meet me in Harrod's dining room. I went directly to the Cumberland Hotel and shaved in the washroom. Trying to hide my identity, I almost crept into Harrod's; taking a table in the farthest corner, I sat with my back to the other diners. After a half hour, I felt a tap on my shoulder and heard a female voice state; "Why, Ken Bell, what are you doing here? I thought the 1st Division was in Scotland or elsewhere?"

I jumped a foot and my heart almost stopped - it was the wife of one of our Brigadiers. I asked her guiltily to sit down while I explained everything and then to please make herself scarce. She willingly complied. My wife and I

then spent a beautiful 24 hours at the Savoy. The next evening, I entrained again after saying farewell 'till we meet again, not knowing when or where that may be and Patty having no clue of 1st Division's destination.

On board the S.S. "Circassia", I was confronted by a very irate D.A.A.G., a "twirp" from the Oxford Rifles, who flashed his legal mind, pointing out how I had flouted H.M.R&R, endangered the entire invasion of Sicily, deserved to be Court Martialled or at least left in the U.K. I scoffed at this officious child, knowing that I would be backed to the hilt by my A.D.M.S. I gave this officer the icicle treatment for the remainder of the voyage and I never saw him again.

At 2200 hours, Tuesday, June 29, 1943, we sailed from the Clyde. The next 11 days were spent lecturing on malaria, practicing signals, learning some Sicilian words, and reviewing our losses as the cargo ships in the "slow convoy" ("Sir Essylt", "City of Venice", and "Davis") had been torpedoed in the Mediterranean. Our manifest resources showed us we had lost considerable medical stores and a large part of the transport of #9 Field Ambulance and possibly 3 Medical Officers - one with each ship. (We were informed weeks later that the Medical Officers had been rescued.)

There were only 2 visual incidents on the voyage - viz July 4, we watched our escort depth charge an enemy submarine and seeing lights as we passed Gibraltar at 0300 hours that night. On Tuesday, July 8, we rounded Cape Bon and all of us packed in readiness for debarkation. My diary for July 9 records: "High wind in aft., sea quite rough, sky clear and I can count 80 ships with the naked eye." I can not recall any submarines nor threat of cancellation; besides, the wind abated by nightfall.

Our assault at 0245 hours, July 10, was very successful. We lowered ourselves into our assault craft at dawn and walked ashore. Apparently, all initial targets had been taken by 0730 hours. My objective the first day was to contact all R.A.P.'s of 1st and 2nd Brigades that were functioning. Not having any transport, I started out on this task a pied but, tiring in the heat, I fortunately came upon a stray donkey and completed my days' duties on the back of this slow but sure beast. I found the Sicilians very friendly but their abodes filthy. That night, we slept dispersed over an open field; there was an air attack with much flak falling around us, but we Canadians were happy to at last be facing our enemy 3 1/2 years after leaving Canada.

My A.D.M.S.

landed on July 11. I spent that afternoon establishing temporary H.Q. and bathing my feet in the sea. To our great

delight, all ranks were issued a quart of beer (Whitbread's). I couldn't help but marvel at the thoughtfulness and ingenuity of an Army that could plan and execute long distance transportation of this morale booster - and to think Gerry mined that ship! The next day we set up H.Q. in a stable at Burgeo; D.D.M.S. 30 Corps visited and Hygiene and Blood Transfusion Officers reported. We were on the move forward almost daily. An Advanced Surgical Centre was set up at Bompalazzo, consisting of #1 F.D.S., #1 and #2 F.S.U.'s, #1 Fd.Transfusion Unit, and #9 Fd.Amb. but no surgery could be performed as the instruments had not reached us yet. Fortunately, casualties were light and were evacuated to a beach dressing station and thence to a hospital ship. The initial advance was so rapid that it put an impossible strain on the depleted divisional transport. As a result, we had to turn those of our medical stores that had been dumped on the shore, over to civilians in Modica. By July 15, we had set up an A.S.C. in Monterosso Almo, and #4 Fd.Amb. had opened an A.D.S. in Grammichele. On July 21, D.D.M.S. 30 Corps and our A.D.M.S. decided to evacuate all our casualties through Br. units to Syracuse.

From Diary: Aboard H.M.T. "Circassia" - Invasion of Sicily

July 9/43: "Morning spent packing, reading and writing. Gave note to S.M.O. for 7000 Mepacrine Tabs. In aft. the mistral blowing and wind very high with heaviest from 6 to 8 pm. Sea very rough. Passed Gozo and Malta in late aft. In late aft. counted 80 ships with naked eye and close to us were M.L.'s having a rough time with watchman lashed to forward mast. Certainly do not feel lonely with such a crowd around."

2300 hours: Had one hour's rest but couldn't sleep. Same feeling as before playing a rugby game. The Seaforth's and all the O.R.'s are in high spirits, laughing and joking among themselves. Brig. Vokes came on the P.A. and said how pleased he was that the wind was abating and seemed assured of a fairly smooth sea. "Actions speak louder than words so go to it boys and show these bastards! Give 'em hell!"

2345 hours: Lights on mess decks extinguished.

0015 hours: Serials being called up. "On deck a nice breeze, slight roll to the ship, bright half-moon, many stars, some of our planes overhead, flares, ack-ack and bomb flashes off port bow."

July 10/43, 0100 hours: All quiet and first of L.C.A.'s got away at 0110 hours. Dull glow in sky straight ahead but these may be floodlights.

0400 hours: S.N.O.L. - reports red flares seen at 0355

0404 hours: S.N.O.L. - success green - no opposition

0410 hours: S.S. Bde. - orchid

0450 hours: Description of patch worn by enemy troops

0507 hours: I.C.I.B. little opposition

0508 hours: H & P.E. - Honeysuckle

0517 hours: S of C - Phase 1 complete

0530 hours: Bad exit S. Amber

0535 hours: R.C.R. - L.C.S. laying smoke

R.C.R. - Red Beach O.K.

0600 hours: S.S.Bde. - Prisoners captured

0620 hours: R.C.R - Roger Green clear

S.of C. - heavy S.A. fire

I.C.I.B. - Roger Red good for vehicles

0621 hours: R.C.R - no mines

0625 hours: S.of C. - no mines

H. and P.E. - at assembly area

0627 hours: S.of C. - nearing Squirrel

0629 hours: S.of C. - moving to Sable

0635 hours: S.S.Bde.- exit from S.Red, suitable to 3 tons

0639 hours: R.C.R. - joined with 51 H.D.

0645 hours: 2 C.I.B. - S.S.Bde. requires no help to get objective.

0400 hours: Heavy naval bombardment

0500 hours: Visibility good; sun rose shortly after.

0600 hours: Reported 8 Seaforth's killed by a shell. S.N.O.L. reports the attack was a complete surprise.

0650 hours: Destroyers laying smoke screen.

0715 hours: 2 C.I.B. moves ashore and Div. takes over in control room.

0800 hours: Everything moving slowly and casually. Bright hot morning.

0756 hours: Reported by all units - no casualties. R.C.R have 135 prisoners. R.C.R. filling out defense of airdrome. H.&P.E. awaiting instructions re: refugees.

0815 hours: A.M.Br. news states invasion of Sicily begun and encountering heavy opposition on the beaches - Well, well!

0820 hours: Visited Ops. room. All serene.

On July 24, I fell victim to Sicilian trots and it was 100 degrees fahrenheit in the shade. Next day I had trouble with an abscessed front tooth and had it extracted by Major Shaughnessy under a tree without anaesthesia or sterilized instruments - his first dental emergency in the field. Next day my temperature was normal and, feeling better, I visited each Field Ambulance. That day, 200 casualties had been evacuated. On July 28, I was busy mobilizing all available medical transport to carry medical supplies, including instruments liberated from a hospital in Leonforte, to Syracuse for #5 Canadian General Hospital which had lost most of its equipment through enemy bombing. At this time, the tactical deployment of our Field Ambulances was changed so that the 3 sections formed a Casualty Collecting Post near Bde.H.Q. and from here the R.A.P.'s were serviced as required. Also, for the first time in history, each Field Ambulance and A.D.M.S. were loaned R/T by the O.C. divisional signals. How they ever got along without this form of communication up to this point in the Medical Corps is hard to imagine.

Another amusing incident early on in Sicily was the capture of a German refrigerated trailer - less its coolant - which contained many bottles of fine wine and champagne. For a few nights, our dinner of field rations was greatly enhanced. Then we were suddenly ordered to make a 40 mile advance. Lacking sufficient transport, we had to leave this trailer with its valuable cargo behind; however, 3 O.R.'s were detailed to remain guard over it. In about a week, an officer returned to bring the trailer forward but, to his horror, he found the cupboard almost bare and the O.R.'s recovering from severe hangovers. Being contraband and no authority existed for the guards, no charges were laid.

Of the Sicilian environment, I can only recall days of dry heat, blazing sun, dust, dirt, offensive stink, primitive sanitation, and all towns built on high ground - this was for protection in ancient times and for sewage removal, as all sewers were open and depended on the rain for flushing downhill into the valleys. Flies were prevalent which

meant we suffered repeated attacks of dysentery and walked around with pockets-full of sulfa.tabs. Mosquitoes took a terrible toll by causing an epidemic of actual and suspected malaria. The cause of this was a failure due to circumstances to provide adequate training in protective measures and to impart sufficient knowledge of the dangers of malaria so that the units did not take adequate precautions. This caused my counterpart at Corps and myself many hours of compiling statistics and taking part in joint discussions with A.D.M.S. and D.D.M.S.

The second month of the Sicilian Campaign consisted of daily visits to forward medical units, daily conferences and, in the latter part of August, planning for the invasion of the toe of Italy, as well as compiling a report on our operation up to date. The Sicilian Campaign ended on August 16 with Paton's 7th U.S. Army in Messina. Monty visited us on August 20. On August 24, General McNaughton gave all the heads of service a briefing. The Colonel and I followed this with a delightful swim. The next day, the Div.Medical Society held a Garden Party at #2 F.D.S. at which Gen. McNaughton spoke. On August 27, we sent out orders for all troops to take blanket Quinine tabs. This was done reluctantly because it had been proposed earlier by the British but Col. Playfair had resisted because he felt its use was quite unscientific; however, under pressure from above, he gave way. On September 2, I was issued a Jeep with Shortt as Batman Driver. The attack on mainland Italy, Operation "Baytown", started September 3 and there were few casualties.

My trip across the Strait of Messina was on a L.C.M. leaving the "hards" at 1100 hours, September 4, and arriving on Fox Beach north of Reggio at 1330. From there, I proceeded to rear Division H.Q. which was situated on heights overlooking the city. It was a sunny beautiful day and smooth sailing. Reggio had been badly bombed but looked as though it probably was a nice city in peace-time, with wide streets and clean large buildings - quite different than what we were used to seeing in Sicily.

It was a quiet night and, being Sunday, the church bells pealing was the only sound. In the afternoon, I went on a recce along the coasted highway to Boon or as far as our forward patrols, who failed to encounter the enemy.

The attack on Reggio had been launched by the 13th Corps consisting of 1st Canadian Division on the right and British 5th (Yorkshire) Division on the left. The British went up the western coast road and we went into the rugged mountains of the Aspromonte. The idea was to create a diversion so that Operation "Avalanche", the assault on Salerno, would be successful and the capture of Rome made easier. The Germans had pretty well

withdrawn from the "toe" and provided troublesome opposition to the 5th U.S. Army and British Corps at Salerno. Because of this we were to push on rapidly in the hope of helping them, but the Germans had pulled back with well-prepared defense of blowing every bridge and booby-trapping everything which made the advance of the 8th Army very slow. 1st Division had the added handicap of lengthy lines of communication necessitating delays to allow administration services to catch up. It was encouraging to know the "Eyeties" surrendered on September 8, but this made little difference because they had been surrendering in such numbers that prisoners were a nuisance. As D.A.D.M.S., it seemed our H.Q. was frequently on the move and because of distances, I was having difficulty keeping in contact with the medical units while meantime, the A.D.M.S. in liaison with the D.D.M.S.13 Corps was siting the Medical Services in leap-frog fashion. After a few days among the evergreen trees in the mountainous terrain, where Canadians had a feeling of being at home, we descended to the east coast road and concentrated in the Catanzaro area. Our next objective was to capture the communication centre of Potenza and join up with the British force which had landed in the Gulf of Taranto and subsequently held the seaport of Taranto which by the end of September, was the terminal for the evacuation of casualties. This became necessary because of the very lengthy route via Canadian medical units to Reggio. At one point, it was necessary for the A.D.M.S. to make arrangements for casualties to be evacuated by infantry landing craft from Cotrone - #5 Fd.Amb.- to the beaches near our divisional maintenance area. This period up to September 29 was uneventful as far as the fighting troops were concerned but for us it was a scramble to keep up and maintain the lines of evacuation for the wounded and seriously ill.

At one point on the plains, our convoy was passing fine fields of corn and maize - something the lads hadn't seen since we left Canada - and all Canadian mouths were watering, when a noon-time halt of the convoy was ordered. It appeared we were going north on the highway as troops of a British Division were travelling south - typically, the British climbed off their lorries and had a pot of tea brewing in no time - but the Canadians to a man were spontaneously jumping into the fields picking corn and shortly had it on the boil. The "Limies" and the "Eyeties" stood in amazement that these aborigines could eat this food grown only for the swine.

