

Part 1 – The War Years 1940-1941

Thomas Horrocks Houston – Hand written personnel war diary

'These war diaries were hand written, in pencil, often in atrocious conditions, but more incredibly were successfully hidden from his captours, for five years.'

The following typed transcripts of these diaries were reproduced in November 2006 by the conscientious and dedicated effort of Andrew Houston, supported by Steve Applegate. 'Thank you both.'

The diaries, shown below, describe the events from leaving Dover on 22nd May'40; captured 3 days later in Calais; then the long march to the Polish Lamsdorf Stalag VIII-B arriving 21st Jun'40; to avoid Russian advances were transferred to Memmingen Stalag VII-B on 3rd Mar'45; then eventually repatriation by the Americans on the 26th Apr'45; returning to UK on the 8th May'45. Unfortunately no records have been found for the period 2nd Jun'41 to 18th May'44.

Diary: 1940 - 26th May to 31st Dec
Other entries – 1st Jan to 1st Jun 1941

Diary: 1945 – 22nd Jan to 9th May
Other entries – 18th May to 20th Nov 1944



(Full size = 80mm x125mm x 12mm)

(Full size = 80mm x 125mm x 10mm)

Diary extracts – (copies below):

- 26th May'40 – 'Shelled very heavily in Calais, captured & taken POW'
- 20th – 21st Jun'40 – '48 to a cattle truck, 36hrs traveling to Lamsdorf, Stalag VIIIB'
- 18th – 19th Jul'40 – 'Each day was similar, up ~06:00hrs, shovelling cement/sand'
- 30th – 1st Oct'40 – 'When will this war end, very cold, 50 more POW join factory'
- 27th – 30th Jan'45 – 'Bad tales of the Long March. Thank God I remained in camp'
- 13th – 18th Mar'45 - 'Air raid on Germans. We transferred to Memmingen StalagVII-B'
- 24th – 27th Apr'45 - 'We cheered as Americans lined up our guards as P.O.Ws'
- 6th – 9th May'45 - 'Were flown to Rheims. Lancaster Bombers took us home to UK'

MAY, 1940.

1st after Trinity. Sunday 26

Shelled very heavily in morning
Sook up position near Hotel
at Balais. Shelled with eggs, etc for
5 days. Blown out of trench by
trench mortar. Absolutely all in
hot port meal on station but only guard
taken prisoner of war.

Given nothing to eat. marched
from Balais by twisting to
Lyrite where we slept the
night in a church

time finished last mouthful as
German machine guns opened up
at end of platform. Had then
to run gauntlet to fort where a
R.B. Major waved the white flag, much
to our annoyance. Fully expected
to get it at night

MAY, 1940.

Saturday 25

Sun 26 cont.

germans rounded us up on the
beach. From where we saw
the Navy come in and put
up such a barrage of fire.
They then incidently saw that
we were captured and withdrew
while waiting there became very
hungry and also got soaked through
by heavy showers (caused probably by
the heavy shell fire) couple of
hours later we were rounded up
and marched through the Balais
battlefield. We saw some terrible
sights which I think Jerry had left
for us to see because there were
two dead Jerry's along the roads
the British soldiers had not even been
seen. Shock & right

JUNE, 1940.

Thursday 20 ☉

Drew 2 days rations consisting of
2 loaves between 3 & 2 chow between 4 & 5
Told that we are leaving at 3/6

Up at 3/6. 1275 of us marched to
station and put us in a truck
and commenced another
nightmare journey. Reminded
me of a well of snakes all
intentioned managed to relief
a little and travelled - a
general S.E. by direct. at one
station saw notice up to Breslau
stood up at opening now and
again. Noticed how there is
no unused ground. Hay is cut

JUNE, 1940.

Friday 21

from little corners & embankments
felt very stiff & weak.
Turned heavy hot & stuffy
Tried to play cards and
crosswords but could not
concentrate.

Spent the day trying to sleep.
wish I had some cigarettes
they would sooth your
nerves a bit. For some reason
could not stomach the bread
arrived at Lamsdorf at
8.30 pm after 36 hours
travel.

Walked to our billet which
seems to have been a holiday camp.
Lussed with bread wharagi
& jam. This was lovely some
much so that we eat it
all. Usual rumours floating
about.

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soup, and our billets very comfortable with
a lovely room of ~~four~~ ^{four} beds. Everybody
very pleased and hope we can stay here
and should be comfortable.

Thursday 18

Up at 6:30 and issued with two big
jam sandwiches of nice ordinary bread (Did
not mention the wash-places, this is certainly
a luxury.) Loked out as a mechanic and
put a fire chopping wood with byrd.
Issued with 2 bowls of soup at 12%.
In afternoon put on to unloading trucks
of sand this was certainly very hard
work and made my shoulder ache. But
our goods and fumes at factory very
high speed. Finished at 4%. Tea
issue of 2 big sandwiches of pork paste & coffee
then a football with which we had a
little kick round and to bed at 9%.
Goods locked our boots & boxes of
cement from Scherische Portland Zement
fabrik A.G. Uffeln

JULY, 1940.

Friday 19

Up at 5%. On cleaning up fatigue.
Sandwich of jam which were kept until
the break at 9%. Started work at 6%.
break at 9-9:30. when we had coffee
& sandwiches. worked again filling small
truck with cement and tipping inside
factory. Stopped at 12%. but dinner
not up on time. Dinner consisted of
2 hard boiled eggs, potato and a mustard
gravy (not of my own) this was very good
Started work again at 2% finished
about 5%. Goods got us on couple
of days to spare. Tea issue 1 both
mug & jam sandwich. My tux for
kitchen received 1 more pork sandwich.
Luis received a slice of bread and butter
for good for cleaning room out.
Lately a good hard day work and so
to bed at 9%

SEPTEMBER, 1940.

Monday 30

Morning are very dark & the moon out
but it soon gets light. Very cold, but
Norris & I put on Swiss truck soon got
warmed up. Started to rain. Finished
truck off by 12%. Dinner of a very
nice thick barley soup. Started on
2nd truck but goats took me off it.
was glad as it was raining. Tea issue
of mash & mug of buttermilk. Lucky
on the card cut received to buchrki mugs.
Remouved that if America comes into the
war Japan will join up with Germany
Makes one wonder how long this war will
last. Also heard that another 50 black
prisoners are coming to work at this
factory on the 15th

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OCTOBER, 1940.

Tuesday 1

Breakfast 1 butter 1 cheese (strong yellow).
On little trolley until sand truck
came in. Unloaded it by 5% when we
finished. Very cold this morning, a
chilly north wind blowing, when it is
like this it makes one wonder how we
are going to winter here. Spent a
depressing morning due to the cold.
Dinner of a thick veg soup (carrot & barley)
Turned cold again in the late afternoon
Tea of barley soup & 8 spuds in jackets.
Locked up at 7:30 not much time after
tea except to go off to bed. Received
Luis leaf tobacco ration owe him 4.2 ph.

Janvier

Saturday 27

Heard some very terrible tales of the hardships of the boys that went on the march. They were sleeping in woods & barns. Bleckhamms district being attacked by Russians. Fighting in Breslau. Can hear shelling all day. Few Russian planes over. Water shortage very bad. No water or lights all day. Issued with 1/2 Red bread, 1/2 medicinal Parcel & 50 sigs. Thank God that I managed to stay here in camp.

28

Sunday

Thin very sore, breaking out again making me very depressed and miserable. Got some medicinal head bath in a tub. Melted medicinal soap and some washing, dried it in the heat. Collected fuel down to the station and some tomorrow. Issues issued for Berlin.

Katowitch Number of crates returned from march. Janvier

Janvier

29

Monday

Went up to Block II for bricks etc. for building a stove. Spent all afternoon building with Chas Elms. The other crowd U.S. No lights or water all day & night. Dined with rabbit soup (one of the best soups ever issued in low life). 1 pht Knackerbot. Got round the fire, which was very successful.

Tuesday

Last night very strong gun fire heard nearly all night. Very heavy explosion about 3%. Water issued. 1 Pht biscuits issued. Ammunition level between 3.

no bread or spuds issued to day. Soup - well dish water would have had more body in it. Nobody eating except the guards who doubled up. Hear that we are all going back to Stalag at Memmingen tomorrow.

Wed. 14.

Packed blankets etc but no good don't think we will be going to day. Bread came up 1 loaf between 2 for 3 days. Officer coming up tomorrow from Memmingen. Just going to bed when the air raid siren went off. Most went down to cello, but some went off into the fields. No planes came.

Thurs. 15.

16

Officers came round and said the Memmingen was too full and we would have to stay here. Took away a list of complaints. 1/2 parcel issued on Saturday. Late in evening Major Schubert came in and say that all N.C.O.s & Banit were to return to Memmingen in 2 batches of 25 tomorrow. I got on the first party to go at 3 AM. Packed kit and blankets. Shook food out with Olives. Did not bother getting undressed just lay on palliasse. 4th bat. 3% made a crest. Marched to

Station in a hellva rush to catch the 5% train this time in ordinary carriages.

Mars

Fri. 16. Arrive at Memmingen about 8% walked up to the camp. searched fairly cushy had a bath, wrote letter to Nick (which guard said he would take back). Yanks, Poles, Serbs, Russians and all sorts here. English compound very crowded. Marquee very full. I was debilitated for the concert hall. could not find space to sleep. What a life. Issued with soup and bread. (6 to a loaf army bread). Met all the boys Chas Elms, the Spriggs, Jomal David Pombel. - did not get much help from them???

Sat. 17. Started making a blowers with Henry Amilage. The boys had had no parcel issue. Very hard up for a smoke. Sold tin of porridge for 10 fags. Having a smoke and tried matters considerably.

Sun. 18. Roll call 9.30. Finished blowers quite a super little job. Suppose to be a parcel issue tomorrow 1/2 parcel Mon. 1/2 Thurs. 1/2 following Monday & Thursday. Settling down to the hardships. Wrote letter card home first since January.

from buggers, they must have been
strapped like hell on the road.

In the evening saw our planes
diving on the road behind the
trees, flames went up in smoke.

24 Sunday
New that army had passed.
Wm about 50 kilometers from
here.

25 Wed.

April

26 Thurs

When out to see the village in flames,
and machine gun fire. The fight is on!!
outside the town, understood that the bridge
must be went out, and arranged for the
town to be declared an open town. In
the early afternoon sent from the hospital
roof, the wounded column moving in.
Went down the road and what a scene
went up when the tanks & jeeps came
up the road to camp. After many hand-
shakes, the boys were all off to town.
Our guards were lined up and taken
C.O.W. How young these tanks seem.
Went into town

27 Friday

Nobby & I went down to the town
buildings - traps (mostly baked bread & etc.)
making windows and getting into
the shops - looking like a trap & vehicle
coming into town & back out evening.

Mai

6 Sunday

Still no signs of planes.
Had quite a homey Sunday, went
into the boat for a drink.
Strolled round the village.

7 Monday

Weather on the improve. Planes are
in. What a race - seems to be hundreds
landing all Daugon Transport C-47.
Started off at 12%. Found travelling in
planes quite good. Arrived at Rheims
at 2%. Lorry to the camp where all
our notes were taken off us, bathed
and new American gear dishied out.
Whiskers was in the way and very
naughty. After supper went down down

with Nir & gang. Prices too high and
did not see much life. Was just like
sleeping in main Mai line station with
mikes, people walking about etc.

8 Tuesday

Waiting about all morning for grouping.
Started for airport about 3%, airport
outside Rheims (just learned that
the peace terms have just been signed
at Rheims of all places) Loaded into
Lancaster bombers. I was fortunate
enough to get in the nose with the
A.G. and what an experience followed
the route across France and arrived
over England at Brighton. Landed
at... and taken by lorry to
where we stayed the night. I can't
explain the feeling felt but everything
reemed so solid & fresh. How glad
the coltaning side is.