Near the end of September, we were informed that the next objective of the 8th Army was to drive north and capture Campobasso. On September 23, I was struck with chills and a fever, and the next day, general malaise and

mental apathy, followed in another day by stomach cramps; nevertheless, I continued to "soldier" all that week. On September 30, we advanced 100 m by convoy but immediately after A.D.M.S. H.Q. set up, I went to bed weak as a pup. The next day, October 1, I evacuated myself to #7 C.C.S. in Bari. On October 2 I was admitted to #70 General Hospital, Taranto. By this time I was turning yellow with Infectious Hepatitis or jaundice. This hospital was, at this stage, only acting as a collecting post for casualties to be evacuated to North Africa. I didn't want this to happen and prevailed on the O.C. to retain me for a few days because, being D.A.D.M.S., my services were needed back at Div.H.Q. After a week, I used the field phone to summon my driver to come pick me up. He came promptly and on October 11, I was discharged. The first thing we did was liberate some eggs by barter with an "Eyetic" farmer and we had a feast. We drove to Bari for the night and had dinner in a hotel where, to my surprise, our Div.Comdr. General Simmons sat two tables over; I learned that he too was just recuperating from jaundice.

On being greeted by the A.D.M.S., his opening remark was, "You aren't better, you still look like an Oriental." I was dispatched to #5 Fd.Amb. at Lucera for a rest. It was acting as a convalescent centre for officers at the start and later for all ranks. When I was there, we had 300 patients and I was given several wards of jaundice and malaria patients to look after. On October 16, I got the feeling that I had been permanently replaced at Div.H.Q. On October 20, we started unloading our patients and A.D.M.S. remained overnight and informed me that in a couple of days I would be posted to #4 Fd.Amb. On October 24, three officers and myself went to #9 Fd.Amb. in Campobasso, which was holding 400 patients. We had a meeting of medical officers in the afternoon.

The new D.A.D.M.S. visited and informed me that I had been S.O.S. on October 2. "This is an underhand way of doing things on part of A.D.M.S. Col.Playfair. At first I was ill at ease and somewhat irritated but decided to sleep it off." Next day: "Am now laughing! What difference will it all make? I will be happier with a Fd.Amb. anyway."

"I'm going to take my time from now on and he (the A.D.M.S.) can do the pushing."

On October 29, I reported to my old unit, #4 Fd.Amb. as Second in Command with our M.D.S. on the edge of Campobasso. Our H.Q. was in a modern sanatorium; however, I found things in "a hell of a mess." The next day, I wrote out our Part 1 Orders, Standing Orders and made out a Trg.Syllabus. The following day I was Duty Officer

and took the Church Parade in the morning and the Pay Parade in the afternoon. On November 1, I held the Trg.Parade in the morning and, in the afternoon, I wrote the Standing Orders for Transport Section and Piquets.

On November 3, we moved into Campobasso, taking over a building from "B" Company. Because of lack of space, I unwittingly moved Officers into a near-by brothel. We were disturbed many times in the night by visitors and none of us were too happy in this environment with visions of V.D. etc. The next day we shifted back into the H.Q. building (a school) and effected a shift in billeting.

On November 6, I took the O.C.'s Parade and arranged a celebration for the R.S.M. who was ordered to return to the U.K. tomorrow. Muster Parade for the R.S.M. and S/Sgt. who were both off to the U.K. in the morning, taken by yours truly in absence of O.C. On November 8, I had Lt.Col Noble and his Officers of #5 Fd.Amb.(M.D.S.) for dinner; then all of us attended the A.D.M.S. Conference at which we discussed R.M.O. and Company Commander problems. Each day was cool with considerable rain.

November 10 - A.D.M.S. for lunch. Welcomed two new Medical Officers. Gave a lecture and blood grouped 40 personnel. This week the O.C. made unsuccessful recce's on 3 days for our move forward. Meantime, I made good arrangements for troop entertainment through Mr. McBett of Sally Ann and also had a good visit with Greg Clark.

November 20 was a cold, rainy, miserable day and I spent most of it on recce of Civitanova-Carovilli area for M.D.S. site; made definite decisions; told O.C. and confirmed by A.D.M.S. On Sunday, November 21, I arranged details of the move with the O.C. then held O group. Capt.Mackay took Church Parade and Capt.Fletcher took Advance Party to Civitanova. The next day was beautiful and I led our convoy from Campobasso to Civitanova. I also set up our M.D.S. which was interesting work. The next day was a busy day of organizing the M.D.S. and looking after a steady stream of casualties - from Diary: "C.O. of no use whatever!") The next day we were well organized, everyone reasonably happy and F.S.U. arrived. "Better than being idle."

Campobasso was our first Canadian "rest" town in Italy. It didn't take long for the auxilliary services to establish theatres and clubs. The "Royal York Hotel" opened for officers and provided needed relaxation and entertainment. Our men were kept busy with "sprucing up", blood grouping and inoculation of personnel.

Fortunately, in Civitanova casualties were light. Evacuation back to Campobasso, some 40 miles, was not easy because the continuous rain had washed out parts of the road and the remainder were in such poor shape that any vehicle heavier than a jeep was compelled to follow a traffic route 100 miles long. On November 25 we were busy. The D.D.M.S. Brig. Arnott visited at noon. Orderly officer the next day and everything functioning smoothly. I spent most of the next day interviewing and arguing with "Eyeties" who wanted such things as rides, funeral arrangements, etc. On November 28 I carried out recce of Agnone. On November 30, Brig. McCusker and Gen. Price visited. On December 3, we closed Civitanova and moved to Agnone on a wet, cold day. We slept in an incomplete T.B. San. and ate with the O.R.s in a school in the town. In the rain the next day, I led the convoy to Casalbordino - all of us were drenched to the skin. On December 6 we had another miserable day of rain for our move to Rocca, where we arrived at 2215 hours. The rain continued and there was considerable snow on the mountains. There was much air and artillery activity. We got organized the next morning and Brig. McCusker visited the next day to warn me that I might be shifted to a Corp job in 2 months. Major Fletcher had set up a car post in support of Ist C.I.B. beyond San Vito. On December 9, I visited #5 Fd. Amb. in Rocca and had supper with "B" Ech. R.C.R. among old friends. "The battle for the heights beyond the Moro River is a tough one."

On December 10 the R.S.M. and I laid out the M.D.S. in San Vito. Visited the A.D.M.S., prepared our plans and held "O" Group. I arrived at San Vito 0830 hours in the rain as usual and opened M.D.S. at noon on December 11. Our lads did a grand job of cleaning the building up; we didn't use the upper floors because of shell fire. At 2000 hours, Q.M. stores were hit by shells but no casualties.

On December 12, in the midst of a tough battle for Ortona-Orsogna road and we handled many W.N.S.R. casualties. G.S.O. 1st Div. Col. Bogart visited in the evening and our Sergeant's mess was splattered with shell fragments.

On December 13, we admitted 206 casualties. The "Heavies" on both sides are carrying on a noisy duel over our heads. Believe it or not, I picked some oranges this afternoon during a breather. The casualties were very heavy on December 14 - Jerry resistance is very stiff.

On December 15, I spent the morning on recce for more buildings. The A.D.M.S. and Brig. Cantcie visited. #2 Fd.Surg. Unit, #1 Fd. Transfusion Unit, Pay Corps and Padre attached. Triage is our priority here because of still being shelled - Priority I&II cases evacuated to the advanced surgical centre at Rocca; Priority III to Vasto (C.C.S.); seriously sick cases to British Field Ambulance at Cupello; minor sick to #2 Light Field Ambulance in San Vito Marina; exhaustion cases to Rocca where we had a Divisional Psychiatrist.

On December 16, two shells hit the square in San Vito at 1615 hours. "About 12 killed and double that number wounded." "Abnormal number of N.Y.D. (Psy.) cases admitted." This was a very busy day and night.

December 17 - Being surrounded with Arty. Mediums the M.D.S. continues to be a very noisy place. A number of nursing orderlies were attached from #2 F.D.S. to help us out. I spent a busy day at paper work.

On December 18, the greatest attack of the Italian Campaign to date started at 0800 hours. Our #2 F.S.U. was kept busy, with overflow to advanced surgical centre at Rocca.

December 19 - Vital Ortona-Orsogna road intersection with highway north from San Leonardo captured and the way cleared to Ortona. #1 F.S.U. joined us. Being Sunday, our Padres held services. Another busy day for me doing paper work and was on duty all night; I had a nice reunion with George Cherrier, Chief R.C.Padre 1st Division and an old pal as we were "originals" with the R.C.R.

On December 20, there were not as many admissions. It was expected we would capture Ortona tonight but the fanatical paratroopers put up a stubborn resistance for a week. We sent out "B" Company to replace "A" Company in support of 1st Brigade.

As of December 22, H.Q. was completely reorganized. D.D.M.S. 5th Corps. visited in the afternoon.

December 23-24 were routine busy days. The amount of local shell fire had eased. A weary Second in Command had, at midnight, been joined, by coincidence, by Pay Master Cec Hollingsworth and Padre Cherrier - all ex-R.C.R. of the Aldershot days. Each of us found a "heel" of whiskey or rum so we drank to our "loved ones" and wished them a Merry Christmas.

December 25 was not a peaceful day and we looked after many casualties. We attended a Church service; had a G.O.C. inspection; served the O.R.'s their noon meal - turkey, mince pie and plum pudding; attended Sgt.'s Mess at

1700 hours; was on duty all night. The shelling is still close to San Vito. From December 19 to 25, we handled over 700 casualties.

Another 145 casualties came in on December 26. The total number retained at present was 96 - about our limit. Thus #5 Fd.Amb. was ordered to open at Sant Apollinare to relieve some of our pressure.

On December 30, #5 Fd.Amb. opened in Ortona. Two British Nursing Sisters started to report daily to help us with the care of our post-operative cases. There was very heavy rain from December 31 to January 1, 1944. Evacuations stopped for a time because of bad roads. At noon on New Year's I worked and allowed the other officers to entertain the sergeants. In the late afternoon I attended an A.D.M.S. Birthday Party at Rear Division H.Q. All of us were served excellent meals today.

On January 3 we were relieved of our responsibilities as parent to the forward ^Rsurgical centre by #2 F.D.S. and we moved onto the square in San Vito to look after exhaustion and V.D. cases. We had the Divisional Psychiatrist, Major Doyle and Veneriologist attached. D.D.M.S. Canadian Corps visited us and remained overnight. Our Major Fletcher was awarded M.C. We were a very busy unit for 48 hours. On January 5, we were holding 179 patients - 56 exhaustion and 35 V.D.

NOTE: In November, 1943 H.Q. 1st Canadian Corps, the 5th Canadian Armoured Division and other Corps troops and assorted normally Army or L. of C. units. The 5th Division concentrated in Foggia plain and others remained temporarily in Sicily. Mid-January 1944, the 11th Brigade replaced the 3rd Brigade on the right flank of the Ortona salient. The idea was to push the "Jerry's" back to the Arielli Valley but the push was not successful and the 11th Brigade was withdrawn.

January to April, 1944 found us playing the very static role of looking after minor sick, exhaustions and V.D. cases in San Vito. On Sunday, January 16, Major/General Vokes attended a successful Church Parade in the square, now called Dominion Square. The next day, our unit was inspected by Brig. Bayley, D.D.M.S. 5th Corps. On January 29, #1 Mobile Bact. Lab was attack^hed.

On February 1, I went on a week's leave to Naples; remaining the first night in Avellino at the Transit Hotel which was free. Avellino was crowded with Canadian troops and I spent a pleasant evening chatting with friends. The next day I had a slow, interesting drive through Naples to #14 Canadian General Hospital, where I was

delayed with old friends. The drive was slow because of numerous carts and heavy traffic. Naples was swarming with Yanks and had been badly bombed so it was dirty and easy to see why it was disease-ridden. I was struck by the fertile soil, the mile after mile of olive groves and vineyards. The highway, lined with fruit vendors whose stands were a blaze of colour, and the oranges, apples and vegetables were, to a "bully beef" specialist, unbelievable. After supper I did ward rounds with a friend and later settled down to several cognacs, finishing up with egg, toast and cheese. It made me wonder why I hadn't opted for hospital duty.

I arrived in Naples the next morning and stayed at the Patria (Officer's Transit) Hotel. I spent considerable time walking and shopping on the Via Roma and had a drink in the Officer's Club. All the Italians live outdoors and the street seems to be their home; thus, the Via Roma was jammed with talking, gesticulating "Eyeties". I spent a social evening with two padres.

My driver went back to #14 General Hospital with the H.U.P. each night. On October 4, we did some sightseeing and at night went to the Officer's Night-Club just out of the city, high above the Bay of Naples, with a beautiful vista of the city and Mount Vesuvius. There, I ran into John Robarts, Frat. Brother at the University of Western Ontario a couple of years before I graduated. He was an Officer with the Royal Navy aboard one of the H.Q. ships on the invasion of Anzio; his ship had been badly damaged and was in port for repairs. As I recall, the Club closed at 2200 hours so I offered him a ride back to his ship. He insisted that I come aboard; stating that I would be more than welcome because of a R.N. tradition that the Mess would re-open if an officer brought in a visitor. The British officers plied us Canadian officers with drinks. My only concern was for my driver and John reassured me that he would be well taken care of. I can't recall too much of this evening except an awakening in the a.m. in John's bunk with him curled up on the floor. Little did I or anyone else dream at that time that here lay the future Premier of Ontario. On Monday, February 7, I arrived back at #4 Field Ambulance much refreshed.

The next two months were "hum drum" in our static medical roll in San Vito. On February 18, we came under 1st Canadian Corps' temporary command, much to the consternation of some unit personnel. The first evacuation of casualties by train commenced on February 10 and that day we held a Div. Medical Society meeting at #9 C.F.A. in Ortona. Several cases of diphtheria were diagnosed and treated at this time. The weather in general was cold, gloomy and wet. February 24 was a big day as we were inspected by Maj./Gen. Caswell, Brig. Lester, Brig.