9. Weds

Up at 7% for MO on dental inspection
filling up numerous forms, received
25 lbs. Interrogated in afternoon. Told
that we want to be going to day as
we still have to be fitted out
with clothes. Saw Red Cross Centre
of Mother is at home. Went to an
C.W. Show. 10.10 - 11.00.

Content of Diary of Thomas Horrocks Houston – 1940 - 1941.

The following diary is a typed transcript of a diary written by Thomas Horrocks Houston, a Private serving in the Queen Victoria Rifles during the Second World War. He was a conscript/territorial army dispatch rider. The regiment were sent to Calais May 1940. This occurred as part of the preparations for evacuating the British Forces from Dunkirk.

The diary starts on Saturday 26th May 1940. The preceding pages were removed to prevent details being available when captured.

The majority of the diary is written in pencil and any words in italics are the difficult to interpret. Similarly place names are unclear at times and also typed in italics.

Sunday 26th May 1940.

Shelled very heavily in morning. Took up position near hotel at Calais. Issued with cigs 1st for 5 days. Blown out of trench by trench mortar. Absolutely all in. Got first meal on station but only just time Finished last mouthful as German machine guns opened up at end of platform. Had then to run gauntlet to fort where a RB Major waved the white flag much to our annoyance.. Fully expected *to get shot on sight*. Germans rounded us up on the beach. From where we saw the Navy come in and put up such a barrage of fire. They then evidently saw that we were captured and withdrew. While waiting there became very hungry and also got soaked through by heavy shower (caused probably by the heavy shell fire). Couple of hours later we were rounded up and marched through the Calais battlefield. We saw some terrible sights which I think Jerry had left for us to see because there were no dead Jerrys along the roads. The British soldiers had not even been *covered up*. *A shocking sight*.

The following was written in ink between the above pencilled account:-

Taken prisoner of war. Given nothing to eat. Marched from Calais by twisting (*road*) to *Guite* where we slept the night in a church.

Monday 27th May 1940

Up at 4 o'clock in morning. Marched on to *Marquise* where we met some of the other crowd. Shortage of food but Germans search round and some of us got piece of bread and some soup. Started marching again to *Le Waste*. Pass big column of motor troops etc. Stayed at night in a field. Changed socks at *Marquise*. Feet in a terrible state. Found clean pair in *Sutch* pack which I picked up on a lorry while being marched through Calais battlefield.

Tuesday 28th May 1940

Up at 4 o'clock and on the road again. Feet very sore. Walked to *Deserves* in a stadium where we had a bit of dinner consisting of beans and meat, 3 biscuits. Started from here at *1 o'clock*.

Schen St Homier

Slept in a field at *Henninon*. Very cold and wet. They tried to get some supper but did not succeed. As I was so tired did not notice the wet so much. Am surprised the human body can stand so much.

Wednesday 29th May 1940

Up at 4:30 on the road again. Weather very dull and cold. Supposed to be a lift for us but no signs of it. Got soaked through and are being driven like cattle. Walked miles with only 2 rests. Nothing to eat except a sugar beet picked up on the side of the road. Finished up in a place called *Hersidin* in a garrison which used to evidently used to be a (sic) barracks. Very filthy. Received one packet of biscuits for supper.

Thursday 30th May 1940

Had a very comfortable sleep on sawdust sack. Up at 6 o'clock and received one packet *of (or awful)* biscuit. Started walking again. Walk 25 kilos to *Frevent* where we were billeted in a wool factory. French able to pick things up from the people but Britishers do not get much chance. Officers still

walking with us. Issued with (fat and water) soup and bread (green). Jimmy bought some butter which was very nice on the bread.

Friday 31st May 1940

Walked on to *Doullens* where we were billeted in a big prison this was terrible as we did not get anything to eat on the top floor. The attic was so stuffy and crowded that we did not get much sleep. Up very late in morning but feeling absolutely lifeless.

Saturday 1st June 1940

Up very late. Started walking but did not know how was going to do it but it got automatic after a time. Turned very warm. Managed to scrounge some potatoes and onions. Arrived at a barbed wire field at *Foraquevilliar* where we were given biscuits. The villagers brought up potatoes, bad meat, bread. After lining up received 2 boiled *suds* (*spuds*) and meat I couldn't eat. Later we made some onion, potato and biscuit mash. This was fine but shared between too many. Slept in bed of 9 of us. *Keep* fairly warm myself.

Sunday 2nd June 1940

Up at 4 o'clock on the road at 4:30. Weather quite nice. Passed one or two cemeteries of the last war. *The Owl Trench*. Stopped about 7:30 for first rest. Carried on walking until about 12 o'clock when we arrived at a field where we were searched again. We gathered potatoes but were not allowed to light fires to cook them. Given some water & fat and half a green loaf. Queued up all afternoon to give our names in. Went to bed (*curly?*) all together but it was very cold. Up at 3:30 because somebody started. This seems to be general one person started to move then everybody moves. *Bapaume*

Monday 3rd June 1940

Marched on to *Cambrai*. After 28 kilos march. Plenty of wood knocking about did not shave very pleasant sleep but got some pea soup and bread (mouldy) for supper. *Beuogeny*. The fort at *Cambrai* was just like the American shamble town. We are living like a lot of rats. Believe that party's got out on fatigues were they manage to scrounge jam, coffee etc.. It seems that our only means of food is by how we can scrounge.

Tuesday 4th June 1940

Additional note.

Coincidence that on one of the rests who should I sit down besides but Cyril Cook. He was captured with the R.B. (*Rifle Brigade*) at Calais.

Left *Cambrai* about 12:30 after cooking myself a good meal of potatoes and steak fat. Very warm and had to walk 31 kilos. Managed to get a lift on a platoon lorry about 10 kilos out. Scrounged a box of cocoa. Arrived at *Valenciennes* where we stopped in a park. No food issued. Picked up potatoes and onions on the way. Managed in the morning to get on party to take French Officers luggage to station. Officer gave me 3 Players and managed to get a piece of brown bread. Terrible fight to get water.

Wednesday 5th June 1940

Up about 7 o'clock. Lit a fire made some cocoa and potato & *pea* soup with Jimmy Went down very well but feeling very weary and hungry still. Had a good wash in the lake which was very pleasant. Swapped some cocoa for some cigs. Made more cocoa at 1 o'clock. On the move again from *Valenciennes* to *Mons*. 32 kilos about 2:30. This was a nightmare journey, Jimmy, Steve and myself hung behind to do some scrounging. Searching empty houses, picked enough things up for a stew (veg.) Obtain a lift in a lorry which took us the wrong way. This turned out good in the end as we got a loaf, bottle of wine and a piece of chocolate, pieces of bread and lard and soup.

Thursday 6th June 1940

After this we were feeling a bit fitter but did not believe we would ever get to *Mons* but they made us march on. We crossed the Belgian boarder and eventually reached *Mons* about 5 o'clock in the morning.. Prisoners were dropping down and sleeping but were waking by the guard. Slept about 3 hours in a field, made some cocoa (this was certainly a god-send) then heard there was some bread and dripping to be had. First the dripping gave out and when we arrived there was no bread for us. We made a marvellous veg. stew (helped by seasoning found by Jimmy in a house). On the move again by 11:30 with the usual rumours of the distance. Turn out very hot, but Belgian country side is more pleasant and cleaner. Walked about 20-25 kilos to *Chiselchen outside Soigius* where we were put in a field. Arrived about 7:30.

Friday 7th June 1940

Did not have anything for a stew. Finished off loaf and lettuce and cocoa. Up about 7:30. Had our breakfast of fried stale bread. Managed to scrounge some chicken fat. Cocoa running low. Got on fatigues to get biscuits, managed to fill pockets. Changed from one field to another and issued with about 12 French biscuits. Turned very hot. Lined up at 1 o'clock English in front this time. Did not move until 5:30. Marched along a long straight road about 10 kilos to *Enghien* where there was a big camp. We were put in a field but for a change in an orderly fashion. Sergeants put in charge, marched in five and received 2 fresh loaves between 5. This is too good to believe. Just tasted the bread, had biscuits and cocoa for supper.

Saturday 8th June 1940

Up at 6:30 Light fire and made cocoa and fried bread. This was very good. Heard from interpreter that we are not moving today and that we will march tomorrow to *Brussels* and get transport there (this rumour of course we have heard many times). A number of the QVR's now split up, some must have gone from *Cambrai* straight to Germany. Very hot day just spent lazing about. Got lined up twice for soup. The nerves of some are getting very jumpy. I suppose it is the lack of food and fatigue. Wrote another letter home. Had some pea soup and a tomato about 6 o'clock. Queued up for bread again until dark, some managed to get 2 helpings, also managed to light a fire and made cocoa before guard made me put fire out.

Sunday 9th June 1940

Went to sleep but was very cramped and as had been lying down all day was not very comfortable. Had us up for the move about 4 o'clock very cold and misty. The usual messing around forming 5's etc.. Started off about 5:30 after eating last nights bread. Turned out very hot. On the way managed to scrounge between us 3 eggs, milk, rhubarb. Passed through *Halle*. At 1 o'clock prisoned in a factory on the 4th floor. This is very crowded and dirty. Issued with coffee and bread. Jimmy managed to buy some chocolate and cigs. Had a *slept(?)* in afternoon. Think we at *Halle* must be on the outskirts of *Brussels*.

Monday 10th June 1940

Cyril is still with us.

Cooked a lovely supper of an egg, few potatoes and fried onions and rhubarb. Finished off our cocoa. Moved off about 9 o'clock in the morning. Given 1/4 loaf and coffee got double helpings from cooker. Had a terrible long walk to *Waivre*. This was a very pretty new town. Feet very sore. Should imagine distance about 30-35 kilos. Looted a hotel in *Waivre* got a big bottle of Bovril and tea, flour & jam. Arrived and queued up for about 2-3 hours received food at about 12:30. Went to bed on the grass in a college grounds. Up about 5 o'clock Cooked a nice breakfast of 1 fried egg, bread and jam and Bovril.

Tuesday 11th June 1940

Received a slice of bread and coffee about 8 o'clock. Moved straight off. Turned very hot, quite a number of the boys flopping out, most of them haven't had the food we have had. Steve developed foot trouble and got a lift part of the way. Received plenty of bread and lard along the road. First stop for about 1 hour had ½ bar of chocolate. In the next stop we had a lovely lunch exchanged 2 slices of bread for ½ a rabbit. Had also a hard boiled egg, Bovril sandwich could hardly march after.

Carried on walking but feet very sore. Arrived at *Tienens* about 7 o'clock. Billeted in a barracks and at last have straw to sleep on. Not able to do any cooking *had* bread and awful soup. Went round to cookhouse scrounged some coffee.

Wednesday 12th June 1940

Up about 6 o'clock. Had bread and coffee. Ready to move at 8 o'clock. My left knee giving a bit of trouble. People in this town seem very scared of the Jerry. Moved off but my feet and knee did not let me get far. As all the shops were open the boys went mad. Received quite a lot of food stuffs. Steve and I got a lift in a Red Cross lorry taken to *St Truident* 15 kilos away. Had my feet attended to. Boys arrived about 3 o'clock. No fires allowed but they were light (*lit*) and we managed to get some flapjacks and chicken legs and tea cooked. Felt very feverish Think I must have caught a cold. Told that we are going by train tomorrow *through* to Holland.

Thursday 13th June 1940 19th day of march.

Pouring with rain. Queued up received from Red Cross jam sandwich, chocolate and coffee. Walked a bit of the way but knee gave me a bit of trouble so got a lift, did well on the scrounge before being put in lorry. Billeted outside in a football field at *Tongeren* Heard that Chamberlain had shot himself. Cooked some flapjacks.