McCusker, Col. Playfair and Lt./Col. Sexsmith. Our next Div. Med. Society was on February 29 at #5 Fd. Amb. On March 1, we held a Mess party but I volunteered to be Duty and Orderly Officer.

March 1: Lt./Gen. Sir Oliver Leese, G.O.C. 8th Army presented awards in "Dominion Square". Two of our O.R.'s received M.M.'s for gallantry during the attack on Ortone.

March 6: the Unit returned to be under command of 1st Canadian Division.

March 7: I had lunch with Brig. McCusker, Col. Leach and C.O. In the evening there was a cocktail party at #8 F.D.S. for them as they move back with Corps.

March 11: C.A.C. Band played in Dominion Square and I had a happy reunion with my batman and Sgt. of R.C.R. days.

March 13: We are now operating with 4 officers as others have either been sent back to the U.K. or to #15 C.G.H. and 2 are on leave.

March 15: Dinner party for C.O. (Lt./Col. Boyd) who had been ordered back to Canada as Col. i/c Hospital.

March 16: G.O.C. 5th Corps, Lt./Gen. Allfrey visited with Brig. Bayling.

March

17: Brig. Weeks and A.A. and Q.M.G. visited at noon. Sally Ann opened a recreation room.

March 18: Made arrangements for more billets and V.D. space.

March 19: Two new M.O.'s reported and two padres returned.

March 20: A.A. and Q.M.G. (Col. Gilbride) replaced by Col. John Adam. Lt./Gen. Burns now G.O.C. 1st Canadian Corps and Maj./Gen. Hoffmeister, commanding 5th Canadian Division.

March 22: Sanitation and Malaria Control meeting at 0930 hours. Cols. Farmer, Playfair, Lt./Col. Lamessurer and Major Lovall inspected the Unit. A.D.M.S. told me to pack up as I was to command #16 F.D.S. Lt./Col. Coke to be new C.O. of #4 Fd. Amb. (with Major Nicholson as his second in command.)

March 25: Attended Medical Society dinner. Spent all evening in the Mess with D.D.M.S. "Uncle Emmet" and Don Young.

March 26: Went for dinner at R.A.P. of R.C.R. with their M.O. Doug Cameron and many old friends (Doug was later Professor of Medicine at McGill University and Physician in Chief of Montreal General Hospital.) Lt./Col.

Coke arrived for supper back at the Unit and together with Major Doyle (Division Psychiatrist) and Brig. McCusker, we yakked until 0300 hours. **March 27:** I spent the morning making the rounds with

Lt./Col. Coke. After lunch, the C.O. and I visited R.A.P.'s and 1 Brigade H.Q. We had supper at #9 Fd.Amb.

Upon return to our unit, there was a magnificent reception in my room and the party broke up at 0400 hours.

March 28: A.D.M.S. (Col. Playfair) found time to drop by and wish me farewell and had lunch. I packed speedily and bade a hasty good-bye to all the lads. Arrived at #16 F.D.S., situated on a bald plain 10 m from Termoli, after dusk.

March 29: Introduction to my new command - #16 F.D.S. (Really Army troops attached to 1st Canadian Corps.) D.D.M.S. and his D.A.D.M.S. (Major Ed Corrigan) visited me. (We were the only two original R.M.O.'s, 1st Canadian Division remaining in the field; he came overseas as M.O. of the P.P.C.L.I.) It was Patty's birthday.

April 7: I spent the day breaking up the camp.

April 8: Leave camp in convoy and arrived at the new

site, Telesse(?70) at 1800 hours.

April 9: Excellent camp site. I understand that Col. Sinclair is now the A.D.M.S., 1st Canadian Division. All canvas up, slit trenches dug and everything's under control. Our lads have done a big day's work.

April 11: Capt. Metcalfe and I established Blue Light Stations in Telesse and S.Salvatore. I visited several units. Completed baseball diamond and volleyball court.

April 12: Started 6th Victory Loan with a talk to the men. I visited 8 F.D.S., 5 C.C.S. and A.D.M.S. in Ciazzo.

April 17: Brigs. Fenwick and McCusker visited.

For the next month, all was routine with the usual inspections, training, lectures, conferences; there was usually softball and volleyball in the afternoons and bridge or shows at night - a time for catching up on word from home and letter writing.

On April 24, we moved forward and established a new camp in the S.Maria area. The next day, I fraternized with our new neighbours, the U.S. Army. On May 2, the Yanks invited me to dinner - what a feast; pork chops et al., an amazing organization that has refrigerated vans with fresh meat and vegetables...so far forward. We haven't reached that advanced stage of organization but maybe we fight better when not so well fed. I had another dinner

with them on May 8, followed by a lively concert. I think they feel sorry for us and unfortunately, I can not repay them in kind.

On May 11, I attended the D.D.M.S. Conference and told about the momentous attack on the Gustav Line that goes in tonight.

May 12: Read General Alexander's and General Oliver Leese's orders to the men, explaining our battle tactics.

May 19: Informed that the Gustav Line was captured and our troops now facing the Hitler Line.

May 20: Unit moved forward alongside #2 F.D.S.

May 21: Drove D.D.M.S. (McCusker) to ? F.D.S. and spent the afternoon with C.O. Major Don Young. I returned to the unit and adjusted some of our loading.

May 22: Moved on verbal orders at 1430 hours to G850123 across Gasi River. Visited #1 F.D.S. who are very busy across the road. Excellent view of Monastery Hill with its destroyed monastery - the Abbey of Montecassino.

May 23: Important attack by 1st Canadian Division early this morning and understood it was successful but with many casualties. In the afternoon, we moved 7 miles forward, in front of the other medical units, a noisy spot among the mediums. Somewhat unhealthy but a fine location. We are 2 miles west of Pontecorvo.

May 24: Very little sleep for anyone last night because of shelling and air activity. Informed that bridgehead troops are backing out. The weather continues to be clear and hot.

May 25: Did recce of Pontecorvo at 0830 hours. Took over badly shelled hospital from the R.C.R. Set up for operation 2000 hours. #1 and #4 F.S.U., #2 F.T.U. and 6 N/S arrived at 2100 hours. During the night, we admitted 84 casualties and 10 operations were carried out. Very close air raid at night. **May 26:** Another surgical unit and research lab attached. 2nd Brigade casualties are very heavy. Got my first bit of sleep this night despite shell fire.

May 27: Relatively quiet day. Many visitors. Have put 12 Italians and 30 Pioneers to work cleaning the place up. Feeding 27 officers and approximately 200 O.R.'s. 211 beds occupied. Understand 5 Division has reached Ciprano.

May 28: D.D.M.S. (Brig. McCusker) and A.D.M.S. 1st Canadian Division (Col. Sinclair) visited and latter remained until midnight. Beds occupied=25 and slackening off of admissions. **May 29:** Brigs. Arnott and

McCusker, Lt./Col. Robertson (Guards Brigade) and Col. Anning (A.D.M.S.-S.A.A.F.) inspected and seemed pleased. Beds occupied=28 surgical patients and 2 fevers.

May 30: Admitted

14 sick, 1 battle casualty; beds occupied=18. Cols. Montgomery, McFarlane, Playfair and Matron Herman (#14 Gen.), Col. Young and D.D.M.S. visited most of the afternoon. Lt./Col. Sexsmith and Frank Shipp had lunch. In the evening, I carried out a post mortem on accidental belly wound.

June 1: Mild epidemic of dysentery among the officers, nurses and O.R.'s. Post-op cases evacuated, leaving 12 cases retained.

June 2: Struggled forward to Ciprano to visit D.D.M.S.; it took 3 1/2 hours to go 14 miles. Lunch at #8 F.D.S. and got back to unit at 1700 hours. #1 and #4 F.S.U. moved forward to 4 C.C.S. Cyprano. Research Lab to #8 F.D.S. Eight patients remain.

June 3: 1st Division of Frosinona. Casualties have been light. 1st or 5th Division to be withdrawn and to rest. Informed that in this great battle for the Lire Valley, there had been 903 Canadians killed, 2574 wounded, and over 2000 of the latter were handled by medical units of 1st Canadian Corps, as well as 400 battle casualties from other formations. The 8th Army paid great tribute to the efficiency of our medical services.

It is to be noted that the employment of Field Ambulance units in the Division had changed. Each Fd.Amb. was specifically assigned to a Brigade and its H.Q. formed an advanced dressing station (A.D.S.); there were 2 bearer companies each of 3 sections; one company carried out evacuations forward of the A.D.S., the other company developed a collecting post to clear the brigade, and supplied extra stretcher bearers and jeep ambulances to assist the R.M.D.

The Field Dressing Stations had come under D.D.M.S. control for the first time and formed advanced surgical centres on the main down traffic route after detachment of F.S.U.'s and F.T.U.'s. Sometimes they were holding units for the sick. In the battle they were approximately 6 miles apart.

June 6 (from Diary): Heard via radio that invasion of Normandy had begun. Major Generals Hartgill and Luton and Brigadiers Arnott and McCusker inspected the unit this a.m. In the afternoon, I visited Aquina airfield, Cassino and Hitler Line. Cassino had been completely flattened and main streets had been bull-dozed to allow

vehicles to pass through the town. The Hitler Line was fascinating with its gun emplacements, dug-in German tanks and, unfortunately, burnt-out allied tanks; one could easily imagine the ferocity of the battle.

My guests for supper were the A.D.M.S. Col. Playfair and Lt./Col. Sergeant.

June 7: Discharged the last of our patients. Corps moving back to Venafro for 3 wks. rest.

June 9: Received orders to move, so packed up. N/S returned to 5 C.C.S. D.D.M.S. visited in the afternoon. Advance party under Capt. Peter Spence departed.

June 10: Left ⁿPolicorvo 1740 hours and arrived at Telesse 2 hours later after uneventful, speedy trip. The advance party had done a great job and had 12 tents up.

June 11: Camp in good shape and all is well.

June 13: Started a series of trips where different officers took groups of men on tours of Vesuvius, Pompeii and Naples. One group, one destination each day.

November 17: Unit departed for over-night on the beaches, in the rain.

November 18: 0400 hours - severe electrical storm.

1045 hours - storm of tornado proportions flattened the camp; the newly arrived mail was ruined; pictures, books and magazines were destroyed. My personal notes were ruined. No one had any dry clothing and the rain continued. The truck loads of our swimmers returned completely washed out. Never saw anything like it!

June 19: Our camp a shambles; the men took whatever cover that could be found and we officers did a "no no" and slept in ambulances. More rain to-day but we were able to raise some canvas. Made plans for trip to Rome tomorrow. The D.D.M.S. had ordered me to establish a "rest camp" for Corp troops on outskirts of Rome.

June 20: Left camp 1100 hours, followed No.7 Hwy. and chose beautiful spot in olive grove two miles south of Rome, overlooking the city and beside the famous Roman ^{Aqueduct} *****(?75). Our convoy travelled 145 miles in 7 hours. The boys immediately spread canvas for the night.

June 21: Left the boys to organize the camp. At 0800 another officer and myself set out to see Rome. We picked up a guide at the Amphitheatre and he directed us to all the important sites. Had an unusual experience at St.Peter's where the Pope was in the midst of giving his blessings to Gen. Clark, his staff and a large no. of U.S. troops. We had to stand in the ante room as we were unable to gain entrance to the audience chamber. We weren't

there long before the big doors opened and, lo and behold, here was the Pope being carried out in his _____, by his Swiss Guards and they set him down right at our feet. The Pope descended, blessed all of us and walked down the hall. My only disappointment was to find that the armour of the Swiss Guards was papier mache.

June 22: Mission accomplished I left the required officers and men and, back in our camp at 1700 hours, having returned via No.6, visited #3 Cdn.Gen.Hosp. at Anagni(?76) - a very beautiful location - and the D.D.M.S. office.

June 23: Spent all a.m. reading orders and cleaning personal belongings following the deluge. 13 personnel from C.B.R.D. reported for training.

June 24: Inspected the men and billets. Took all officers to Allied Officers Club, Napoli, for supper and we had a jolly good time. Met some old friends from London, Ont. and ended up with the U.S.Navy (L.L.C.) in Pozzubli.

June 25: A.D.M.S. (Sinclair) held an "At Home" at Piedemonte d'Alife. It was a lovely garden, band in attendance. Unfortunately, rain tended to dampen things a little but it was like Old Home Week for me and I talked to McCusker, Sinclair, Playfair, Bowman, Spry, Sparling, Spence, etc. (Playfair now A.D.M.S., H.Q., 1st Echelon Allied Armies Italy - A.A.I.)

June 26: Spent day in and around Naples eating at #14 Cdn.Gen.Hosp.

July 1: Started wk's. leave at Albergo Palumbo, Ravello - set aside for Senior Officers (Major and up) of the 8th Army. Officers of lower rank stayed in hotels in Amalfi. Ravello was unique in that it stood many hundreds of feet above the Mediterranean and you gained access only by a long series of sharp switch-backs. As you look down from the top, you cannot see the city of Amalfi, only the blue sea and, to the south, on a clear day you can just make out Salerno. At night you had only the moon, stars, and broad sea with some twinkling lights of fishermen that acted like sparkles on a dark, wide mat. All this panorama in complete silence. It was heaven. The meals were excellent and I again met friends, including my pal, Ed Corrigan.

Just down the street in Ravello was a large Palatzo where King Alfonso was incarcerated for the duration. Another magnificent garden was that of Villa Cimbrone, owned and occupied by Lord Grimthorpe throughout the German occupation. At the end of his garden is a promenade almost suspended in the sky, overhanging the drop down to the sea. The charm of all this after the horrors we had been through in Sicily and Italy was fantastic. I made a note that I must return in peacetime with Patty (which was accomplished over 30 years later).

Other notable spots visited were Amalfi, Sorrento, Salerno, the Blue Grotto and Capri. A word about the latter, Capri was out-of-bounds to all troops except U.S.A. I'm sure this was respected, but at my Albergo were some Austrian officers - no regulations, ^{of course} war stopped the Aussies from doing whatever they wished to do and made it more enticing to them if something was forbidden; thus, they rented a fishing boat but needed a few more officers to cut down the cost. This was for me, so I joined them. On July 4, I arose at 0600 hours and boarded the boat at Amalfi for a delightful 3 hour trip to Capri. The skippers dropped anchor beside the famous Blue Grotto and we went for a swim by ourselves. Afterwards, we rented a farmer's cart near San Michael and drove into the city. The latter was swarming with Yankee Officers and we were not challenged by any M.P. despite the fact that it was obvious we didn't belong. Of course we were intelligent and prudent enough not to try to enter any of their hotels. The scenery was beautiful but no more so than Amalfi-Ravello. Unfortunately, the centre of the city was full of souvenir shops, gyp joints, and generally trash. We were all happy with our experience but only too happy to return to our lovely "home" in Ravello.

On July 6, this grand leave ended upon my return to #16 F.D.S. Everything ^{is} ship shape as it should be in a happy unit!

Had a D.D.M.S. Conference all morning on July 7. Took off for Rome in the late afternoon to attend the marriage of Capt. Peter Spine ^{gncc} to a Canadian N/S tomorrow. Woke Peter up at our camp at 0200 hours and we unit officers drank to his health.

Spent the morning shopping in Rome. I had lunch at Villa Borghese. An impressive marriage ceremony was held at #5 C.G.H. at 1500 hours, with a reception at Nurses Home. Afterwards, I did a tour of the city with supper at the Chateau Laurier and was back at the camp on the hill by 11 p.m.

I left camp at 0930 hours, July 5 and we drove to Anzio. Unfortunately, it was raining but the experience was worthwhile. It was a weary ride back to the unit over bad roads. We made up for it with a splendid supper, having Peter and his wife for guests.

July 10: a busy day in the Orderly Room, catching up.

July 11: another busy day on my quarterly report ^{and} other paper matters. To #4 C.C.C. in late afternoon for business meeting of the Medical Society. It was reported that the incidence of V.D. was terrible viz 286 cases per week.

July 13: Our camp outside Rome closed and our officer with O.R.'s returned.

The weather during the next 20 days was extremely hot, with ^{series} si***(?78) of extremely hot humid days on July 21 and 22. The D.D.M.S. Brig. McCusker had lunch with us on July 20 and put us in the picture. Capt. Spence and Adv. Party left for Fulingo(?79). #8 F.D.S. made over into #8 Light Field Ambulance. Next day we heard the attempt on Hitler's life had failed. On July 22, the Corps Medical Society Dance, which I helped to plan, was held at the Albergo Grande and it was a great success. I spent the majority of the time chatting with many old friends.

July 29: Received instructions re: Exercise "Trigger" or the visit of General Collingwood (i.e. King George VI).

July 30: Attended meeting at #5 C.C.S. regarding King's visit to Corps. Started to break up camp.

July 31: King George's visit to 1 Cdn. Corps was very impressive ceremony at S. Angelo airstrip. Returned in late afternoon to inspect the camp, loading, etc.

August 1: Inspected campsite and convoy left at 0750 hours. Lunch at Frasinone - 1430 hours; arrived at Transit Camp south of Rome at 1730 hours and bi***^{packed}(?79) over night.

August 2: Moved through Rome, followed No.3 through Narni, Terni, and Spolito. Stopped for the night in valley near Spolito.

August 3: Set up temporary camp. Visited Corps H.Q. and spent the afternoon locating our R.A.C. in Spolito.

August 5: Visited Corps H.Q. in a.m. and then visited Assisi especially the church and convent of St. Francis, Basilica and St. Pufino's Cathedral. The town was clean and untouched by the war and it was an interesting experience in the home of Fransiscan Order of Monks.

August 6: Message at 1330 hours to move at once to location south of Florence. Arrived at 4 Br.C.C.S. at 2330 hours - received a message from D.D.M.S. 13 Corps to proceed to building in Uzzano(?79) (near Grin(?79)) where we arrived at 0430 hours. We were delayed because of the breakdown of 2 of our lorries; however, it is a beautiful casa on a huge estate with lovely gardens. The 1st Canadian Division had entered the line south of Florence under command of 13 Corps.

August 7: The men worked hard on whipping this villa into shape. The D.D.M.S. 13 Corps visited in the afternoon.

August 8: Received our first casualties at 0800; #2 F.S.U. attached and 5 operations carried out in a.m. Visited #8 (S.A.) C.C.S. and brought back some whole blood. Count Castelbasco, the owner of this villa, spent the day with us. We are told that the Tedesci(?80) carried his wife off with them when they retreated and he nightly crosses the Ponte Vecchio with a group of Partisans in search of her. He speaks excellent english and in peacetime has a big market for his Chianti Classico in America. The huge vats in the lower floor of this casa were a joy to behold and our tastebuds were tickled. My "digs" was a huge room, barren except for a huge canopied 4-poster of ancient vintage, on which I threw my bed-roll. Hardly perceptible in the decorative linen wall covering was a secret passage to the top and bottom of the casa. The ceiling was decorated with paintings of nudes and cherubs - good thing our lighting was poor else it would have been difficult to sleep. The count had a more modern suite in the casa.

The D.A.D.M.S. visited and informed me we would be moving in about 48 hours. This had been a very busy day.

August 9: Maj./Gen. Hartgill (D.M.S. Allied Force H.Q.), Brig. Chyne (D.D.M.S. 13 Corps) and Col.Sinclair (A.D.M.S. 1st Cdn.Div.) visited. A new plan had evolved and the intention now was to launch an attack against Bologne, with the 8th Army on the Adriatic Coast and the 5th Army from Florence. The unit packed up and prepared to move.

August 10: The unit remained packed up and ready to move. I went forward to the outskirts of Florence to visit H.Q. 13 Corps and #2 F.D.S.

August 11: The Count accuses us of stealing vina rosa from his immense cellars. I wouldn't be surprised.

August 12: Had friendly chat with the Count in a.m. and he served me some of his best Chianti. At 1100 hours, our convoy took off, travelled 146 miles through Grave, Perugia, Assisi, Foligno, and arriving at our old campsite at 2030 hours. All of us hungry and tired.

August 13: Set up camp again. Visited Corps H.Q. Attended a conference regarding our move to Ancona. The mosquitoes and flies are particularly bad. The new army plan is to crack the Gothic Line which stretched to the

west from Pesaro, along the north bank of the Foglia River with an advanced line along the Metauro River. We had returned to 1st Canadian Corps Command. The attack was to be launched simultaneously by the 5th Corps, 1st Cdn. Corps and 2nd Polish Corps with Canadians in the centre. The medical arrangements were to be similar to those used during the Liri(781) Valley battle. The attack was scheduled for August 25.

August 15: Packed up and ready to move to Jesi tonight but last minute cancellation and men quite fed up. Maj./Gen. Lease, G.O.C. 8th Army (who had succeeded Monty early in the year), visited corps troops this afternoon and told us about the invasion of the S. of France. At dusk I gave a talk to our unit.

August 16: Unable to find out why the move was cancelled.

August 18: Heard the German Army in N. France liquidated.

August 20: Paris being beseiged on 80 m front and in south France, the allies reached Aix.

August 21: Packed up and convoy on the road at 1900 hours. Travelled by Hwys. 3 and 76 to Jesi, where we settled in at 0430. It had been a beautiful night for the move. Montgomery announces over the radio that the enemy forces in Normandy have been completely smashed.

August 22: Practically no sleep. Layed out camp under trees surrounding a field by the river and visited H.Q. Corps in the morning. In the afternoon I attended a meeting of surgeons at #1 C.G.H.

August 23: Weather has been particularly hot and humid the past 48 hours. By radio, we learned ~~that~~ about the liberation of Paris and Marseilles. At midnight the news of the capitualtion of Rumania. (With all this good news it was hard to imagine that we were about to enter one of the bloodiest battles of the war.)

August 24: Conference with D.D.M.S. at 0900 hours. Capt. Sturdy(282) and I went on a recce; visited A.D.M.S. 1 Cdn. Div. and found suitable staging area on Cisano River. Then had my second swim in the Adriatic. Had another conference with the A.D.M.S. in the evening.

August 25: Arose 0600. Led convoy to new location near S. Michele, 12 m inland from Adriatic, 20 m south of Pesaro. F.S.U.'s, F.T.U., padres and nurses arrived in the afternoon. Visited Col. Coke, our new A.D.M.S. 1 Cdn. Div., also #4 Fd. Amb. and 4 C.C.S. The attack of 1 Cdn. Div. to cross the Metauro River went in at 2300 hours. (It was here in 207 B.C. that the Romans defeated the Carthoginians and killed Hannibal's brother.) We heard that Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill and Gen. Sir Harold Alexander had visited the front line in the afternoon.

August 26: The battle was progressing favourably and there were few casualties. Brig. McCusker and I went for a recce across the Metaura River in the afternoon.

August 27: A confusing day as the unit got divided, and our water and Q.M.Stores(783) lorries broke down. We are being badly shelled. Went forward with Frank Shipp to Montebroccio(783) and picked a possible new site.

August 28: Ringed(783) with shells. H.Q. M.A.C. behind us hit; 2 killed and 2 wounded. Very busy getting place in shape. Brig. McCusker here for lunch. Our Surg. Unit doing surgery. Took Major Spence to Rear Div.H.Q. and thence to Montebroccio. Heavy shelling continues.

August 29: Three major surgical cases, and 3 burials this busy morning. Visited the food area with Brig. McCusker and Col. Playfair in the afternoon. In the evening: 9 beds occupied and 3 vacant.

August 30: Moved food to Montebroccia about halfway between Metauro and Foglia Rivers. Our advanced surgical centre was set up by 1800 hours. First surgery by 2100 hours. Had left an officer, a n/s and rear party to look after 9 post-op cases. Our present site is in a civic hospital and quarters are quite cramped. Officers and Sgts. sleeping in the town. We admitted 3, evacuated 3 and retained 8 casualties. No sleep this night.

August 31: We got progressively busier until, at 1600 hours, we had 21 casualties awaiting major surgery. At this point, #3 F.D.S. opened up and took off some of the pressure. In the past 48 hours, Priority III casualties had been evacuated by M.A.C. directly to #1 C.G.H. at Jesi. One surgeon, George Bastido, did surgery for 36 hours without rest. The other Surg. Unit with n/s did not report until 1430 hours; it having taken them 6 hours to travel 8 miles. We three M.O.'s worked through another night and the lack of one M.O. made considerable difference. The log showed: 54 admissions, 39 detained, 9 died.

September 1: Dr.Dave Johnson carried out surgery all night until 1000 hours. I visited #3 F.D.S. We re-opened at 1700 hours and Dr. Johnson started to do surgery again in the evening. The log shows: 19 amputations (or 22 limbs), 8 admissions, 4 evacuated, 33 retained. Was able to get cat's naps on a stretcher today.

September 2: Mostly German casualties this morning. F.S.U.'s and F.T.U. left us at 1900 hours. Unit closed at 2300 hours and I finally got to bed. Log: 26 admissions, 14 evacuations, 37 remaining, 3 died (1 Cdn.).

September 3: 2 n/s went forward to #1 F.D.S. Brig. McCusker visited and warned us to be ready to move forward.

Log: 2 admissions, 2 evacuations, 29 remaining, 1 died.

September 4: Finally, a routine day after a hectic

week.

September 5: Rear party rejoined us, having turned patients over to #3 F.D.S. Major Spence and I did recce of forward area in the afternoon; visiting 5 C.C.S., #1 F.D.S. and #2 F.D.S.*****(?84-85) Also visited A.D.S. 5 Fd.Amb. in Ca**(?85) which is a very lively spot.

September 6: Had lunch at Corps H.Q. Visited the forward areas and had a long chat with my old pal Major Corrigan. The rains started.

September 7: Unit remains on wheels, ready to move. Had ^enteritis(?85) and tooth-ache so low-key all day. Major Spence S.O.S. to #5 Cdn.Fd.Amb. Hear Allies are on German soil.

September 8: Frank Shipp replaced. Had lunch at Corps H.Q. All roads are in terrible shape and all bridges over Foglia River are washed out.

September 9: Remained in camp all day being troubled with facial neuralgia. Apparently no advance on our front, with fighting heavy and exhausted. Log: 2 evacuations, 1 death, 1 P.M., 6 remaining.

September 10: Visited rear corps H.Q. and no orders. Another death today making a total of 19 (2 P.O.W.). Outdoor picture show for second evening.

September 11: Recce Pessaro area and chose V.Imperiale(?85) as staging area. Lunch at #5 C.C.S. at Cattolica. Log: 3 evacuations, "Billies" 2 remaining.

September 12: Advance party moved off to Pesaro. Last casualties evacuated.

September 13: Start time 0830 hours and arrived in Pesaro 1000 hours. Set up our staging area in a beautiful bombed-out villa and spent the rest of the day getting settled in.

September 14: Now overcast and cool. Visited 4 and 5 C.C.S., #2 F.D.S. and Corps H.Q. this a.m. 1st Cdn.Div. attack went in this morning and reported as progressing favourably. The ground shook all afternoon and evening and at night there were beautiful fireworks to the north. A great night to sleep out under the stars.

September 15: Visited Corps H.Q. and lectured our troops this a.m. 1st Division lost 1000 men before Fortunato Ridge was finally cleared.