Friday 14th June 1940 20th day of march.

Report at sick bay after being up at 4:30. We managed to cook some eggs and Bovril. Only Coffee supplied by Red Cross. Got a lift in lorry after loading officers luggage. Managed to pick up a cow skin pack from a rubbish store there. Arrived at a bridge where we waited for the column then marched properly through *Maastrich*. Arrived at a field where we received 1/2 brown loaf and bit of sausage. Managed to get some wood so made a lovely sausage roll with the flour we had.

Saturday 15th June 1940

Up at 4:30 moved off with a chunk of bacon fat and ½ a loaf. Stayed with sick and got a lift to *Palinberg*. Where we waited for (*them*) in football field. Then packed on to trucks (50 to a truck). Started a nightmare of a journey commencing at 7:30p.m.. Truck closed in and locked up. Not room to move but managed to get a little sleep. Arrived at station at 8 a.m. Sunday morning. Given nothing to eat either at football field or when we arrived.

Sunday 16th June 1940

Walked from station to a sort of proper camp. Split up into regiments. Everybody feeling very hungry. Feeling very weak myself and slept most of the day off and on. No food supplied but promised food in the morning. In Hanover somewhere in North West Germany. *Bathorn*. Told that this is a passage camp and should be sent from here to a proper prison camp where we should be registered and looked after by the Red Cross.

Monday 17th June 1940

Had a very comfortable sleep. Supplied with 1/5 loaf and some cheese and did that go down well. Just lazed about until about 3:30 when they issued potato and barley soup. This certainly was good. Especially as they split us up into sections it makes it much easier. A number of the boys changing watches and razors for small lumps off bread. Have had a nasty boil inside my nose for a long time now.

Tuesday 18th June 1940

Up about 6:30 Had bread cheese and coffee about 7 o'clock. Shortage as a couple of the boys detailed to get bread pinched some. It is marvellous that Englishmen should act like this. Am beginning to hate this rye bread for its bitter taste. Even the smell is beginning to turn me off. Spent all day resting, but am sure it is only making us weaker as now every time I stand up I come over dizzy. Suggested a game to the boys and this seemed a success as it whiled away the time after our soup which was again potato and barley. Cut Jimmy's hair for him - didn't make a bad job for first time.

Wednesday 19th June 1940

Up about 7 o'clock. Issued with sausage for a change this morning but it is tasteless stuff - more like oatmeal and water. Everybody's nerves getting very frayed - arguments about nothing very frequent. Steve as usual spends the day asleep. I spend the day mostly day dreaming of home and England. We heard a rumour that France has packed in and that Peace talks are being arranged.

Thursday 20th June and Friday 21st June 1940

Drew 2 days rations consisting of 2 loaves between 3, 3 cheese between 4. Told that we are leaving at 3 o'clock.

Up at 3 o'clock 1,275 of us marched to station and put 48 in a truck and commenced another nightmare journey. Reminded me of a well of snakes all intertwined. Managed to sleep a little and travelled in a general south easterly direction. At one station saw notice up to *Breslau*. Stood up at opening now and again. Noticed how there is no unused ground. Hay is cut from corners and embankments. Felt very stiff and weak. Turned very hot and stuffy. Tried to play cards and crosswords but could not concentrate.

Spent the day trying to sleep. Wish I had some cigarettes they would soothe your nerves a bit. For some reason could not stomach the bread. Arrived at *Lamsdorf* at 3:30 p.m. after 36 hours travel.

Walked to our billet which seems to have been holiday camp. Issued with bread margarine and jam. This was lovely so much so that we eat it all. Usual rumours floating about.

Saturday 22nd June 1940

Barn we are sleeping in very lousy. Took off clothes and searched for lice. Found quite a number of big fat ones. Did not get much sleep because of them.

Sunday 23rd June 1940

Queued up all day to get a bath and have clothes deloused. This was as good as a meal. After the bath we were taken to new billets. These are quite good. Newly built brick with bunks 3 deep and proper wash houses. This is more like a prison camp and should be a little more comfortable. No straw for palliasses.

Monday 24th June 1940

Up at 6 o'clock. Lined up for coffee. Started making myself a wooden spoon. This made the morning pass very quickly. Had late dinner about 3 o'clock consisting of soup and potatoes (tiny bits of bacon in soup). Lined up after dinner for tea, coffee, bread, marg and cream cheese. Jimmy and I fried our bread with the marg in the evening. Had one slice for supper about 8 o'clock saved a slice for breakfast tomorrow. Bunks very hard to sleep on with straw.

Tuesday 25th June 1940

Up at 6 o'clock. Lined up for coffee(cold water & grounds). Did some washing which dried very easily on the barbed wire fence in the sun and wind. Had a little sun bathe and mended socks. Usual issue of soup (thin) and potatoes. Uneventful day. Registered fingerprints & photo taken. Card given to send home. Only bread and marg for tea. Sliced cold potato up and spread a little butter on and fried them - these were very tasty. Lights out or rather in bed by 10 o'clock.

Wednesday 26th June 1940

Up at 6 o'clock. Another uneventful day. Had a little sun bathe and P.T. in morning. Wrote out card and believe it has gone off home. Usual soup and potatoes. Very surprised to see boys swapping gold watches and rings for 25-30 cigs. The afternoon go very quickly because of queuing up at 2 o'clock for dinner, then again at 4:30 for tea and again at 6 o'clock for checking.

Tea for a change was 2 loaves between 8 and a spoon of jam. The coffee had some sugar in it for a change. Sgt trying to arrange a concert party. Supply of tobacco running out again.

Thursday 27th June 1940

(No entry)

Friday 28th June 1940

Raining all day. Had food inside. On fatigue to get food and do all the work. Not much extra at dinner only about 4 *suds* (*spuds?*). Dinner macaroni soup. Scrounged a cig from Jerry soldier while collect tea which consisted of bread, marg and jam. Had a fire inside and toasted a couple of boiled potatoes up.

Saturday 29th June 1940

Dull in morning, received coffee and started eating all last nights bread issue but called out on P.T. Slept all morning. Usual muck up about food - waiting for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Soup was porridge today - just a thin oatmeal swill.

Diary stamped here with Stalag 344 *Gepuft* with number 46.

Sunday 30th June 1940

Rumour very strong that France has come to terms with Germany. French fleet, railways and ports supposed to be taken over by them. Also usual rumours and tales about Red Cross parcels. Made out specimen letter-card of what to say to them at home when we get the cards. Should the French have given in Peace should soon be here but will believe it when we are released. Had two lovely big potatoes pinched out of my pack. Had to eat some of my bread for supper. Passed the time with a game of Birds, Fish, Animals. Retired at 9 o'clock.

Monday 1st July 1940

Up at 6 o'clock. Had ¾ hour P.T. Feeling very weak expect it is lack of food and nothing to do all day. At end of queue for dinner - did not get much soup but received about 15 potatoes. Felt very blown out as ate most of potatoes mashed up in soup. Lined up for tea which consisted of usual 2 loaves between 9, marg and cream cheese. Wrote postcard. Finding time lagging- will be glad to get out on working parties. I wonder how long this will go on. Sometimes one feels like screaming. Enjoyed a thick slice of bread toasted and spread thick with half my marg ration.

Tuesday 2nd July 1940

Weather turning out nice again after storm of yesterday morning. Gave in postcard then as usual issued with letter-card. I don't know why everything should be made such a mess of. After squeezing most things on a card we can now write out letter-card. Wrote out letter-card and sunned ourselves. Issued with small piece of shaving soap and soap and soap powder. Just been thinking what if German prisoners are being treated like we are. We look such a scruffy crowd and am sure they are getting better fed.

Wednesday 3rd July 1940

Things looking up and getting properly organised. The Commandant is very disgusted with our discipline but what can he expect with our treatment and food. Split up into sections of 18 in which we line up for food and all parades. One must be properly dressed in tunic etc. Issued with marg, jam and sausage and 1 loaf between 4. Ate the whole lot for supper - saved none for breakfast.

Thursday 4th July 1940

Reveille at 5:30. Roll call 6 o'clock. Parade at 8 o'clock for 1½ hours P.T.. Saved cigs pkts laying about and started to make playing cards. Managed to scrounge enough tab-ends to make a bit of cigarette. Surprising that the little discipline has made the boys a little more cheerful. Soup has a little more taste today but on lining up again when it came to me, I *ducked*. Tea issue lard, cheese, jam and bread (1 between 4). Quite a good amount of cheese and lard. Had P.T. parade after which we had a bit of a sing-song. Eat all issue for supper. Enjoy talks we have before bedding down, they usually end up with food.

Friday 5th July 1940

Up at 5:30. Heavy rain during night. Very dull in morning. Had sing-song instead of P.T. then had a little marching. Two rumours very strong. One prisoner just supposed to been captured heard on wireless that France had packed in and England had a peace conference of 15 days with Germany.

This rumour probably coupled with the news Jerry has for us on the 10th. Of course we must have the rumour of Red Cross parcels. Someone supposed to have seen one.

Note Does this mean diary was written at a later date???

Makes 7th pay day owing. On P.T. told that Commandant promised cake for the block with best P.T. team. This fairly made the boys smarten up. Cake promised for Sunday week. Had sing-song and usual discussion. Bed about 10 o'clock.

Saturday 6th July 1940

Reveille at 5:30 Parade 6 o'clock 8:30 P.T. Washed shirt. Dinner consisted of 4 small potatoes and a water soup of stale cabbage. Tea consisted of 2 loaves between 9, jam and marg.. Issued with spoon. Weather very warm. Hold sing-song. Favourite songs seem to be sentimental ballads. Roger gave us a rendering of 'Oh leave a kiss'. Surprised he has quite a nice voice. Ate supper and went to bed about 10 o'clock.

Sunday 7th July 1940

Reveille at 6:20 Roll call 6:30. Had usual discussion on food we had at different times. This of course seems to always be the main topic of conversation. Had parade at 9 o'clock for boot inspection - had my name taken for clogs. Had another mess up with the dinner. Fatigue party brought soup (little tough meat and water) about 11 o'clock as no potatoes came until 3 o'clock ½ ladle of soup was dished out at 2:30. Then lined up for potatoes and bit more soup. Trouble was they dished too many out at first consequently the end people ducked. Our 2 old CSM's are to blame they have no idea of organisation. Spent from 11:15 to 4 o'clock lining up for meals. Tea issue 2 loaves ¾ lb. *mara* (*marg?*) and sour cheese and lard between 18. Apology for coffee served later. Miss a cigarette on trying days like this it would soothe the nerves and help the stomach a little bit. Bedded down about 10 o'clock..

Monday 8th July 1940

Up at 5:30 Roll Call 6 o'clock. Coffee very weak. Tried to chop dried potato peel up and smoke that but not very successful surprisingly. What the boys have tried coffee grounds, chopped up boot lace. Will be glad when we get parcel but don't expect one either from home or Red Cross before August. Meeting about organisation by NCO's. Dinner certainly served out better and slightly better quality soup. Ladle and bit, 2 small 2 large suds. Weather very warm. Had a bath and washed smalls. Tea issue 2 loaves between 9. marg and lard only. Received a paper in English called *The Camp* printed in Berlin. Reported British Channel Islands taken by surprise attack of German Air Force. Norway completely surrounded June 9th. Bit of bad news for us that all mails temporarily stopped and that our letters and postcards are held up in camp. Hope this does not mean the Registration Card has been held up. Armistice signed between France and Germany June 22 in the *Forest of Campiegne*. Map published of Britain versus Continent. (note Malta shaded as taken) also photo of German troops parading at *Arc de Triomphe*. Paris reported fallen on 14th June. Paraded at 7 o'clock. A big working party going out, we will hear in the morning.