September 16: Went to Corps H.Q. and was greeted with congratulations on promotion to A/Lt.Col. in command of #4 Cdn.Fd.Amb. I truly thought they were kidding. The Brig. asked me to stay for lunch and then came back to #16 F.D.S. with me. Major Peter Spence arrived to take over command from me. Party in the evening and a big time had by all.

September 17: Packed up and moved to take command of #4 Fd.Amb. in Cattolica. Spent the afternoon inspecting the unit with Major Paul Tisdale (2 i/c). Naturally, there was another party in the evening.

September 18: Another busy day getting used to my new duties. Luckily, I'm no stranger to most of the lads. Lt/Col. Bobby Clark, O.C. Irish Regt. visited (my original Adjt. of R.C.R. on coming overseas). Had supper at #5 Br.Lt.Fd.Amb.

September 19: Fine introduction to the unit with 4 men up for orders this morning. Visited Div.H.Q., 1 Bde.H.Q. and Company this morning. Went to #5 C.C.S. for meeting of committee on Nursing Orderly exams in the afternoon. Col. Coke, A.D.M.S. 1st Division visited.

September 20: Canadians have broken through Gothic Line. All quiet here.

September 21: Rimini taken and 1st Cdn.Div. pulled out of the line to be relieved by 2nd New Zealand Division. I got the tactical picture on visiting Bde.H.Q. and returned to speak to our troops and ordered an issue of rum. A.D.M.S. and D.A.D.M.S. had dinner and spent the evening with us. It was a very enjoyable evening.

September 22: Received orders to move tomorrow; carried out recce of new site. Visited C.C.P. in the afternoon. Received a visit from H.Major R.O. "Rusty" Wilkes, M.C., who had been Chaplain of R.C.R. since 1940 and had just been relieved of his duties with them.

September 23: Moved the A.D.S. from Cattolica to two miles north of Riccione near Rimini. Visited Bde., R.C.R., H.&P.E., and 48th. A very tiring day. Inconveniently, our mess is 3/4 mi. from the A.D.S.

September 24: All tps. (287) being visited and thanked by G.O.C./Cdn. Div. Had Bde. Conference in morning and long session with the A.D.M.S. in afternoon. Visited R.C.R. in the evening, meeting many old friends such as Jim Houghton, Frank D^urton (287) etc. (Jim had been on staff at Corps H.Q. but was now back in command of "A" Co.) Afflicted again with dysentery.

September 25: Held a long ^{unit} limit (?87) conference and laid on details of a S.B. course. In afternoon, attended a M.O. Conference at #9 Cdn.Fd.Amb. Another meeting with Bde.R.M.O.'s in evening.

September 26: Held a conference to go over new War Establishment just received; we are now known as #4 Cdn.Lt.Fd. Amb. Much work carried out followed by an officers meeting at night.

(insert) We were now kept busy for several weeks affecting the change-over. This change meant that instead of having two Companies that would leap-frog one another, there were to be six inter-changeable and independent sections. This change would result in about 80 (?62b) men being S.O.S.

September 27: Conference and busy all day with unit administration. Had meeting with senior N.C.O.'s and discussed our new W.E. that night.

September 28: Conference and routine morning. Noon, Col. Playfair joined me in a drink; later we were joined by Col. Coke and another old friend H.Capt.Padre Stu East. Followed by A.D.M.S. conference. Capt. Bishop gave us a lecture on rehabilitation in the evening.

September 29: High wind and rain continues. Worked all day and into the evening on the new W.E. Col. Haig spoke to the men on rehabilitation.

September 30: Conference and inspected unit lines in morning. Worked on new W.E. and made final decisions in afternoon.

October 2: Personnel surplus to new W.E. returned to C.B.R.D. Visited A.D.M.S. at Div.H.Q. Otherwise, a routine day.

October 3: Company (?88) Sections organized on an ABCD basis. Farewell drinks to C.S.M.Goody at noon.

October 4: On 24 hour notice to move. Major Paul Tisdale (Second-in-Command) to be S.O.S. and proceed to #4Cdn.C.C.S. Had party for him at night with A.D.M.S. Col. Coke and Lt.Col. Ed Corrigan present.

October 5: Had long visit with Col. Gordon Sinclair. Tisdale left for his new posting. Capts. Anderson and MacLeod went on leave.

October 6: Visited all three R.M.O.'s, Bde.H.Q. and Div.H.Q. as well as a trip to Rimini to see Lt.Col. Ed Corrigan.

October 7: Hampered by terrific amount of rain and general attack to go in to-night. Inspected lines and talked to the troops this morning. Visited #13 and #16 F.D.S. in Rimini.

October 8: Received 12 hour warning order to move as of noon tomorrow. Had supper at Bde.H.Q.

October 9: Visited Bde. and Div.H.Q. Then went forward to visit Col. Ken Hunter, A.D.M.S. 5th Ard. Div. (288) and had lunch with Lt.Col. Shipp. Attended O Group Conference at Bde. Our move postponed until tomorrow. There were many cancellations.

October 10: Went up front to recce A.D.S. site in San Archangelo. Took over from #214 Br.Fd.Amb. and had supper with them. Unit arrived at 2100 hours. O Group Conference at 2200 hours. Our Bde. taking over from #169 Bde. tomorrow. Area being shelled heavily. We were now on the left flank, with N.2 Div. in middle and a composite group known as "Cumberland Force" on the Adriatic flank.

October 11: Opened A.D.S. at 0700 hours. The men had a large clean-up job to tackle. Major McLeod and I went forward to Savignerro where we established a C.C.P. Considerable shelling. Heard that A.D.M.S. Col. Coke had an appendectomy last night. Col. Gordon Sinclair filling in for him. Lt.Col. Magnus Spence, O.C. #5 Cdn.Fd.Amb. evacuated.

October 12: No battle casualties during the night. Despite heavy shelling I visited C.C.P. and Bde.H.Q.; then went forward to large mansion, Villa Gveldo (?89), at present T^oo^e (?) H.Q. of R.C.R. but possible future site for A.D.S. Our forward troops have reached Sesh Pegnaso River (?89) and by eveing the H.&P.E. had crossed the river. Not many casualties. A.D.M.S. Col. Gordon Sinclair visited.

October 13: Took Col. Gordon Sinclair into forward area and visited C.C.P. this morning. Our casualties are light although our advance is held up. #2 N² Div. operating with about 50% of strength is meeting with stiff opposition in our right flank.

October 14: Visited our C.C.P. with Col. Sinclair and met our new A./A.D.M.S. Lt.Col. McCannell. Col. Sinclair to report to 1st Erh. (?89) (A.A.I) and Col. Rusty Playfair to report to 3rd Cdn.Inf.Div. as A.D.M.S. Had a dinner in honour of Maj./Gen. R.M.Luton, D.M.S., C.M.H.Q. at #4 C.C.S. and it was a gala affair.

October 15: Progress is slow but steady and casualties light. Visited Bde.H.Q. and C.C.P. Our lads have done excellent job in cleaning up our building.

October 16: Visited R.A.P.'s with Maj. MacLeod. I wanted to move the A.D.S. forward but Bde. occupying all available suitable buildings. Ordered to throw a party for D.M.S. tomorrow.

October 17: Busy morning with casualties. Maj.Gen. Luton inspected in the afternoon and we had a tea party - all spit and polish - but quite successful. The lads did a grand job.

October 18: #3 Br.C.C.S. moving in. Spent morning looking for a new location to no avail and in the afternoon made a dicker (?90) with #7 Cdn.Fd.Amb. and we move to Rimini tomorrow. Couple of our men wounded.

October 19: Moved unit to Rimini and quarters will be nice once cleaned up. 5th Army (U.S.) within 9 mi. of Bologna.

October 20: Held lengthy unit conference this morning and then to visit A.D.M.S. in Santarcangelo. Visited Col. Coke in C.C.S. We are holding 10 minor sick.

October 21: Inspected unit lines. Visited Div.H.Q. and A.D.M.S. Lt.Col. McCannell visited us in the afternoon. We are running a N.O.course. Holding 20 sick. All R.M.O.'s assembled here for dinner and a talk.

October 22: Went up to F.D.L.'s. Got roundly shelled in Casena. Visited #5 and #4 Fd.Amb. and #16 F.D.S. which is open in Savignano(?) and A.D.M.S. office. Lt.Col. Darling visited in afternoon. Canadians have taken Cervia, 20 mi. up the coast.

October 23 to November 2: Completely quiet and general routine. Having reached the Ronco, the 1st Cdn.Corps. was taken out of the line for a well-deserved rest and were relieved by "Porterforce" similar to "Cumberland Force".

The weather had become cool and wet.

November 3: Our Fd.Amb. was attached to Porterforce and moved from Rimini to Cervia during the morning. Carried out extensive recce for building and having found one reported to H.Q.Porterforce. Left the T.O. and returned to Cervia. Visited Lt.Col. Shipp, O.C. #7 Lt.Fd.Amb. The latter provided medical care for the right flank and our #4 left flank. I was to be Senior Medical Officer and co-ordinate the evacuation of our casualties. This had been quite a day because of rain and mud to such an extent it would have to be seen to be believed.

November 3: (?) Led two Sections to new site and opened an A.D.S. at 1200 hours. Visited ^{on} R.A.P. and attended Porterforce Conference. Remainder of H.Q. arrived at noon. Had conference with officers and Sr. N.C.O.'s in evening. We got shelled at intervals.

November 4: In the morning called at Porterforce H.Q., A.D.M.S. office, #10 Br.Fd.Amb. and #1 C.C.S. in Casina and firmed up evacuation arrangements. Called in on medical section attached to R.C.D.'s. This area is my idea of Holland with its many dykes and I plowed through 2 miles of water, a foot deep. The unit is completely settled in and I had a very tiring day. The men are to receive a daily rum ration on this duty.

November 5: Visited outlying Sections; all quiet.

November 6: Visited P.F.H.Q., and R.M.O.'s. Force consists of 27 L., R.C.D.'s, 2 Fd.Regts. and 1 R.H.A. One of our officers liberated some turkeys so we are going in for farming. Also we are not in full production of "Blue Flame", a potent alcohol we distil in the Officer's Mess from vino. Our Batmen were responsible for the care of our still. The name comes from our instructions to them to keep the still going until the batch will burn with a blue flame, when a small quantity is tested. Wine was plentiful in Italy as it was a rare farmer who didn't own a huge vat of vino. Most of it wasn't a great joy to one's palate but on the other hand it was safer to drink that ration water, that chlorinated stuff from the tank lorry. The decent wine we could get chiefly by barter for a few cigarettes but the sour wine was procured for free and there was still good alcohol content which could be had by distillation. The necessary equipment for our portable still was picked up from shelled abandoned hospitals. This clear pure alcohol "Blue Flame" could pep up any non-alcoholic drink such as lemonade. Most times we were too busy to tend the still but given a relatively quiet period we were back into the distilling business!

November 7: Away from unit all day visiting Carena, Riccioni and Cosenatina. (?) Had a turkey dinner thanks to our farm. The turkeys were acquired by a brave foraging party going into "no man's land" at night and capturing such turkeys as were running loose.

November 8: Considerable bombing and shelling just forward of us. The boys liberated 3 turkeys and 12 chickens last night. In the morning I took Maj. Anderson, who had just returned from leave, to visit each R.A.P. Our troops staged an amusing pro wrestling match in the evening.

November 9: Routine. One of our officers is organizing civilian medical services. Took tea with owners of our casa.

November 10 - 20: All very routine and on 20th I attended a conference in Riccione to meet our new G.O.C. 1st Cdn. Corps. Lieut. Gen. Charles Foulkes, C.B.E. (the same R.C.R. officer who as a Major met my wife and other officers' wives at Liverpool and conducted them to London in 1940). (sp⁹²)

He gave an excellent talk. Next day I repeated most of this to our men.

November 22: Attended conference at Div.H.Q. where we were given the intentions of 1 Cdn. Corps and of the location of the areas for #1 and #5 Cdn. Divs. I then did a recce of the area from Montoni and Ronco Rivers.

November 23: Visited H.Q.P.F. and attended A.D.M.S. conferences. I attended a farewell dinner for Brig. McCuskey (?) who is leaving. It was a very successful party and I recommend the night a "B" Mess. Bed at 0400 hours.

November 24 and 25: Routine.

November 26: G.O.C. conference lasting 1 1/2 hours at Riccione and heard about Operation "Chuckle" for the 3rd time. Spent the afternoon with Col. Coke who has returned as A.D.M.S.

November 27: Up forward in Jeep all morning. Corps is moving up.

November 28: 2nd day of rain. Took me 2 1/2 hours to get to Rimini because of bad roads. Visited D.D.M.'s, A.D.M.'s, Lt. Col. Shipp and had lunch at #2 F.D.S. Carried out further recce of forward area.

November 29: Rain continuing and cool. Routine.

November 30: 1 C.I.B. moved up during the night. I visited Bde.H.Q. and each R.A.P. Attended A.D.M.'s conference in afternoon.

December 1: Bde. moves across Rocco (Ronco?) River. Visited Div. and Bde.H.Q. and each R.A.P. An entire day spent in the Jeep.

December 2: Attack launched by 3 and 12 C.I.B.'s this morning. Our Car Post (?) joined 1 C.I.B. across the Ronco River. In the morning, I visited R.A.P.'s, Bde. and Div.H.Q. In the afternoon I saw Col. Monague to protest the C.S.M. posted to us from C.B.R.D.

December 3: 3 C.I.B. attack very successful. In the morning carried out recce close to Russi and in the afternoon returned to unit and brought them across the Ronco River.

December 4: Clear and cool. Moved in advance of unit to a building in Russi. Opened A.D.S. at 1100 hours in a shelled out wing of a Civil Hospital. I visited R.A.P.'s and Bde.H.Q. Our boys worked very hard and made excellent job of cleaning up our A.D.S. The civilians gave all of us a rousing reception.

December 5: Cloudy, cool with drizzle. R.C.R. and H.&P.E. attacked across Lamone River at 0100 hours but our troops had to withdraw because of a fierce counterattack. The R.C.R. had 2 Companies decimated, leaving them with about 30 men per Corps. (294), one Major and two Captains killed. The new D.D.M.S. Brig. Elder and Brig. McCusker had lunch with us and said farewell to latter. We were quite busy handling the 70 battle casualties and I made the observation "the line of evacuation is much too long."

December 6: Major Anderson awarded the D.S.O. that I had written up for him and at the same time he took off for Rome and returned to the U.K. #2 F.D.S. opened up an advanced surgical centre in Russi in the afternoon, despite shelling. A counterattack by 3 C.I.B. was cancelled because of the inclement weather.

December 7: Visited R.A.P.'s, Bde.H.Q., C.C.P. and Div.H.Q. Attack to go in tonight and arranged to take Capt.J.Bradshaw, C/Fd.T.U. (294) out to our C.C.P. at 2100 hours to see the start of our attack but it was cancelled by the 8th Army, apparently due to a breach of security.

December 8: Visited Ravenna including the Cathedral which was extremely interesting. Parts of the city are badly smashed. Nothing new happening on our front. Had exciting night with eight shells into and around our A.D.S.

December 9: Our attack was postponed. The shell fire on Russi has increased. Brig. Smith has been replaced by Brig. Calder. Lt.Col. Ritchie of R.C.R. also given the gate and replaced by Lt.Col. Reid, D.S.O.E.D.

December 10: A very busy day amid intermittent shelling. At 1630 hours an "O" Group at Bde.H.Q. and given all details for our attack tonight at 2130 hours, to be preceded by heavy artillery barrage. Another "O" Group at 1930 hours.

December 11: The C&Y, W.N.S.R. and 48th have established a bridgehead across the Lamone River. Handled about 42 battle casualties during the night.

December 12: 1 C.I.B. took over from 3 C.I.B. advancing NW, crossing the Vecchio River and reaching the Naviglio. The morale in the R.C.R. and the H.&P.E. is very poor. There is no bridge across the Lamone River and this makes the evacuation of casualties very difficult.

December 13: Went out to Relay Post in early morning and walked to our C.C.P. Picked up by the A.D.M.S. Col. Coke and then we had two hours of high excitement, being chased by "Moaning Minnies". The H.&P.E. and C&Y very badly cut up. My humour wasn't helped any by my third day of dysentery.

December 14: A steady stream of casualties but not considered heavy. Spent all morning in forward area. 2 C.I.B. have firm bridgehead across Naviglio River. Our A.D.S. received direct hit in afternoon but no casualties.

December 15: 1 C.I.B. now on left flank with H.&P.E. in reserve. Had lunch at C.C.P. and place is holey with shells. Spent most of the afternoon with the A.D.M.S. Section with H.&P.E. brought in for rest as they were badly shaken. The A.D.S. fairly busy all day.

December 16: 2 C.I.B. and 3 C.I.B. changed places during the night. The 1st Bde. trying to enlarge bridgehead across Lamone River. To C.C.P. in morning in Traversara and no change in general situation. A very busy day in the A.D.S.

December 17: Russi shelled heavily at times and forward areas are quite "hot". A.D.S. busy.

December 18: H.&P.E. and R.C.R. repulsed again on attempt to cross the Vecchio River. The morale of these poor kids is shot. Visited R.A.P.'s, C/1 C.I.B. in the morning. The F.D.S. is very busy and at noon while D.D.M.S. Brig. Sinclair was visiting, a shell tore through the building without exploding, so "the F.D.S. will be closing forthwith".

December 19: #2 F.D.S. closed at 0800 hours. We closed for b. (296) casualties at 1600 hours and #5 Fd. Amb. opened up about 1 3/4 mi. up the road. Advised by A.D.M.S. to move back so spent rest of day on recce of rear areas including Ravenna and S.Pietro.

December 20: Requested permission from A.D.M.S. to return to our former building near Porterforce H.Q. and although out of Div. area permission was granted, thus guaranteeing a quiet area in which to spend Christmas. Our Advance Party left in the afternoon.

December 21: Moved back to S.Pietro during the night. Brought Padre Stu East (of 48th) back with me to Rest Area. (He had baptized our daughter, back in the U.K. when he was Padre of the P.P.C.L.^{I.}~~B.~~)

December 22: Capt. Gregg McLoughlin (R.M.O. of R.C.D.'s, recently with 4 Fd.Amb. for short period as reinforcement officer) and Dvr. Joslin were blown up by a Teller (sp? 96) mine early this morning. I happened to be visiting the forward lines a few minutes behind them. Apparently they pulled over just before the cross roads as it was being shelled and struck a mine. There was very little left of Joslin or the Jeep but I could see Capt. McLoughlin's body lying about 30 ft. from the road. I ordered my driver to remain mid-road, borrowed his bayonet, then picked my way through the minefield, removed personal effects from the bodies and returned to our Jeep. Possibly fool-hardy of me but I was quite upset at coming upon this tragedy and had personal admiration for this serious officer who spent all his spare time with us reading or writing a treatise comparing Christianity and Communism. (Unlike the rest of us who were either writing letters, playing cards or drinking "Blue Flame" during leisure time.)

I experienced a good deal of enemy shell fire while I was up forward and there was much air activity day and night. 1st Div. being moved back out of the line for a rest. We seem to be formed up along the Senio (?97) River.

December 23-24: Visited forward units. Attended funeral for Pte. Joslin in afternoon, conducted by Padre Wilkes. Part of 1 C.I.B. out of line for Christmas but another attack planned for Dec. 26. Hard to understand because the troops are truly worn out, have lost most of their experienced bodies, therefore are inexperienced with too few reinforcements. The Canadians are fighting like a boxer with one hand tied behind his back. When you cannot make any progress and you keep looking back over your shoulder, it doesn't take a psychologist to understand that morale would and had sunk to an all time low.

December 25: Christmas Day started with church parade at which I read the lesson. At noon I spoke to the unit in our mess hall and this was followed by all of us drinking punch together. As per tradition, the officers served the O.R.'s and our menu was soup, turkey, potatoes, cauliflower, plum pudding or mince pie and tea. (Perhaps I should explain here that, quite unofficially, we left two O.R.'s behind, while we were in action, to look after the farm. This had been a very profitable and popular move.) The afternoon we had arranged a musical programme

from our unit resources. I have never hear "The Lord's Prayer" sung as beautifully as did one of our young tenors. Wine and rum flowed freely because by common consent we had saved up our daily ration for this occasion. Our A.D.M.S. Col. Coke honoured us with his presence mid-afternoon and spoke to the men. I spoke and read Lt.Col. McCartney's Christmas message from home. (He brought the 4th overseas and never forgot us.) The afternoon was filled with jokes, horse play and badinage (?98) A never-to-be forgotten Christmas passed too quickly!

December 26-31: Routine. Most time spent in visiting Div. H.Q., Bde.H.Q., C.C.P., 5 C.C.S. and F.D.S.'s. All our officers gathered for supper with poker songs and drinks in the evening, ending with seeing New Year's in in the Sgts.' mess. It had been an eventful bloody year and we were glad to see the end of it.

January 1, 1945: At noon attended the G.O.C.'s "At Home". Returned to have drinks in our Sgts.' mess and to toast this grand bunch of fellows. In the afternoon attended a conference at Bde.H.Q. Afterwards visited #4 C.C.S. and #5 C.C.S. All ranks seemed to enjoy this day and tended to make us forget our sadness and, yes, homesickness.

January 2: Up visiting forward units all morning and in afternoon did end-of-month paperwork. #5 Div. started offensive to *** (?99) up to Adriatic on this side of Senio River. Heard some startling news this afternoon viz. the D.D.M.S. Brig. Sinclair is considering sending me to command #2 Lt.Fd.Amb. and I take a dim view of it.

January 3: Routine. Busy writing quarterly report and registering my feelings about the new W.E. which in general are not favourable. 2 C.I.B. attacking tonight to clear the Senio bulge.

January 4: So far this year each day has been clear and cool. Spent day doing administration and finishing quarterly report. Col. Hunter, A.D.M.S.#5 Div. is in my hair again, this time wanting a Section to accompany the R.C.R. who are temporarily under command 12 C.I.B.

January 5: Visited our C.C.P. who are with the R.C.R. and also our A.D.M.S. The 2 C.I.B. attack has been successful and 1 Cdn. Corps line now runs the length of the Senio River.

January 6-9: Routine.

January 10: Visited #7 L.F.A., C.C.P., Bde. and A.D.M.S. in morning. Chose three of our veterans to return to Canada with the first group to return to Canada on rotational leave (reg. men who had served overseas for over 5 years). Three of our M.O.'s left for leave in Rome.

January 11: Visited C.C.P., Bde. and A.D.M.S. Farewell dinner for one of our officers.,

January 12: Winter has truly set in for roads are very treacherous because of ice. In morning visited C.C.P. and A.D.M.S. An afternoon of administration and returned for A.D.M.S. conference at 1600 hours. Had two guests to share a grand chicken dinner with us.

January 13: Held morning parade in Mess Hall and the lads were smartly turned out. Called out each of the four returning to Canada on leave and each in turn said a few farewell words. Invited the four of them to the Officers' mess for a drink of rum. Then carried out a full inspection of the unit pointing out the things that must be improved.

January 14-19: Routine.

January 20: Started day by being congratulated by Lt.Col. Magnus Spence O.C. 5 Fd.Amb. on my being Mentioned In Dispatches. Held parade and inspection at 1000 hours at which our R.S.M. gave a farewell speech (on 2nd draft for leave to Canada). Took Mr. Cooper to C.C.P. where we had dinner and fine chat over whisky for part of afternoon. Returned to A.D.S. where Col. Coke and Mr. Cooper were our guests for dinner. Followed this with a poker game ending up finally in the Sgts. Mess. I was able to get to bed at 4 a.m. Thank goodness we have one R.S.M. at a time!

January 22: To C.C.P., Bde.H.Q. and A.D.M.S. where I asked the latter for leave which was granted and I leave for Florence tomorrow. In evening I attended our O.R.'s dance for an hour; there were multi people in attendance. Afterwards I drove to a pleasant Officers' Dance at the R.C.D.'s but left early.

January 23: Left S. Pietro with driver and H.W.P. at 0930 hours and arrived in Florence at 1400 hours. We followed Hwy. #67 which climbed over the ridge of mountains which was risky but beautiful and impossible if it hadn't been for our chains. I registered at the Cdn. Officers Hotel (Albergo Minerva on Piazza S.Maria Novello). (?101) Put my batman-driver up in a clean pensione. Sat down to an excellent dinner at 1830 hours. Went to Cdn. Officers Club at 2000 hours but unfortunately it closed at 2030 hours. Returned to Minerva for drinks and in bed by 2300 hours.

January 24: Visited S.Lorenzo and San Maria del Fiora (the Cathedral). Climbed Grotto bell-tower, one of the most beautiful in the world, all 444 steps and me with multi sweaters and coats. Wow! Walked various streets and

had coffee in the American Officers Club. This had been a men's club and was a rich swanky place. Returned to Minerva for lunch and meeting with several old friends. Spent afternoon seeing the sights "a pied" with tea at the British Officers Club - thus providing me with an opportunity to study and compare characters of three allied countries. Attended a G.I. Variety Show in the evening with Lt.Col. Shipp.

January 25: Another day of absorbing the immense beauty of Florence. At noon I met Brig. George Kitchen⁷ (old friend from R.C.R. days). After lunch we went shopping together and he asked me to dinner at the Cdn. Officers Club. We had a real "chin wag" in the evening mostly about my sweethearts back in England as he had recently seen them.

January 26: Despite cloud and heavy rain, another M.O. and I took off in the H.W.P. for Pisa at 0930 hours. It was a miserable drive and we ate our haversack lunch on arrival. After admiring and climbing the Leaning Tower of Pisa, we visited the adjoining cathedral and noted that despite the weather the trip had been worth it. Back at Minerva Hotel by 1700 hours. Ate a hearty meal, had several drinks, wrote home and to bed by 2230 hours.

January 27: Spent all morning walking streets of Florence. Very heavy rain in the afternoon so went to Opera Verdi to see "Madame Butterfly". The soprano was excellent but the others were mediocre. Had Lt.Col. Bobby Clark (O.C. Irish Reg't. and an old friend of mine from R.C.R. days) as guest for dinner, then followed a long wet evening as we recalled past memories and commiserated with him as apparently he had just been relieved of his command.,

January 28: To Fircola (?102) in H.W.P. on this mild morning with the sun shining. It occupies an enchanting position on the top of a hill with a grand view of Florence and the surrounding plain. Visited the grounds of the Villa Medici, followed by a tour of the city and a visit to church of S.Maria Novello which is colossal, barren yet beautiful.

January 29-30: More sight-seeing and returned to S.Pietro on 30th after a very refreshing educational leave.

January 31: Back in the old groove again - visiting R.A.P.'s, C.C.P., Bde. and Div. H.Q. and doing unit administration.

February 1: To C.C.P. and recce, with Capt. Bill Byers, of present 2 C.I.B. area, as we are to exchange C.C.P. with #5 Fd.Amb.