Tuesday 9th July 1940

Up late Roll Call 6:20. Very dull morning. Pouring with rain. Issued with dinner inside - macaroni and 4 suds. Had a doze in afternoon. Tea 2 loaves between 9, marg and jam. Piece of sausage issued later. Had a sing-song later. Funny how the North Country people like sentimental songs. The Scotch fellows seem to know old sentimental songs.

Wednesday 10th July 1940

On fatigue, but did not do exceptionally well. Went to pick clogs up and picked up a few tab-ends and guard brought us some extra soup (of which the sergeant pinched all the meat). This fatigue made the day go a lot quicker. Surprised that our own English cooks would charge the boys cigarettes for food. Issued with marg and cheese and loaf between 9. Given clogs, but kept boots as well as did not like the idea of parting with them. Clogs made of wooden soles and motor tyre canvas

tops from which the rubber was stripped off. Enjoy full ration of supper about 9 o'clock. Also the couple of fags I made out of tap ends and diary paper.

Thursday 11th July 1940

Turned out very hot. P.T. parade but did not have much energy owing to the heat. Borrowed a book "Murder Intended" which read between the owner reading same. Had quite a change today in the form of fish soup (haddock or ling) with 4 suds as usual in their jackets. Found my right eye twitching a lot. Tea liver sausage, jam (teaspoon) marg, 2 loaves between 9. P.T. very awkward in clogs. Boys finding it hard to walk in them. Had a row about our 2 CSMs. Signed a petition to have them removed. Had a shave after P.T.

Friday 12th July 1940

Very warm again. Finished reading book and did a bit of sewing and darning which passed the morning. Makes our 3rd week at the camp. Issued with barley soup, 4 small pudding received early. Had rest in afternoon. Tea issue usual bread, marg and cheese. 30 required for working party but it is only to dig ditches. P.T. and roll call. Had sing-song. Number of jokes told (not to clean). Fellow sang a very good song which all the boys liked - this was called 'Rose in No Mans Land'.

Saturday 13th July 1940

Up at 5:30 to find weather completely changed very cold and dull. One of those miserable days all together. Called out for working party. Building people seemed to be wanted. Issued with a watery potato soup, piece of sausage, 4 suds. Tea issued marg and jam. Most of our time spent while waiting for food on discussions either on food, films, plays. Sat in sun out of wind.

Sunday 14th July 1940

Up 6 o'clock Still cold but brighter. Crusts off late nights bread, very nice to chew with morning coffee. Feeling very miserable and fed up, am afraid that it is too much of a boring life. Lunch up early - received a good issue of suds and thin soup (potatoes are very bad and taste nothing like a good English one). Borrowed a New Testament and read a few chapters then had a doze. Tea issue usual 2 loaves between 9, marg and jam (good spoonful today). Had a concert after roll-call only one or two turns any good. Got boring after a while and was pleased when it was over so could have my tea/supper. Bedded down about 10 o'clock. Still sleeping on bare boards as palliasses not arrived.

Monday 15th July 1940

Up at 5:30. Turned warm again and much brighter but still feel very fed up hoping to get out on a working party. Very glad of a draw off Jimmy's cig, but life would be pleasanter with some tobacco. Soup issue very bad. Nothing much of interest to note. Tea issue 1 loaf between 9, marg and jam.

Tuesday 16th July 1940

Up at 5:30. Started making a monopoly board. This will give me something to do for a time. Soup issue very good received quite a basin full and 5 suds then issued with 2 more. RQMS Harboard and Tex Austin taken over control of hut. M.O. messed up a comfortable dinner by wanting us out on parade just after dinner was served. Called for working party but they did not want mechanic so to be with the boys went back again as a labourer. Finished monopoly board off and had a bit of a game. Wrote card home asked for ships (*biscuits*) and ginger biscuits, pencil and note book.

Wednesday 17th July 1940

Up 5:30. Looking forward to getting out today. Found Jimmy, Steve and I had been knocked off list for cement factory. After dinner of fish soup we changed over with *L/C Creling* and others. (This will be noted later a good thing). 90 of us marched to station and on to train. This time travelling in real carriages (found number of tab ends in ashtray). Feeling now very happy at being with all our boys. Life is certainly looking up. Arrive after about half an hour at *Oppeln*. Marched off in 30's to different cement factories through the town. Various impressions of German life. Noticed the people seemed very sorry for us, expected to be cat-called and booed, but found them very good, example one young fellow went and brought a packet of 3 cigs and gave them to us. Arrive at factory and got shock of my life. We were issued with a lovely thick carrot soup and our billets very comfortable

with a lovely room of bunks of straw. Everybody very pleased and hope we can stay here. We should be comfortable.

Thursday 18th July 1940

Up at 6:30 and issued with two big jam sandwiches of nice ordinary bread. (Did not mention the wash places, this is certainly a luxury.) Sorted out as a mechanic and put on to chopping wood with Cyril. Issued with 2 bowls of soup at 12 o'clock. In afternoon put on to unloading trucks of sand. This was certainly very hard work and made my shoulders ache. But our guards and foreman at factory very kind and good. Finished at 4 o'clock. Tea issue of 2 big sandwiches of pork paste and coffee. Given a football with which we had a little kick round and to bed at 9 o'clock. Guards locked our boots and braces up for *night*. Cement firm *Schlesische Portland Zement Industrie A:G. Oppeln.*

Friday 19th July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. On cleaning up fatigue. Sandwich of jam which were left until break at 9 o'clock. Started work at 6 o'clock - break at 9-9:30 when we had coffee and sandwiches. Worked again filling small truck with cement and tipping inside factory. Stopped at 12 o'clock but dinner not up on time. Dinner consisted of 2 hard boiled eggs, potatoes and a mustard gravy (sort of mayonnaise). This was very good. Started work again at 2 o'clock finished about 5 o'clock. Guards got us a couple of razors to shave. Tea issue 1 pork sausage, 1 jam sandwich. My turn for bucks received 1 more pork sandwich. Later received a slice of bread and butter from guard for cleaning room out. Certainly a good hard days work and so to bed at 9 o'clock.

Saturday 20th July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Issued with 2 slices of bread and jam. Went off to work at 6 o'clock. Ducked again for digging cement slag. Break at 8:30-9 went eat breakfast. Knocked off at 12 o'clock when we were issued with runner beans and potato soup. (Very nicely cooked and very clean). 1 o'clock returned to work until 3 o'clock when we started getting the place scrubbed out and had a bath. Had inspection by guard commander. Then issued with tea which consisted of 1 slice of bread and jam and a porridge of corn and honey, had a little sugar on it. (nice and warm and filling but really tasteless). Received 3 cigs and cigar from the foreman's son. Went to bed very tired about 9 o'clock.

Sunday 21st July 1940

No work today. Up at 7 o'clock. Mess Orderly today. Breakfast at 8 o'clock consisted of 1½ rolls and ½ slice of jam. Made money of cardboard for monopoly until dinner time. The dinner (oh boy) rissoles (beautifully cooked) potato and cabbage. This certainly was a surprise and a great treat and plenty of it. Played monopoly in the afternoon. Issued with 2 slices of bread and jam. So to bed at 9 o'clock.

Monday 22nd July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Usual day of hard digging.

Tuesday 23rd July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock and work at 6 o'clock. Feeling very stiff but think am getting used to it better now. Think that in time this digging and just the little amount of food should be quite fit after a few months if I can stand it and they keep us here. I have my doubts, it would not surprise me if, after a months hard work they pack us back to the camp and get 30 new slaves. Dinner of carrot soup but no meat in it. Worked on to 5:30 again this seems to be the regular time and not 3 o'clock as we had heard. Tea issue of boiled potatoes, hard boiled egg and sauce. To bed at 9 o'clock.

Wednesday 24th July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock Started work at 6 o'clock. 2 sandwiches of pork paste. At work loading tipping truck with stones. Very dull, rained during day but they would not let us stop work so got very wet. Dinner at 12 o'clock had vermicelli (usual 2 bowls full). This was very filling. Told in the afternoon that I was one of the fellows that had been slacking but think this was very unjust of the German guard. This has supposed to have stopped our cigarette issue, pay on Friday if there is any more will be sent

back to *Landsdorf*. Think this is a lot of German rot. Finished work at 6 o'clock after a very hard day of 10½ hours solid digging. Tea consist of 12 potatoes (in jackets) and cream cheese (nicely flavoured) 1 sandwich of bread.

Thursday 25th July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Issued with 2 sandwiches of bread and butter which was eaten at the break after starting at 6 o'clock. Still digging stones into trolley - hoping that we finish at 3 o'clock today as the work is very hard. Dinner at 12 o'clock - a very nice runner bean soup (two bowls full). Work until about 2 o'clock on stones then taken off on to digging mud into railway truck at 4 o'clock. Feeling very stiff and tired. Finished work at 6 o'clock. Tea consisted of 1 sandwich of brawn and 1 of cream cheese with chopped onion and sugar for the coffee. The sugar made a big difference to the drink. Very tired, rested after tea which we finish at 7 o'clock.

Friday 26th July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock Breakfast issue of 1 sandwich of pork, 1 of *butter*. Turned out very cold and wet. Very miserable day. Dinner issue of barley and potato soup. Beginning to feel the food not filling enough for the amount of work we do. It is fairly comfortable keeping at digging until 3 o'clock but after that it becomes very heavy and weary. I wonder how long we will have to work the full 12 hours to 6 o'clock at night. It is a long time between 1 o'clock and 6. Especially with old Rat's Face (our foreman) keeping watch over you the way he does. Got very wet but got a floury soup and 1 pork sausage sandwich (sugar for coffee). Went straight to bed after tea. While digging spent most of the time thinking of happenings at home and things that I have done or will do when I get back.

Saturday 27th July 1940

Work again. Issued with 1 sausage ,1 butter sandwich. The day a bit brighter but still chilly. Taken off filling today and put on shovelling cement into a railway truck. Believe to be leaving off at 3 o'clock today. Dinner issue of cabbage and potato soup. Back to work again at 1 o'clock and as another truck of sand came in worked on until 5 o'clock but did not mind very much as in the afternoon some children came and climbed the wall and passed over 3 bags of cake which we immediately ate and a couple of cigs. As the guard and Goatsbeard left us alone it was quite a pleasant afternoon. Tea issue of 2 bread and butter sandwiches. Wash and shave and general clean up for inspection. Receive another small piece of cake from a woman. To bed about 9 'clock.

Sunday 28th July 1940

Up at 7 o'clock after a nice looked forward to lay in knowing there is no work today. Breakfast consisted of 2 rolls jam and the piece of cake as promised. Did not mention that this was the first since leaving England. Went back to bed again. Had a big game hunt (bag of 5). Got up for a stroll and struck lucky with tab ends. Dinner rissole, chopped carrots, potatoes and gravy. Read in afternoon. Started on design of a house. Tea at 6 o'clock 2 sandwiches of sausage meat and ½ of this mornings cake issue. Spent on the whole a lazy day. Thinking quite a lot of home and wondering how long it will be before we get there again. Heard that Liverpool, Tunbridge Wells had been bombed.

Monday 29th July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Bread and butter issued (2 sandwiches). At work at 6 o'clock unloading sand truck. Break at 8:30 for breakfast. Taken off sand to keep chute clear of slag. Morning passed very quickly. Dinner at 12 o'clock consisted of vermicelli (which was very tasteless really) but very filling. Only had ½ hour for lunch but finished at 5 o'clock. Tea 2 sandwiches of bread and butter (received 1 sandwich bucks this morning). Lazed about and read during evening. Went to bed early.