For next two days all was routine. Then on February 4 while on church parade, I was called to field telephone to speak to Div.H.Q. and informed that it was my turn for rotational leave to Canada. This invitation was flatly refused as I naturally wanted to go to U.K. where my wife and daughter were residing. Picked the 5 O.R.'s who were to go on Canada leave. Next morning I went to the A.D.M.S. office at Div.H.Q. and again, I was asked if I wanted leave to Canada. I spoke to Col. Coke, the A.D.M.S., and explained my desire to go to England, but he stated there was nothing he could do about that and advised that I go to Corps.H.Q. and try to get permission. First I called on Brig. Kitchen and he said there was nothing he could do. I next tackled the D.D.M.S. Brig. Sinclair; in essence he stated "I advise you to return to Canada because of your lengthy service. It is not official but we expect 1 Cdn. Corps to join Cdn. Army in N-W Europe soon. If you remain you forfeit your chance to return to Canada on leave and I cannot promise you a leave to England until the war is over." He slammed the door on any chance of my getting to England. I had to admit that my long service in the field was beginning to get to me. I agonized all afternoon over Patty's difficulties in getting home to Canada, but finally made the decision to return based on the idea that it was best for my wife, daughter and myself to quit Europe and return to native soil. Next morning I was officially notified that a reservation had been made for me to be part of the present leave to Canada quota. I wrote a quick note to my wife and took it to Brig. Kitchen at Corps H.Q. as he promised to send it by bomber. (This note was never received.) I sent a cable "Go home. See Gen. Luton at C.M.H.Q." Maj.Gen. R.M.Luton was D.M.S. at C.M.H.Q. who knew me personally and I thought he would be informed that I was being sent on leave to Canada and would be helpful in getting my wife and daughter passage to Canada. How naive! It subsequently turned out he informed Patty (my wife) that he had no information about any officers in Italy and was of no assistance in getting her back to Canada. A Junior Officer was a help and advised her going to Cook's Travel Agency as one would do in peace time, which she did and booked passage on a banana boat in the normal fashion. It so transpired we were in different convoys on the Atlantic at the same time. Truly a miracle when you consider there was no communication between us from the time I sent the cable until my arrival in Montreal (more about that later).

On **February 7** The Big Three Conference was in progress in Yalta. The Russians were making huge advances and the Allies were advancing in N-W Europe. We were betting that the end of German resistance would come in June.

On **February 8**, I spent time in going to 1 Bde.H.Q. to say good-bye to Brig. Smith and his staff, to Ravenna to bid adios to #13 and #16 F.D.S.

On **February 9**, the unit was paraded and I said farewell in a shaky faltering manner, as it just didn't seem right for me to leave it to this fine body of men to finish off the war and I was truly sick at heart. After the parade I went to Corps to say au revoir to the D.D.M.S. Brig. Sinclair and again he didn't seem very sincere in his send-off. Made my farewell visit to the C.C.P. and Maj. McLeod filled me in on future plans of 1 C.I.B. as he had just returned from a conference at Bde. This reinforced my feeling that someone of higher rank could have made it possible for me to remain and still get to England in the near future. It wasn't until the Unit Farewell Dinner that evening that I came to grips with myself and became convinced that I had made the correct decision. It was a memorable mess dinner with the A.D.M.S., D.A.D.M.S. and three other Lt.Col.'s as guests, and the festivities ended with a farewell visit to the Sgts.' Mess.

On **February 10**, I was driven over to Rimini where I boarded a train loaded with 14 officers and 360 O.R.'s. Surprise, the train left on time at 1300 hours. I knew several of the officers and we were all happy. Arrived in Rome at 0600 hours (Feb. 11?) after an uncomfortable night because of the hard, short seats. On arrival the Aux. Services handed out chocolate bars, cigarettes and magazines. Had breakfast of usual M & V (?105) with tea after which we shaved out of our mess tins. Boarded train again, had a M & V lunch and arrived in Naples at 2000 hours, after an M & V supper. Spent another uncomfortable night with man sleeping on station platform. Realized we had been badly spoiled since last time we were in action. Arrived at Forino #2 N.E.T.O. at 1130 hours next day (**February 12**). Ran into 3 M.O. veterans, on rotational leave and old buddies with me. As senior officer, I was in command of this draft so I had sessions with Maj. Burgoyne, O.C. #2 N.E.T.D. The meals are good and the depot

well run. We have to make inventory of every article of luggage which isn't simple. Watched a movie in evening and turned in early. What a joy to be able to stretch out fully and enjoy a night's sleep in a bed. The next day was spent getting acquainted with Forino and my draft of 500, all ranks. Had supper with friends at #1 Fd.Hosp.

On February 14, I spent the morning reading orders and inspecting the billets which was like a long route march. Spent most of the afternoon fixing up my personal kit and diary notes "may the Lord help me if I'm caught". Spent enjoyable evening chatting and drinking in C.O.'s room.

No mail from now on and naturally feel very cut off and concerned about the welfare of Patty and Vicky in England. Drove to Avellino to visit my old staff Capt. Mike Carlton (Wpg.) and then to view the beautiful paintings in Monastery Montevergine (?106). Meeting with our officers at 1300 hours followed by inspection of O.R.'s kit. Late afternoon drove a lad to #1 Fd.Hosp. to have his infected hand lanced, thereby saving him from missing this Canada draft. In evening we saw cinema "Stormy Weather", afterwards singing songs in the bar until midnight.

Accompanied four other officers to Naples where we did some shopping and had lunch at the British Officers Club. This was followed by a long chit-chat with old friends at #15 C.G.H., Casserta. (?106)

Next morning February 17, I spoke to our draft of over 500 of Canada's finest and longest serving soldiers. In the afternoon we saw "The White Cliffs of Dover" which was very enjoyable but sad to me because I had the feeling I might never see England again. Lt.Col. Cameron, H.&P.E., reported in and is on his way to England by plane and to be promoted. Again I had the feeling this could have been done for me without the promotion.

Padre Smith gave a fine timely sermon at church parade the next morning. Informed that a chap I had been playing bridge with was also to be returned to U.K. by plane. This didn't help to sooth my feelings. Next day Lt.Col. Ed Corrigan sent a vehicle for me and fore noon (?107) arrival at Salerno after 3/4 hour ride. Here I spoke

to Col. C.S. Thompson, A.D.M.S. Cdn. Sec., G.H.Q., 1st Echelon (A.A.I.) who said he would write to Gen. Luton at C.M.H.Q. requesting priority for Patty to return to Canada. (There never was any evidence that this was done.) In afternoon, Ed took me in his station wagon along the coast road to Amalfi and Positano. We climbed to Capurnica (?) Monastery and Hotel and had supper in Positano. The two of us had a real gab fest, on a clear cool day amid some of the most beautiful scenery in the world.

Embarkation has been postponed until March 1, so tomorrow we are to be moved to Canada Bks., Avellino. Spoke to our officers at 1100 hours February 20th, and we could foresee multiple disciplinary problems unless we proceeded with great caution. Had a meeting with our W.O.'s at 1330 and chose C.S.M. Oakley to act as R.S.M. That evening Maj. Carleton hosted a fine dinner for us and old friends in Avellino at the Officers' Club.

On February 21, we moved to Canada Bks. Had lunch with Col.'s Lent (?108) and McKenna who are in charge. Our fine draft moved and settled in good order. I returned to Forino in afternoon to thank Maj. Bill Burgoyne for his hospitality and brought he and Col. Gillies back to Canada Bks. where ^{we} were again entertained by Col. Lent. The officers' rooms were satisfactory but quarters for the O.R.'s were very poor and there were many small things for which we had to battle.

February 22: "Clear and cool. Spent most of morning on draft administration. Received confirmation from 2nd Esch. of many wives being sent home but no word re: Patty. At my insistence they will check into this." (At the time I failed to realize that the wives being shipped to Canada were English war brides and Patty didn't fall into that category.) "All ranks out for a march this a.m. A banquet for the five of us was thrown by Maj. Ian McLean that evening and involved speeches and jokes, followed by darts."

February 23-25: Routine days. Our lads somewhat upset by lack of pay and no cigarettes, so I could see trouble brewing. Spent half a day making arrangements for a pay parade, cigarettes and aux. services. Naples has been placed "out of bounds" and that there is no news regarding our move, we think it is due to the move of 1 Cdn. Corps to France, in fact the "scuttlebuck" says some elements are already in Marseilles.

February 26: Things start to happen. All ranks confined to barracks. Had meeting of officers, muster parade and finally pay parade with three paymasters at work. By mid-afternoon we received full details of move at 0530 hours tomorrow.

February 27: Clear and warm. Arose 0345, breakfast parade 0430 hours. Arrived Pier 22, Naples at 0730 hours. Boarded liberty ship "Archbishop Lamy". Moved into harbour 0930 hours and weighed anchor at 1200 hours. We bade Italy which had been our home since July 1943, goodbye and no regrets for having done our part to help win this horrible war, but with sadness over the loss of so many friends, and to what end? It had been a long destructive 20 months and most of us had the feeling that we were the forgotten legion. Our incomparable veterans were full of joy, not because of ridding themselves of the stench of a broken Italy, but they were finally going home, a place they hadn't seen for over five years!

Now begins the narrative of the voyage of the M.V. "Archbishop Lamy", February 27 to March 20, 1945, Naples to New York City.

It was a happy group of Canadian soldiers that boarded this Liberty ship. A certain number of this type of mass produced wartime cargo ships were convertible to carrying troops viz cargo. Hold had hammocks, latrines and cooking facilities for about 250 men, on deck level about 8 small two-bunk cabins, the latter for officers. The only exits were onto the deck and all doors to the operational and living quarters of the sailors were locked. We had to arrange our own cooking from this central galley and we were supplied only Yankee "Bully Beef", Spam, canned vegetables and bread. The ship was filthy and the discipline of her crew lax. No cigarettes, games, reading material or fatigue clothing were provided. Despite all this our troops remained in good spirits. Our complement was 14 officers and 236 O.R.'s as our contingent of 500, all ranks, had been split into two.

Our skipper was a fat braggard-type, totally lacking common sense, any social graces and I fear questionable sailing ability. Despite the urgent question I wished to put to him he refused to meet me until 2000 hours, the first day. At that time he would answer none of my questions but dictated that I was in sole command of the soldiers,

that there must be no fraternizing between the crew and my men. He would inform me of breeches in blackout or ship's regulation and expect me to deal with all disciplinary matters. An officer could go ashore with his steward at Oran to see if arrangements could be made for better rations. His actions were like Capt. Bligh but one suspected he lacked the brains. It became apparent that co-operating with this individual was going to be difficult. I was told later that prior to the entry of U.S.A. into the war he had been a wheelsman on a Great Lakes freighter and I'm sure must have received help in getting his Captain's papers. Maybe he was covering a deep inferiority complex.

Set sail from Naples, February 27, aboard the "Archbishop Lamy", with smooth sailing on a placid Mediterranean to arrive in Oran on March 2. The crew donated books, magazines and games for our lads. The skipper warned that none of our men were to assist his crew in any way because of "union rules". As stated the ship was filthy and our soldiers begged to have the monotony relieved by swabbing decks, etc., but "Capt. Bligh" said "no". Maj. Whitwell was able to organize P.T. and games for the troops. Our medical supplies were minimal and when our M.O. requested codeine from the skipper, he was refused and told "my ship will not carry any sick men". What a guy! I felt a little relief when a troop ship came into view and I thought at least this guy is steering on a recognized course. Everyone happy in Oran as skipper slipped off ladder into the sea.

In Oran, the Master informed me we had to make room for 26 passengers, the American crew of a freighter that had been delivered from the U.S.A. My friend had bunked a venerable, experienced sea captain with his 3rd mate who had just been released from the brig. I reasoned and battled with our skipper over the impropriety and having lost I decided to make our own arrangements. "Bligh" refused to talk to this fine Capt. Henderson. (I corresponded regularly with the latter up until his death several years later.) I requested another interview with our skipper and was invited to have breakfast with him. This consisted of prunes, cereal, omelet, bacon, potatoes, flap jacks with real maple syrup (He ate 8, I kid you not), bread, jam and coffee. (Our breakfast on this ship was cream of wheat, powdered egg and coffee.) I was so annoyed with this guy, I never again accepted an invitation to eat with him. I'm happy to say Capt. Henderson refused also when our captain decided that it was good politics to try and get friendly with his superior confrere.

My morning consisted of P.T., rounds with the Duty Officer and general alarm drill. The days were quiet, the ocean smooth and we played bridge every night, always including Capt. Henderson. Bingo was usual fare for the troops at night. Our convoy seemed to consist of about 45 ships, mostly Liberty ships with an escort of 6 destroyers. We passed Gibraltar, forenoon **March 4th**, and at suppertime were jarred by the first depth charges and there was increased activity on the part of our escort. Our crossing was uneventful except that the "Archbishop Lamy" got lost from the convoy for a few hours. The ship almost rammed the Commander's ship and joyfully our skipper got raked over the coals. We docked in Manhattan at 1800 hours **March 20th**, having been aboard ship 22 days. The troops were disappointed at having to look at New York City from the deck as we were bonded through to Montreal. My diary records, "We were boarded by an army of officials. It is very warm and hectic. Our money was changed and baggage checked. I spoke to the troops and held an O Group at 0130 hours. The Canadian officials were quite efficient and co-operative." Disembarked at 0200 hours **March 21**, after ferry ride and mile march we entrained and departed at 0450 hours. The train was clean and comfortable; arrived in Montreal 1800 hours. The troops mustered beside the train and I paid my respects to this cream of Canadian soldiers and bade them goodbye. I felt a sadness creep over me after bidding farewell to men that I had served overseas with since December, 1939. They all ascended the main escalator in a joyous anticipatory mood and I went up a side escalator so that I could stand and admire them. As I watched the reunions for a few, as most were for destinations far to the east, west and south, myself to board the train for Winnipeg, a miracle happened before my eyes. There on the far side of the concourse stood my wife and daughter!