Tuesday 30th July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Issue with 2 sandwiches of bread and butter. Work at 6 o'clock until 8:30. Had rest of breakfast in ½ hour break. Old Goaty put me in the hole shovelling cement, very dusty and choking. Dinner at 12 o'clock to 12:30 Veg soup very like scotch broth - certainly very nicely cooked. Managed to get on shovelling truck again outside. Finished at 5 o'clock. Tea issue of new

potatoes and a lovely flavoured bread soup (usual mayonnaise flavour). Very cold at times. Did not see much of old Goaty today. Hard up for tab ends. To bed at 9 o'clock.

Wednesday 31st July 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Issue with 1 sandwich of bread and jam. Started work at 6 o'clock until 8:30. Half hour break. Dull sort of day and turned to rain. On loading railway truck with cement. Loaded it in the morning and unloaded it in the afternoon 4 of us. Dinner consist of ham and oatmeal soup. I think the most nutritious we have had. Tea of a sort of egg and bread and new potatoes. Usual talks in evening and so to bed with another day nearer Blighty.

Thursday 1st August 1940

Up as usual, breakfast of 2 sandwiches, 1 of jam and 1 of butter which I managed to toast at the break at 8:30 to 9. I'm loading cement truck again. Turned warmer and sunny. Dinner of veg. soup (contained tomato). Knocked off at 5 o'clock and tea of sausage soup and new potatoes containing big lump of sausage which was a lovely treat. Rumoured that will be paid next week. Usual sort of day. On sweeping up fatigue.

Friday 2nd August 1940

Up at usual time. Bread ration very thin - 2 sandwiches of jam which I toasted during the break. Very cold and dampish all day. Went down to quarry to move railway line then on loading cement truck again. Dinner consisted of potato and sort of fish flavoured rissole. Finished off at 2 o'clock to get clothes steamed. Wandered round with blanket wrapped round all afternoon and evening while dried uniform in boiler house. Felt very depressed and miserable all day. Thinking very much of home and different things and people.

Saturday 3rd August 1940

Breakfast issue of 2 sandwiches 1 of jam 1 of cheese (a very strong flavoured, greasy sort of cheese). Saved a bit for tomorrow's rolls. On loading and unloading cement truck finishing off at 3 o'clock. Dinner today of a runner bean and potato soup which I found very filling for a change but would have liked suet pud and syrup afterwards to have felt satisfied. Felt totally different today, think its because got some tobacco from the engine driver, he certainly has been very good to us. Finished off at 3 o'clock and tidied ourselves up for inspection. Heard that we are being paid on Monday.

Sunday 4th August 1940

Had a nice lay in until 7 o'clock. Breakfast consisted of 2 jam rolls of white bread. Went back to bed in the morning. Dinner of soup which was mixed veg sweetish, followed by rhubarb. On mess orderly but ducked badly on the rhubarb. Felt very full. Slept again in afternoon. Enjoy the rest on Sundays after the dull slogging all week. Tea of 2 sandwiches of bread and sausage cut rather thin.

Monday 5th August 1940 (August Bank Holiday)

Bank Holiday eh!!! What a way to spend it. Still on filling and emptying cement truck. Now not a bad job as Old Rat's face goes off at 2 o'clock and we take our time until 5 o'clock. Sandwich issue usual 2 sandwiches of jam (thinner). Dinner vermicelli soup flavoured with parsley. Wondering how, if they have it, they are spending the holiday and spent the afternoon thinking of how I would like to be spending it if at home. Tea of carrot soup with potatoes in it.

Tuesday 6th August 1940

Sandwiches of sausage and jam cut again very thin. This seems to becoming the usual occurrence, blame put on shortage of bread, that is why we get the hot meal at night. Filling emptying cement truck still. My left shoulder feeling a bit wanky today probably due to the strain of continually digging. Dinner of barley and sausage soup. Had a very easy afternoon as Goaty and guards very scarce during the afternoon. Weather very sunny and warm. Tea issue of potatoes in jackets and *sweet* porridge.

Wednesday 7th August 1940

Bread issue still small. 2 sandwiches of jam. Taken off cement truck and empty 2 wagons of round stones down chute, we were rushed so as they could get the trucks out. Les swung his spade and cut my finger rather badly. Dinner of cabbage and potato soup. thin but meaty tasted. Had a hard days work my back aching. Seems to be taking a long time to get used to. Tea suds in jackets and cornflour soup. Had a game of monopoly. Went to bed very tired.

Thursday 8th August 1940

Up usual time 5 o'clock. Bread issue of 1 sausage (liver) and 1 jam which I toasted on furnace. On the old cement truck again. Dinner same as yesterday cabbage and potato. Thinking of what I will do about a holiday. Thinking how nice it would be up at Newton Stewart, to go out to all the farms in the quiet countryside. Finished at 5 o'clock when we received our letter cards which have to be written by tomorrow morning. After tea (porridge or rather gruel and potatoes) wrote card home. Mentioned about being out working, would have liked to have said a lot more but it is awkward not being able to reply to anything. Washed bathroom out.

Friday 9th August 1940

Received 2 sandwiches jam and sausage which I toasted for the break. Filling cement truck in morning. Bumper dinner issue, am afraid eat too much in the time as received 3 helpings of veg. soup and potatoes then mackerel (soused) and potatoes. This made me awfully full up and luckily I was put on shovelling slag where nobody ever came and I had a cushy afternoon. Found 11 pfennige which I gave to one of the boys to get me something tomorrow morning. Veg soup (carrot and potato) for tea.

Saturday 10th August 1940

Up at 5 o'clock Issued 1 sausage 1 jam sandwich toasted at the break. Old Goatly put me in the White Hole, but got me a gas mask. Thank goodness it is a half day. Morning passed very quickly. Dinner barley and sausage soup. Finished at 3 o'clock. Some of the boys received camp marks for their French and Belge money. Corp. Percival went down to the shop - found all food stuff is rationed and they have a limited supply of hardware. Now only waiting for pay. Received about ¼ lb. of bon-bons for the 11 pfennig these were very nice and tasty. Had a bath. Tea of cornflour soup and potatoes. Finished off game of monopoly. Managed to pick up a few cigar ends and tobacco to make a few smokes on Sunday. Had a tummy ache in evening.

Sunday 11th August 1940

Hurrah for Sunday again. Got up about 7:30. The weeks are certainly passing quickly. Breakfast this morning of sausage and jam sandwich. Washed socks and spent a lazy day on the whole. Dinner today very thick veg soup - no extras. Slept during the afternoon. Tea just cornflour soup (tasteless) after which I darned socks then went to bed and read 'Miss Brown of OXY' A very good book.

Monday 12th August 1940

Start of another week. Breakfast of 1 sausage 1 jam sandwich. Ricked my neck in shovelling up on to cement truck. Complained to guard put on lighter work but every shovel was agony but stuck out the day. Dinner not vermicelli but rice soup which was very nice. Could not do much shovelling but tried my hardest. Tea issue of barley and sausage and potatoes. Ate barley soup then had sausage and suds. This was very enjoyable. Neck and back very stiff - went straight to bed.

Tuesday 13th August 1940

Neck and back very stiff. Found it very hard shovelling. Guard took me over to the chemist who rubbed oils into it and guard told me to get off to bed and keep warm. Weather very bad and teeming with rain all day, very glad to be able to be in bed reading 'Swiss Family Robinson' Breakfast of 2 jam sandwiches. Dinner of potato soup mayonnaise. Went to sleep in afternoon. Tea of cornflower soup flavoured with fried onion and a good issue of potatoes. Back still stiff Hope it will have eased up enough for tomorrow or it will be back to Lansdorf.

Wednesday 14th August 1940

Back still stiff but a lot better. 2 sandwiches of butter which as usual toasted at the break. Unloaded coal truck at furnace. Then with Arthur on sand. Dinner consisted of cabbage and potato. Would like a change from these soups for something solid. Although they are very tasty and filling for the time they cannot be doing us much good, I suppose we should be thankful for small mercies. Taken by guard with Dennis to peel potatoes and carrots for tonight's soup. Lady at house gave us 2 cigs and a sandwich of lard and a pickled gherkin. And so to bed with another ½ week over. Our guard commander leaving as he has been discharged from the army.

Thursday 15th August 1940

Back and neck a lot better. Up at 5 o'clock. Swept up billets issued with 2 thin sandwiches 1 of sausage 1 of butter. On at first shovelling sand with Arthur then put on the trolley. At the ½ hour break toasted bread. Dinner ½ hour had a new kind of soup. Potato and oatmeal with bits of sausage in. With Arthur on sand again, talking this afternoon of holidays when we get back. Reminded of the marvellous tea I had once at Bude with the Rovers. Tea issue of carrot and potato soup again pleasant bacon fat flavour.

Friday 16th August 1940

Breakfast of 1 butter and 1 jam sandwich, received a crust on the butter this morning. On filling the cement truck today. Dinner issue of a thin carrot and potato soup (no meat in it) the worst we have had, all said that it was not filling and carrots raw. Did not finish unloading truck. Tea rather late, but well worth waiting for and makes up for dinner, issue of cream cheese, 18 potatoes in jackets and a mug of sweetened goats milk. Our tall guard certainly seems to be taking an interest in the food. He says that there will be more bread as from Monday. Still no pay. Tea just filled me out comfortably, roll on tomorrow and Sunday for a short day and day of rest.

Saturday 17th August 1940

Half day thank goodness. Breakfast issue of 1 jam and 1 butter (usual thin slices) Some bucks today making me first *next*. On the sand with Arthur. Another bad day for dinner very thin cabbage and potato, mostly water. Knocked off at 3 o'clock to clear billets. Had no tobacco but struck very lucky a German workman gave me some tobacco and a sandwich of butter which I toasted about 4 o'clock while waiting for tea which we had after inspection. Consisted of beans and potato soup flavoured with vinegar. Receive buck-she a ladleful. Guards gave us some leaf and cig tobacco, this was very acceptable. Supposed to be a very good salad tea tomorrow night. Just spent the evening talking mostly about films then so to bed to enjoy a good strong cigarette. Year ago today started holiday in Scotland and how I remember how we went to that pub at Ayr for tea.

Sunday 18th August 1940

Up about 7 o'clock. Issued with 2 jam rolls which I *damped* and warmed up on the shovel in furnace, this made them very delicious. On mess orderly. During the morning received a nice crust of bread and butter from a workman of which I had two slices after dinner which was a very thin carrot and potato soup. It is a good job we are in for a good tea. Raining and cold during the day. Spent the day lazing about. Tea special potato salad (chopped potato, gherkin, onion and vinegar) and mint tea. Talking about usual subjects, food, films etc. To bed to start another week at 9 o'clock. Buck-she bread very handy, had 2 thick slices with tea, saved the crust for morning.

Monday 19th August 1940

Up 5 o'clock. Breakfast issue of 2 (thin as usual) sandwiches, jam and butter, toasted at break as usual. On sand with Arthur but he was taken off for the 'White Hole'. Morning passed very quickly thinking of arrival home and arranging in my mind an evening out with Mum, Dad and Helen. Dinner at the Chandos and on to a show. Soup, veg with bit of barley and oatmeal. Certainly thicker than of late. Started to rain so put on cement truck. Tea mashed potatoes and mug of buttermilk. Wrote card to Grandpa and Granny. Wonder if our letters are going through all right yet. So to bed another day nearer home and no extra bread ration as promised.

Tuesday 20th August 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. 2 sandwiches jam and butter. Received bucks of 1 half butter 1 half sausage from the guard. On the sand still but rained nearly all day. Dinner of cabbage soup seems to be a shortage of potatoes but a bit thick. Still raining during the afternoon. Tea came up at 6 o'clock consisted of cornflour soup and spuds in jackets. Spent the evening lazing about and so to bed. Shortage of tobacco. Heard that Germany is in a bad way and that everything is rationed.

Wednesday 21st August 1940

Up at 5 o'clock with usual issue of jam and butter sandwiches (thin as usual). On sand with Arthur and Les. Very cold, goodness knows what it will be like when the weather comes. Rumoured that Hitler spoke on Sunday and said the war will be over in 3 weeks and America says will be 6 weeks but cannot see this. Reported that we have bombed Berlin and Germany has bombed London. Of course I realise that we as prisoners do not really know the position. Dinner of thicker barley soup with ½ inch lumps of bacon fat in. Felt comfortable after the bucks but this soon passed off owing to the chilly wind that was blowing. Tea of barley soup, sausage and spuds in jackets, this I think one of the best we have as solid sausage and spuds nice to eat with knife and fork. Very satisfied and feeling very tired.

Thursday 22nd August 1940

1 jam and butter sandwich. On sand at first but taken off by Goaty and put in the hole. Certainly a red-letter day - we got paid in the afternoon. After a dinner of small barley soup. Paid from 18/7/40 to 10/8/40 at a rate of 70f per day, total of 14 marks 70f in special camp marks. Four chaps went to the shop after work. Quite a time when they returned with tobacco etc. All foodstuff rationed but managed to get a small packet of cheese and pickle gherkins. I bought cig papers 36f, 2 packets tobacco 60f, leaf tobacco 42f, ½ kilo gherkins 42f, cheese 14f. Tea issue of thick veg soup with good chunk of sausage after which the goods were dished out. Great pleasure to have tobacco. Very late to bed. Had a gherkin and cheese for supper very tasty.

Friday 23rd August 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Breakfast usual jam and butter which toasted at the break. One slice spread with cheese. On sand during morning. Weather very cold and then turned to rain making it very biting. Put on cement truck in afternoon. Veg soup (cabbage, carrots and potatoes) but was only warm would have been nice hot. Made out list for tomorrow's shopping. Very thrilling. Tea issue of veg soup. Supposed to have been spuds and cheese but cheese not turned up and so to bed at 9 o'clock.

Saturday 24th August 1940

Up usual time. Breakfast issue 1 butter 1 sausage (breakfast) sandwich. Goaty put me on pulling up weeds. This job was terrible as they were all wet and it was terrible cold and biting wind was blowing. It will be very cold in the winter as I believe the wind blows from the plains of Russia. Clearing up under grab crane archway of slag etc. Dinner a change although very thin, a beetroot soup. Finished at 3 o'clock. 6 fellows went to the shop while we filled palliasses. Five short promised ours next week. Had a shower and cleaned up. Boys came back but brought no food stuff. Brought razor 60f, toothpaste 25f, pipe 70f, tobacco papers 36f, leaf 42f, 2 boxes matches 3f each, bottle of concentrated lemon juice. Tea issue of spuds in jackets and white cream cheese, very filling. Still perishing cold.

Sunday 25th August 1940

13th week of capture. Very cold wind blowing. Woken up at 6 o'clock to go to church, why so early goodness only knows. Just Jerry system again. Issued with 2 white rolls with butter painted on. Tomatoes not arrived yet. Ready for church only 6 of us at 9 o'clock. Marched to the other factory picked up 9 of the others and on to *Oppeln* where we went to an R.C. church. This was a beautiful church but did not understand the service which just seemed to consist of prayers. Walked back just in time for dinner of meat stew and potatoes and cabbage. Feeling very tired after walk about 3 miles each way so went to bed until tea time. Tea of 2 sandwiches sausage and butter (bit thicker than usual) and mint tea (tried lemon essence, turned out quite nice). Darned socks, these are getting to be all darn now and so to bed with another Sunday passed.

Monday 26th August 1940

Up at 5 o'clock, very cold. 2 butter sandwiches which as usual I toasted during the break. On loading small trolley usual sort of day. Dinner of macaroni soup very thick (seemed to contain little balls of macaroni). Tomatoes came up just too late for tea which was mash and buttermilk but enjoyed a nice supper at about 7. To bed about 10 o'clock feeling fairly satisfied.

Tuesday 27th August 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Issued with 1 sausage 1 butter sandwich. Worked a bit over the break so did not toast but enjoyed tomato sandwich. Gave in list for some things from shop. On truck early but later taken off to shovel slag. Guard says we will get more bread and sausage from tomorrow, we'll wait and see. Dinner of thin cabbage soup which contains a number of bones. Boys went to shop but seems to be some trouble, did not bring any food back except pots of mustard. Tea not cheese and spuds as expected but greasy bread soup and a small issue of spuds in jackets. Steamed a couple of tomatoes for soup, had 4 more with potatoes. Disappointed in shopping, got 2 packets tobacco, 2 boxes matches, 1 packet papers, pot mustard. So to bed about 10 o'clock.

Wednesday 28th August 1940

Up at usual at 5 o'clock. Breakfast of 1 cheese 1 butter. Thicker bread as promised did not turn up. Of course this was expected - usual Jerry tales - cannot understand why they will persist on telling us things that never materialise. On emptying truck, kept on with Les during breakfast. Had a delightful meal later with a couple of tomatoes. Shovelling slag in afternoon. Tea up at 6 o'clock consisted of spuds in jackets and barley soup. Wondering how much longer it will be before we hear from home. It would certainly be very pleasant and would like to hear if everybody at home is all right.

Thursday 29th August 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Swept billets out. Still no extra bread issued sandwiches of 1 jam, 1 butter. Four of us put in the 'White Hole of Oppeln'. Hardly room to work as it is so packed out with sand, had quite an easy day really but very dusty. Breakfast very tasty with the tomatoes. Dinner of potato and bacon soup. Worked chute in shifts had 20 minutes snooze. Tea issue of potato and sausage soup. Ate sausage with tomato after the soup. Thinking today what a big waste of time all this life is. Shovelling aimlessly all day if I was learning about a cement factory it wouldn't be too bad. Clean up bathroom and so to bed with another week nearly passed.

Friday 30th August 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Emptied bucket. Bread issue still the same 1 butter, 1 jam, but thought of grilling a tomato in the toast. This turned out very nice, but made it too tasty and moorish. On filling trolley all day. Very glad of this as it was very cold and rained off and on. Dinner issue of potato soup but differently flavoured from yesterday and thicker. Felt very cold and hungry at 4 o'clock. Two fellows went down to the shop. Tea disappointing gruel and 1 butter sandwich, could not make up my mind if this was satisfying or not. Feeling fed up and cold during the evening.

Saturday 31st August 1940

Breakfast of 2 sandwiches. Put down the 'White Hole of Oppeln' again the four of us, had a nice little *snicker* as we took it in shifts. Dust very bad though and wonder if it will do us much harm. Dinner of very thick oatmeal and potato soup with a lump of sausage. Foreman kept us on in the hole until about 4:30, why dear knows. After which we all had to have our clothes steamed and I received my palliass. Very cold wind blowing especially wandering round wrapped in blankets. Tea of thin macaroni soup, very disappointing and did the boys have a moan. Dried clothes at the furnace and then went to bed but found bed very comfortable. While in hole today spent a lot of the time thinking of home with mother in the kitchen.

Sunday 1st September 1940

Awaken about 6:40 by the guard but stayed in bed until about 8 o'clock when breakfast came up not of rolls but 2 sandwiches (usual jam and butter). Did not eat these immediately as the guard made us clear the place up. Toasted bread and enjoyed it very much in peace. Spent most of the morning

cutting up leaf tobacco, this stuff is very strong, but nice mixed with packet tobacco. Dinner issue very good thick brown soup with whole spuds in, Rissoles and beetroot. Certainly an exceptional dinner. On mess orderly. Went to bed and had a sleep until about 4:30. Supposed to be increase in rations from today - will see. Tea of 2 sandwiches of cream cheese.

Monday 2nd September 1940

Up at 5 o'clock, worked until 8:30 when told that 6 of us had to go on 2 to 10 shift. Spent rest of morning sleeping etc. Dinner of barley and potatoes, quite nice and had a enjoyable rest until 2 o'clock, there wasn't that rush. Went on at 2 o'clock. Shovelling cement heap until 5 o'clock then put on slag chute with Stooges until break for tea which consisted of mashed potatoes and mug of buttermilk. Rushed by the guard. Then spent an easy time unloading cement truck until 9:30 when they knocked us off. Put in billets by guard. We have decided that night shift is very cushy with no guard or Goaty watching over you.

Tuesday 3rd September 1940

Did not get up immediately, drew bread ration 1 sausage 1 jam (received a crust for a change). Got up and washed, went round and toasted breakfast, came back and enjoyed it in peace (on the way back received a roll from bakers boy). darned socks during the morning. *Darn????!!* Dinner thick potato soup. But as usual Jerry made us start work at 12:30. Hours now to be 12:30 to 10 o'clock with unofficial tea ½ hour. Tea of very thin cornflour soup and 8 small spuds in jackets. (Certainly warrants the grumbles of us all as it was tasteless water). Took 4 spuds and the roll back to work and put them on furnace to keep hot for supper. How senseless it is shovelling the cement in the dark. Foreman evidently decided the same as we finished at 9 o'clock and told to start work at usual time tomorrow. Inoculated for typhoid in right breast.

Wednesday 4th September 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Wishing we were on late shift still. Breakfast butter and jam again, still as thin as usual. Emptied truck of what I think must be similar to the mud at Northfleet only in solid form. Dinner of thick potato soup and an egg received buck-she ladleful. Back on shovelling cement heap over for truck again in afternoon, seems a very long afternoon. Tea of thick veg soup (fairly tasty and filling). Made out shopping list and so to bed another day nearer going home.

Thursday 5th September 1940

2 sandwiches of 1 sausage 1 of jam. As now not allowed to toast had them as they were but did not find them so filling. In the 'White Hole' with Steve. In the hole find time goes very quickly thinking of home and the old folks. Heard that Hitler had spoken and said that English had bombed towns so they were going to reply by bombing our town unmercifully, rumoured Liverpool bombed again. Dinner of a thick veg soup (tasty). *Miked* all afternoon. Tea very bad 2 bowls of cornflour and water (tasteless) and about 7 or 8 spuds in jackets. Guard came in to say that we could get no more tobacco but that we would be allowed a ration from the camp. Of course this cannot be depended on. The weeks are certainly flying by. Mail and parcels should be well on the way by now.

Friday 6th September 1940

Breakfast sausage and jam sandwiches (on buttered slice). Spent day with Steve in the 'White Hole', had a very easy day. Dinner of split pea and potato soup (very nice and thick). Spent the day thinking of the folks at home. Find this is a very quick way of making the time and very pleasant. Won't it be a day when I get home. Tea of tasty mixed veg soup with lump of sausage. Had hair trimmed and so to bed once again.

Saturday 7th September 1940

Up usual time, 2 sandwiches of jam and butter (very little butter). Emptied slack truck in the morning. Received a nice buttered sandwich from one of the workman. Dinner of carrot and potato soup with small rings of sausage (very thin). On filling gypsum truck in afternoon until 3 o'clock - did not do very much filling as no guard or foreman in sight. Had bath and cleaned up for inspection, which is put off until tomorrow. They must find something for us tomorrow morning. Do not like the

seating about for tea very much. Tea issue of cornflour soup (tasteless) and 8 or 9 spuds in jackets. Very filling but nearly all water, which I found during the night.

Sunday 8th September 1940

Got up for a cup of coffee, went back to bed until breakfast was issued which consisted of 2 sausage sandwiches (thicker spread). Cleaned out guardroom and washed underclothes. Generally lazed about waiting for dinner, which turned up a rissole (????? flavoured so far) thick potato soup and rhubarb (tricycle man unfortunately spilt most of the rhubarb in cart). Had a sleep in afternoon until tea which consisted of gruel (thicker and sweeter than usual) and a slice of bread. Started drawing plan of a house in my scrap book in the evening. To bed about 9 o'clock.