I must explain my wife came over to England as a civilian in **January, 1940** and our daughter was born in **February, 1941**. She remained in England until receiving a brief cable from me, in **January, 1945** stating "Go home. Contact C.M.H.Q.¹ I thought the C.M.H.Q. would explain what was happening to me. She contacted Thos. Cook & Son Travel Agency as you would in peacetime and crossed the Atlantic in convoy aboard a banana boat. In other words, although we were out of contact for three months, they were on the North Atlantic at the same time as myself in the mid-Atlantic and arrived in Montreal only one day ahead of me. (It would be difficult to carry out

such precision even today.) My wife had the presence of mind to contact the R.T.O. and ask if there had been any Canadian troops repatriated from Italy recently. He replied, "Not recently, but tomorrow we expect 500; just come with me and I'll show you the list."

My wife's accumulated baggage of over five years overseas, was put aboard with mine and we were assigned the stateroom in one of the cars assigned for troops, placed on the rear of the transcontinental train. We ate with the troops after the regular passengers were served and they were my best meals since 1939. On March 25, we had a joyous reunion with my wife's family with bands playing in Winnipeg.

(My mother had died while I was overseas, my father in 1937, so there was no reason for me to return to London where I had enlisted. In New York City, I had decided that there might be a slim chance that my wife and daughter would be at her mother's home in Winnipeg.)

Celebrated in Winnipeg from March 23 until April 4, when we entrained to visit my brother in Chatham, Ontario. Visited family and friends in Chatham, Strathroy, Sarnia, Detroit and Toronto until April 10, then made the mistake of going to Ottawa. Since I had heard nothing about my further posting, I decided to go to N.D.H.Q. and find out. Had nice visit with Gen. Fenwick making it clear that I didn't wish to return overseas but preferred a posting in Canada. Returned to Winnipeg and awaited orders. We were given the news on May 7, that Germany had surrendered unconditionally at 0841 hours, C.S.T. We went downtown Winnipeg at watch the celebrations at noon and then settled into a family party for the rest of the day.

On May 16th, I was ordered to report to Osborne Bks. and arrangements had been made for me to proceed to Dundern tomorrow. Soon after arrival began the process of taking over command from Lt.Col.Belyea (2115) However, on May 23rd, I received a message from the D.M.O. to get ready for immediate transfer to Ottawa. On May 28th, I was notified by the D.A.A.G. that I was to S.O.S. and leave Saskatoon by train at 0530 hours tomorrow and to report to the D.G.M.S. in Ottawa at 0900 hours on May 31st! Physically impossible by train -

typical army! Instead I caught the 6 p.m. train from Saskatoon and arrived in Winnipeg at 1000 hours, May 29; spent some time with my family and boarded the 8:30 p.m. train for Ottawa. I reported to D.G.M.S. Office, Elgin House, sharp at 0900 hours. Finally at 1100 hours, I was in conference with Brig. Leuton and A.M.D.I. for 2 hours. I was told that I was being sent to Washington to organize the conversion of Canadian to U.S. establishments for our Far East Force. Nobody seemed to know much about my duties and they cared less. Temporarily I ate and slept at the R.C.A.M.C. Officers' Mess. Most of the needed information was contained in attache case given to me the day I left, Sunday June 3 at 1600 hours.

I arrived in Washington at 1315 hours and was met by Maj. Park who took me to rooms that had been obtained in the Hotel Fairfax. I was then taken to the War College and began work of the Tables of U.S./Cdn. Equivalents. June 5 was a long concentrated day of work and next day preparing Instructional Cadre and Syllabus of Training which we finished at 1500 hours and I just had time to make the train for Ottawa.

Arrived back in Ottawa at 1300 hours and spent busy afternoon in office and managed to get a room for the night in the Lord Elgin Hotel. Next day Brig. Leuton had me as an advisor on committee to form W.E. for Canadian Defence Medicals. Got a room in 3rd floor of house on Elgin St. and put in a long hard day at Medical H.Q. My duties for the remainder of June were varied and most of the time I was frustrated by vagueness and incompetence of everyone in N.D.H.Q., in fact it seemed that no one cared. My memory is one of continual suffering because of the heat and humidity, aggravated by living in a room that was so hot it made sleeping in it nigh impossible, and wearing battle dress or serge (2116) not suitable for Ottawa heat. Many's the night I dozed in a chair on the verandah all night. We had decided that my wife and daughter should come to live in Ottawa. After getting a permit allowing me to live in Ottawa, a duplex was offered to us by a couple who were leaving for their cottage for the rest of the summer. (All living space even on a temporary basis had to be made available for rent.) By June 22, I had about finished working on the make-up of the Pacific Force (2116) but N.D.H.Q. decided I could be of some help with the C.A.P.F. administration. Between my joy, frustrations, and the heat, I began to realize how nice the U.K. and Italy had been by comparison, and my discharge from the army couldn't come too soon. Brig. Leuton

(Linton[†]) put consistent pressure on me to join the permanent force and remain in the army but my experiences at N.D.H.Q. soured me on that idea.

In July, Col. Morgan-Smith was made A.D.M.S. Base H.Q. C.A.P.F. and my job was made easier. By August, my office had become a sorting centre, where any printed material which might be of interest to C.A.P.F. was put on my desk to be vetted as to its need for the Medical O.C.Pacific Force. On August 5, I wrote a letter to the D.G.M.S. requesting my release from the army.

On August 7, I had a fine interview with the D.G.M.S. Gen. Fenwick and he assured me that I would be released by September. That day we attended the slim greeting for Gen. Crease⁶⁶ (?117) and the papers were full of the dropping of an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. A bomb developed from splitting the uranium atom by British, U.S. and Canadian scientists - from my diary "Hopefully this will end the Japanese War and ensure permanent peace".

On August 8, Russia declares war on Japan, and at our H.Q. I'm in conference over objections to Col. Morgan-Smith as A.D.M.S. of C.A.P.F.

August 9: The 2nd atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki.

August 10: Official surrender offer made by Japan. Cols. Tieman (?117) and Morgan-Smith visited from Brockville on C.A.P.F. business, but I find it hard to be interested at this point.

August 11: Gen. Fenwick held a conference at 0900 hours, stating that the expected time of official Japanese surrender would be 2200 hours. All C.A.P.F. arrangements were to be cancelled and to proceed on accelerated demobilization.

August 12: No word yet from Japanese re: peace terms. Erroneous recorded broadcast by P.M. sets off premature V-J Day celebrations across Canada.

August 13: "Japanese still stalling for time!". Informed Col. Zinkinn I would like to be discharged M.D.#1 on or about September 1. Very quiet day at office as simply no work. Very humid. Temp. 85 degrees F.

August 14: Listened to the official announcement of Japan's surrender by P.M. Clement Attlee at 7 p.m.

August 15: V-J Day, a national holiday. Watched the victory parade on Parliament Hill in afternoon. Spent a quiet day, because for my wife and I, it was a day of great thanksgiving!

August 16: Destroyed or filed all my papers on C.A.P.F.

The next two weeks were very quiet at H.Q. office and on **August 13**, I was officially S.O.S. N.D.H.Q. We left Ottawa by night train **September 4**. Next day received my medical discharge exam in London at No.1 D.D. On **September 6** had interview with Dr. Hull, Dean of Medicine, University of Western Ontario and applied for internship at **Victoria Hospital**. On the weekend, visited my hometown, **Sarnia**. Discharged from the army on **Tuesday, September 11, 1945**. One month later, we moved to London and I became senior resident in medicine at **Victoria Hospital**.

THE LITTLE BLACK BAG

Within 24 hours of reporting to the Royal Canadian Regiment at Wolseley Barracks in London, Ontario as Medical Officer, I was told that the regiment was moving to Valcartier, Quebec, in 48 hours. I discovered that the medical supplies for the troop train were completely inadequate. So, in my simple, inexperienced way, I asked the Commanding Officer if I could take along the traditional badge of the general practitioner ... "my little black bag". He agreed at once and that "little black bag" proved a great boon, not only on the train but later.

Valcartier Camp was something else ... cold, barren and probably last used in World War I. The RCR had difficulty with heating, plumbing, cook stoves and, of course, insufficient medical supplies. Again, the "little black bag" saved the day.

What was in that black bag of mine, the kind we all saw the family GP carry in those days as he made his house calls? Basically, the bag contained first aid supplies, thermometer, stethoscope, flashlight, tongue depressors, antiseptic, a variety of pills and, most important, two small metal cases, one containing a special hypodermic syringe and the other holding tubes of tabloids for sedatives and ophthalmic use. (Mine was loaded with extra morphine sulphate in quarter-grain dosage.)

An aside about Valcartier. To my horror I discovered that the entire regiment, about 900 strong, had to be inoculated before proceeding overseas. I was provided with the vaccine, but only a dozen needles, six syringes and one spirit lamp sterilizer. My "staff" consisted of three stretcher bearers (with minimum first aid training) who had to prepare the sterile (?) needles and make an entry on the soldier's Immunization Card. To help me, I taught my corporal to give the needle - provided the intended victim didn't object! Be it known that we inoculated all 900 men without one infected arm or casualty of any kind. Incidentally, by tradition my stretcher bearers were also members of the regimental band and they were asked to remain in Canada where it was thought they would be of greater value, and I was left a sergeant, a corporal and a batman.

We boarded the "S.S. Almanzora" in Halifax and proceeded to convert the peacetime luxury sick bay into a sterile utility Aid Post containing six cots for patients (constantly occupied). The federal medical services supplied five panniers of assorted medical supplies to take care of 1,000 soldiers on this Atlantic crossing. The little black bag rested and enjoyed Christmas at sea.

We established ourselves in Barrosa Barracks, Aldershot, on December 31, 1939. Again, there was a shortage of medical supplies - the proverbial SNAFU - and once more the little black bag was summoned into action. On June 12, (after Dunkirk) our regiment was part of the brief venture into France. We moved by train from Aldershot to Plymouth where we boarded a French ship the "El Mansour". Very soon her toilets clogged up and the troops named her "El Sewer". Next day we landed at Brest, France.

After disembarkation, we formed up and marched up a steep hill paved with cobblestones. I brought up the rear, carrying my little black bag. I was convinced that since we were to go into action immediately, and had been supplied with the minimum amount of morphia in a medical haversack, that again my own GP equipment would prove useful. Thankfully, it did not have to be used as it was a case of an advance of 24 hours to LeMans and a hasty retreat back to Brest. We called the penetration "The Brest Bust".

There is no doubt that had we been ordered to remain to fight we would have been killed or captured, the bag confiscated and the Jerries completely bamboozled. Happily, the little black bag returned safely with me to England and, five years later, to Canada.

THE END

4 March '92

INVASION OF SICILY*(from Official Sources)*

July 10, 1943: 2:45 a.m. - 2 brigades hit the beach. Objective: Pachino Airfield. Brig. Howard Graham.

July 11: - Commandeered a mule with which I visited Fd. Amb.

- Piazza Armesine

- Valguenera

- Leonforte

- Assoro

- Agira

- Regalbuto

After 27 days - Adrano - Div. pullout of line.

July 25: Mussolini toppled

September 8: Mussolini replaced by Badoglio.

September 3: Cross Straits of Messina.

September 9: 5th U.S. Army land at Salerno.

September 20: Captured Potinza.

September 22: Simonds gets jaundice - replaced by Brig. Vokes.

- Molta Montesorvino - R.C.R. and Calgary Rgt. Big battle with 1st Parachute Div.

- Originally 1st Cdn. Div. to return to England after capture of Sicily - didn't happen.

- Decided to send 1st Cdn. Corps under Gen. Crerar.

November 1: Simonds took command of 5th Armoured Div.

- Vokes confirmed in command of 1st Div. (Decision made by Ralston and approved by Canadians that we continue in battle.)

- Germans winter line, Adriatic base thru Mori River, then stiff fight on Sangro River.

- San Leonardo.

- Triquit of Van Doos, promoted Maj. and gets Victoria Cross for taking Casa Berardi.

December 27: Ortona in our hands.

Winter 1944: Static.

- Simonds leaves 5th Div. to England and commands 4th Cdn. Corps.

March: Gen. Crerar recalled to command First Cdn. Army - Burns becomes commander of 1 Cdn. Corps.

Spring 1944: Transfer of 1 Cdn. Corps to fight Gantov line with 8th Army and Monte Cassino.

May 18: Fall of Monte Cassino to the Poles.

May 23: 1 Cdn. Corps in its first action against Hitler Line.

May 17: Day long battle. Hitler Line cracked.

June 4: Cdn. Corps put in reserve.

- Americans liberate Rome.

- 5th Armoured Div. caused jam-up allowing Germans to get away.

June 6: Allies invade France.

August: Florence and Pisa taken.

- 3 U.S.Divs. and 4 French Divs. pulled out of line for attack on south of France.

- Shrunken Allies prepare to attack the Gothic Line.

August 25: Attack begins anchored on Pisaro. Objective: Rimini.

September 22: Break through.

November 5: Burns replaced by Foulkes.

December 4: Ravenna falls.

Christmas 1944: Corps reaches Senio River.

March 1944: End of Italian campaign.

Killed:	408 officers		4,991 men
Wounded:	1,218	"	18,268 "
POW's	62	"	942 "
Other causes			365 "

Total ~~died~~ casualties? 26,254

Personal

Dad: This whole body of work is terrific! Please proof - any changes can be easily made. Tess and I typed what we thought we saw - I'm sure we have many of the names and places incorrect - they don't mean any thing to us! If you want to add more detail about a particular incident, it can be easily added. I wondered about putting an abbreviation list at the front - what do you think?