Monday 9th September 1940

Start of another week. Bread issue usual butter and jam. Weather very warm. Goaty on afternoon shift. Shovelling gypsum in morning. Dinner of pearl macaroni with bit of meat in. In afternoon taken to unload potatoes then carried on peeling some for tea which was mash and buttermilk. (Woman mashed them mixed with melted down bacon fat). Received a ½ sandwich of bacon fat which I fried up and had with the mash. Sgt. Major arrived - told very disconcerting tales (1) that the mails hadn't left *Lamsdorf* (2) We had to have tomatoes to have with our bread. Slim had told us to expect word from home soon and we couldn't have any food from shop.

Tuesday 10th September 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Breakfast of 1 jam 1 butter sandwich. Unloading ballast truck in the morning until 2 o'clock when the stooges came on. Dinner of potato and cabbage flavoured with caraway seed. Had a terrible thunderstorm during the night, all the place flooded out. Very surprised that my Army boots have lasted so long because they were put in for repair when we were at *Beltring*, they are now worn right through. The tops are still quite good. Tea of spuds in jackets and white cheese this was a very big issue. Feeling extremely blown out, but do not think there is not goodness in them.

Wednesday 11th September 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Breakfast of usual 2 sandwiches of butter and jam. Raining very hard during the night and continuous during the day. On loading the little trolley all day. Goaty and Slim keeping us busy all afternoon. Dinner of a nice thick potato soup and piece of sausage. No bucks today. Tea of boiled potatoes and a hard boiled egg and sauce and mint tea (sweetened and milk). Certainly a very nice tea. Tea served rather late to bed about 8:45. Rumoured that London Docks had been bombed (saw a) supposed to be a picture of them all ablaze and that 400 people had been killed and a thousand injured. Cannot believe this to be true.

Thursday 12th September 1940

On sweeping up. Raining very hard all night and when we went out to work. Breakfast of 1 butter and 1 cheese (white). Bread very thin. On little trolley all morning. Dinner of very thick carrot and potato soup received buck-she (very tasty). Had a very funny afternoon, 3 Jerry workmen came on loading other trolley they filled it full and twice as quick as us. Goaty in a terrible temper. To crown it we let the truck run off the rails and tip up fully loaded. I never saw anybody jump about and rave so much. Tea issue of piece of sausage and potato soup (quite tasty). Made out shopping list.

Friday 13th September 1940

Up at 5 o'clock breakfast 1 butter 1 sausage (slices). Very cold but sun came out later. On filling cement truck in the morning. Dinner of oatmeal barley and potato soup (thickish). On filling trolley in afternoon. Tea of cornflour soup flavoured with bacon rind and 8 potatoes in jackets. Received 2 pkts tobacco 2 pkts papers 2 boxes matches, ½ kilo gherkins, 2 portions mustard. Having boots mended with belting fibre. Cut up some leaf tobacco but have not enough ordinary pkt tobacco to mix with it. Leaf very strong to smoke in cig form but will have to get used to it.

Saturday 14th September 1940

Up at 5 o'clock looking forward to the week end for a rest. Breakfast of 1 butter 1 sausage (slices) mustard makes a nice flavouring for the plain bread slices. Spitting with rain all morning. On loading

cement truck and unloading in afternoon. Went on working after 3 o'clock. As usual nothing said by the Jerry, we just carried on until 5 o'clock when we were knocked off very annoyed. Dinner issue of potato and cabbage stalk soup (thickened I believe with oatmeal). Cleaned up clothes, had a shower and went for tea which was 1 egg and 2 cups of mashed potatoes and very nice gravy which contained little dumplings in fat in. Received a copy of the Camp and a postcard to write. Will write this one to Auntie Dora. Cleaned bathroom out and so to bed about 9 o'clock feeling very tired.

Sunday 15th September 1940

Slim woke us at 5:30 but came back and told us we could sleep until 6:30. Why goodness only knows. Breakfast of 2 butter sandwiches (received crust today - saving it for tea) and two spoons of sugar. Usual cleaning, washed socks and shirt. Socks will not be lasting much longer. Received some copies of the Camp and postcard last night. Wrote this card to Auntie Dora. Dinner up about 12:30. Rissole and thick potato soup and a very nice sweet beetroot. On mess orderly not much left in dixie. Had a sleep in the afternoon. Tea issue of butter and sausage sandwiches. Repaired socks darned nearly new heel and so to bed to start another week.

Monday 16th September 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Started work at 6 o'clock as usual. Doug, Roger and myself on the small trolley. Started '*niche arbiton and niche essen*' club. Running service 1 truck for ½ hour. Dinner of thick porridge with some potatoes and carrots. Found this more staying than most soups. Heard it rumoured that 5,000 people had been killed in air raids in London. Find it hard to believe this, but hope it is not true. It certainly gives one some very unpleasant thoughts. As we thought the buttermilk soup would be a failure, small issue of spuds (8). So to bed not feeling very contented after the rumour and the tea.

Tuesday 17th September 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Breakfast of 1 sausage and butter and 1 jam sandwich. On trolley until after breakfast break, then put on *Trass* truck by Slim. Dinner of thick veg soup (thickened with oats). Unloaded truck by 2 o'clock then went on to cement truck. Started to rain about 4:30. Find afternoons very long after 3 o'clock. Tea of very filling spuds in jackets and white cheese (not flavoured). Think will have a early night 9 o'clock.

Wednesday 18th September 1940

Bread issue of 1 butter and spread cheese 1 jam. Had breakfast later as was on unloading *Trass* truck. Had some white cheese over from last night. Percy heard today supposed to be from Reuters that London had been evacuated. This sounds serious it might be advised or compulsory. This bombing seems to be senseless and cannot surely last long. I don't know whether it will mean a short war although we are all telling ourselves it will be so. Dinner today of 1 egg and whole potato soup, very nice and filling. On truck until 2 o'clock then on cement truck and how the afternoons drag. Tea of a bread and vinegar soup and 8 spuds in jackets. Cut some tobacco up and then went to bed as was feeling very stiff.

Thursday 19th September 1940

Up at usual time except Sgt. Major woke us up and did we get up. Received crust this morning jam, butter and sausage spread. At work on *Trass* truck until 12 o'clock. Dinner of potato and turnip soup with a bit of mutton in. Just missed bucks. On cement heap in afternoon. Turned quite warm. Tea issue of mash and a very tasty sauce. Cut up a packet of leaf and so to bed.

Friday 20th September 1940

Breakfast issue 1 sausage 1 butter sandwich. Very nice day which Doug, Roger and myself spent on the slag heap. Very '*niche arbiton*' day. Dinner of potato soup flavoured with mushroom and some pieces of sausage. Quite warm all day. Tea of macaroni and carrot (pieces of bike tyre in it, this turned out to be bacon rind).

Saturday 21st September 1940

Awakened at usual time breakfast issue of 1 jam 1 butter sandwich. Put on shovelling slag for crane but as it was raining put on small trolley then a *Trass* truck came in. This we worked hard to finish by 3 o'clock but a gypsum truck came in and so we caught it again and had to work until 4:30. Dinner today of beetroot soup (thicker than last time and nicely flavoured with fried onion). Had a clean up and shower. Tea of 14 spuds in jackets and flavour sauce and egg. (Managed to save egg). Developing a very nasty spot on my leg, feels very stiff and may turn into a boil. Rumoured that London bombed for 8 hours and now all ablaze also Speke air factory capute.

Sunday 22nd September 1940

Guard called us about 6:30. Up at about 7 o'clock. Ate just 1 slice of bread (some slices very thin). So much so that it was shown to the guard who evidently complained about it. All did fatigues, I cleaned guardroom out and filled pen. Dinner up at 11:45. Rissolle, cabbage and potato very nice. Saved rissolle for sandwich tonight. Mended socks again this is usual spare-time occupation on a Sunday. Leg very stiff and sore. Laid down for a little in the afternoon. Tea up early cold potato salad and sausage with what I saved made a very enjoyable tea. To bed early to start another week nearer Blighty.

Monday 23rd September 1940

Raining in the morning but cleared up later. Breakfast of usual 2 sandwiches butter and jam. On slag heap all day sorting coal from slack and clinker. Very uninteresting day and feeling very miserable. Dinner issue of pearl barley soup very thick. Tea supposed to be mash and buttermilk but Slim evidently stop it and we had to have the terrible buttermilk soup and spuds in their jackets(7). Had my leg dressed by the chemist. This seems to be general as a number of the boys have the same trouble. A white pimple with a hard lump underneath about the size of 2/6 (half crown) and very inflamed. Must be some form of blood poisoning. Has made leg very stiff.

Tuesday 24th September 1940

Raining badly when we got up at 5 o'clock but had stopped by the time we started work at 6 o'clock. Emptied *Trass* truck with Doug and a stooge in the morning by 12 o'clock. Raining off and on. Breakfast 2 sandwiches 1 of jam 1 of butter and spread cheese. Dinner of thickest cabbage (sour) and potato (small ring of sausage) soup. In the temple in the afternoon, didn't do much work but afternoon went by fairly quickly. Tea of porridge (sweetened) but as thin as gruel and 7 spuds in jackets. Jack read in paper that Woolwich Arsenal, Oxford Street and Regent Street had been destroyed by bombing. Hope that about Woolwich is not true as it is a bit near home. Feeling tired so went to bed early.

Wednesday 25th September 1940

Usual sort of day, breakfast the same dinner of a very thick veg soup and sausage which I received buck-she - very tasty. Red letter day for 2 reasons. Barry received 1, Dennis received 2 Red Cross parcels. These contained tins of sardines, chicken and veg, packets of biscuits, tin of marg, jam, powdered milk, tea, sugar, syrup. Each parcel was full of different foodstuffs. This was very pleasant news as it means that they at least know at home about us and we will all be receiving one soon. Evidently they are at *Lamdorf* and are being sorted out gradually. We also heard that our guards are leaving. This is good because we will be rid of Slim. Tea tonight of mash and egg with the rice soup.

Thursday 26th September 1940

Had a lump on the side of my leg about the size of an egg. This I burst as it was painful and a terrible lot of matter and pus came out.

Tea very good, two bowls of barley soup, piece of sausage and mash. New guards brought in plenty of bucks. Unfortunately had to give mine to Rogers as we swapped bucks.

Friday 27th September 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Started work in the dark at 6 o'clock. Very cold and misty. On shovelling slag into piles for the crane with Alf. Breakfast issue of 1 sausage 1 jam sandwich. After this cold morning am wondering what it will be like in the winter and what we will do as it was certainly very cold

although when the sun came out it was certainly a lot warmer. A very pleasant day under the new guards. Tea of thin porridge and spuds in jackets. Leg very sore all day. Rumoured that Japan and Spain had signed a trade pact with Germany.

Saturday 28th September 1940

Up at 5:15 Breakfast issue of usual jam and butter sandwich. On *Trass* truck Had late breakfast managed to do toast. Very drizzle day. Emptied first truck by 12 o'clock. Dinner of thin potato soup. Received bucks. Another truck came in which we had to work on until 5 o'clock. Rest of boys packed up at 3 o'clock. Issued with a packet of leaf tobacco and 2 boxes match from our new guard commandant. He seems to be a more intelligent one than the old one. Tea of very thin macaroni soup and 5 spuds in jackets. Still feeling very hungry. Thank goodness for another weekend.

Sunday 29th September 1940

Rare treat this morning the new guard let us stay in until 8 o'clock. Breakfast 2 usual sandwiches which I saved until tea. Washed socks and had no fatigues. Dinner of slice of meat (argument about whether is beef) cabbage and potato soup very nice. Had a sleep in the afternoon. Tea of potato salad and mint tea. On mess orderly.

Monday 30th September 1940

Mornings are very dark and the moon out but it soon gets light. Very cold but Norris and I put on *Trass* truck soon got warmed up. Started to rain. Finished truck by 12 o'clock. Dinner of a very nice thick barley soup. Started on 2nd truck but Goaty took me off it. Was glad as it was raining. Tea issue of mash and mug of buttermilk. Lucky on the card cut received buck-she mugs. Rumoured that if America comes into the war Japan will join up with Germany. Makes one wonder how long this war will last. Also heard that another 50 prisoners are coming to work at this factory on the 15th.

Tuesday 1st October 1940

Breakfast 1 butter 1 cheese (strong yellow). On little trolley until sand truck came in. Unloaded it by 5 o'clock when we finished. Very cold this morning, a chilly north wind blowing, when it is like this it makes me wonder how we are going to winter here. Spent a depressing morning due to the cold. Dinner of a thick veg. soup (carrot and barley). Turned cold again in the late afternoon. Tea of barley soup and 8 spuds in jackets. Locked up at 7:30 not much time after tea except to go to bed. Received Les' leaf tobacco ration owe him 42 pfennig.

Wednesday 2nd October 1940

Up at 5 o'clock Bandaged up knee, very nearly healed up. Issued with 2 bread and butter sandwiches and so to work in the dark at 6 o'clock. On chute today with Cyril and Dennis (cushy job). The old sore breaking out on my lip evidently caused through the cold wind yesterday. Cannot have the old cod liver oil to build myself up now. Dinner at 12 o'clock potato soup and a small rissole. Back to work at 12:30. Not looking forward to Goaty coming on at 2 o'clock. Machinery broke down so did not see much of him all day. Spent a very easy afternoon on the chute. Tea of a bread soup (flavoured with vinegar) and 6 spuds in jackets. Cut some leaf tobacco up and so to bed. Rumoured American Fleet at Singapore.

Thursday 3rd October 1940

Rained nearly all night. Breakfast 2 usual sandwiches (sort of breakfast sausage on one, not very tasteful and not much of it. On little trolley with Alf and Simms until Goaty came on. Chin worse and painful as usual. Bandage on knee chafed another sore which has festered. Nearly all scratches and cuts we get fester. I don't know if it is the cement dust or the condition of our blood. Dinner of cabbage soup. On chute in afternoon. Tea of 1 bowl very thin porridge (of which was unfortunate to get bucks) and usual issue of mash. Sat round then went to bed.

Friday 4th October 1940

Very warn during the night. Breakfast sandwich of spread cheese and one of jam. Emptied *Trass* truck before 12 o'clock. Dinner of potato and gherkin soup. Believe it is German Potato Harvest day.

Am thinking its a good job we can get potatoes or we would be very starved. Tea issue of spuds in jackets and white cheese. Not as many spuds as usual. Another weekend it view.

Saturday 5th October 1940

Up as usual and breakfast jam and butter sandwich. On *Trass* truck in morning. Dinner of beetroot soup, did not find this as filling. Wondering if we will finish at 3 o'clock but 2 sand trucks came in to put the top hat on that. Old Goaty kept us on until 4 o'clock when we finished unloading it. Issue by the commander of a packet of leaf tobacco and box of matches. This was very acceptable also received Les' issue. Had a shower and then had tea which was a bit of duck (*I think this means poor*) soup (vinegar and burnt onion) and spuds in jackets. Received copies of the Camp. With the usual tripe news. London has been undergoing terrible air-raids.

Sunday 6th October 1940

Up at 8 o'clock, had a wash and went on parade at 9 o'clock. Saved breakfast as it won't be long to dinner. Washed socks and smalls. Dinner up at 11:30. Not quite as good as usual. Potato soup (tasted soapy) bit of gherkin, rissole. Tried to mend watch during the afternoon but am afraid not much good. Tea of potato salad (chopped up spuds and gherkins and juice) and sausage. Mended socks, this is getting beyond a joke and I can hardly keep pace with it. So to bed about 9 o'clock wondering what this week will bring forth. Wrote postcard to Dunbar House this morning.

Monday 7th October 1940

Up at 5 o'clock. Not a very grand day but surprised the weather is keeping so warm. Unloaded a gypsum truck in morning, on sand in afternoon. How these miserable afternoons drag. Dinner today of pearl barley and a bit of meat. Raining in the afternoon. Thank goodness Goaty is not on this week. Pug is on afternoon shift. Tea up at usual time 6 o'clock consisting of 2 mugs of mashed and 1 mug of buttermilk. As Jack Coombes had had enough I received his buck-she. Not many of the boys care for it too much.

Tuesday 8th October 1940

Breakfast usual butter and jam. On slag chute in place of Cyril and Dennis Kidd until Pug came on then he changed us to the hole. Dinner of cabbage and spud soup (next for buck-she) Quite sunny and warm. Tea a proper duck. Thin and water macaroni and cornflour, 7 spuds in jackets. Received bucks worst luck. Sat round talking and so to bed.

Wednesday 9th October 1940

Up at 5 o'clock Usual butter and jam bread possibly a little thick on the average. Did the usual toast at 8:30. Spent the day breaking up the sand and it is hard. Dinner at usual time 12 o'clock. Potato and carrot (notice the absence of meat). Felt absolutely dead beat in afternoon. Am finding this a regular thing now due no doubt to the lack of substantial food. Very cold first thing but turned out sunny later. Tea of potato soup (flavoured with vinegar) and little celery leaves and a slice of bread. Cut up last of leaf tobacco and so to bed and roll on the boat that is to take us back.

Thursday 10th October 1940

A lot warmer this morning. Issue of 1 spread sausage 1 jam sandwich. Carrying on on the sand. Dinner of caraway seed soup (spuds, carrots *bones*) thick and a small rissole. A very tasty dinner but small issue. About 3:30 felt dead beat, my legs like lead. All of us feel this 10 hours on this food it is far too long. On sweeping up, went to cottage for the tea. 1 bowl porridge (sweet, thin) 2 bowls of mash. While at house picked up some potatoes, which I baked later in the furnace.

Friday 11th October 1940

Quite warm again, breakfast issue of 1 sausage 1 jam. On the chute today in place of Cyril. Notice in the fields all round that all the women are picking up potato crop. Understand that this is compulsory and they get a mark a day for it. Dinner today very bad a very thin potato soup (complained to guard who said he would see the Sgt. Major) flavoured not badly but just consisted of potato cream. Stooges did not come on until 5 o'clock. Very windy. Sort of ground rice and mash for tea. Was very glad to just miss bucks.

Saturday 12th October 1940

Up as usual at 5 o'clock. Breakfast issue of 1 jam 1 butter sandwich. Started to unload a gypsum truck but belt broke did not start until 8 o'clock. Toasted bread. Finished truck about 11 o'clock. Dinner of potato soup with small ring of sausage in it. On gypsum with Jimmy and Simms until 3 o'clock. Others on chutes had to work until 5 o'clock. washed and brushed up. Issue with a packet of leaf kindly brought by the guard until we get paid. Tea came up late consisted of a very tasty barley and potato soup and a slice of bread. Cut up a leaf and so to bed to enjoy another weekend.

Sunday 13th October 1940

Up at 8 o'clock. Baked some spuds for breakfast. Made myself a pair of mittens out of an old pair of socks. Dinner up about 11:45 on mess orderly. Complained to guard about small issue of potato soup (2 ladles each) and rissole (must say it was a tasty one). Had a sleep in afternoon. Tea of spud salad and sausage (plus bread ration from this morning).

Monday 14th October 1940

Usual sort of day. Wondering what this week will bring forth. Jam and butter sandwiches for breakfast. On loading gypsum wagon. Went to chemist to have leg and finger done up. Leg nearly dried up. Finger very bad where I just scratch it on a nail. Dinner pearl macaroni (put sugar issue in 2nd bowl) Fairly thick. Tea mash and buttermilk. Started on German dictionary.

Tuesday 15th October 1940

Very cold in the early hour but got warm. Jam and sausage (spread).

Note: No further entries until -

Saturday 19th October 1940

Finished at 5 o'clock unloaded a *Trass* truck.

Sunday 20th October 1940

Thank goodness for the weekend once again. Up at 8 o'clock. Wanted 10 men for unloading. Rest of us wanted on fatigues. Spent the day sticking sacking on mittens. Dinner potato in soup (flavoured with an oxo) rissole and beetroot, up very early. Tea of potato salad and sausage (quite a big lump of like Cambridge) with my bread issue and ½ rissole, felt very full up and sick because mostly salad. Went to bed early. Heard that they said on wireless that the Greenwich Gas Works had been blown up, hope this is not true.

Monday 21st October 1940

Still very cold in the morning. 1 thick sandwich of butter. Do not know if I like this thicker bread or not. Dinner very thick barley soup with a bit of meat in. Turned a lot warmer during the day. With Doug Vincent on shovelling clinker for crane, very boring. Tea buttermilk and mash. Issued with postcard which I wrote to Breda.

Tuesday 22nd October 1940

Very cold and frosty in the early morning, glad I had made myself a pair of mittens. Usual jam and butter sandwich. Dinner cabbage and potato soup.

Wednesday 23rd October 1940

Breakfast issue of 1 jam and butter sandwich. Dinner thick potato soup and rissole certainly the most enjoyable meat of the week. Went potato peeling at the house with Doug Vincent, received a nice frying pan of dumplings made of potato flour, bread and butter and a jug of coffee with sugar and milk. Tea of a sauce and mash. As it was a very cold and bleak afternoon this was most enjoyable.

Thursday 24th October 1940

Very cold. Breakfast butter and sausage. Dinner a sort of thick creamy tomato. Tea sauce and mash. Drums in factory started up. Spend the evening these days cutting up tobacco stalks for cigs,

Surprised what a smoke these make. On shovelling clinker for crane and is it cold up at that corner with the north easterly wind blowing. Am still thinking what it will be like in the winter. The food is no good for this sort of weather.

Friday 25th October 1940

Cold and wet. Breakfast issue jam and butter. On clinker in morning then unloaded sand truck. Dinner of carrot and veg soup, very good as a buck-she as tea soup (oatmeal and fried onion) was not so good, served with the usual mash. Turned to rain in the evening very dismal. Cleaned latrine out.

Note: Entries start getting less frequent - don't know if the conditions are getting to him or he didn't have time - possibly he ran out of ink and didn't have spare pencil. Next entries (until 5th December) in pencil - only days with entries included from here

Sunday 3rd November 1940

Thank goodness for Sunday once again. This has been a terrible week. Very, very cold and snow. Breakfast 1 ½ sandwiches, bowl of ground rice. Dinner potato soup, cabbage and rissole. Tea sausage and mash.

Tuesday 5th November 1940

Dinner green pea in mixed veg soup.

Wednesday 6th November 1940

Very cold wind blowing. On the sand and in the afternoon developed a nasty cold. Felt very cold and stiff with pains in back and stomach. Went straight to bed on finishing work. No rissoles today with dinner.

Thursday 7th November 1940

Stayed in bed and dozed most of the day. Breakfast jam and butter cheese sandwiches. Dinner spud and cabbage. Tea of barley soup 1 bowl and short issue of mash. Received an Belgian greatcoat and a pair of mittens. Believe that shirts and socks to follow. Got paid 21 marks 22 pfennig.

Friday 8th November 1940

Still in bed. Usual sandwiches jam and butter. Start to read Swiss Family Robinson. This is a very appropriate story to be reading what with the foods and things they made. Percy and Campbell went down to the shop and got most of the things that were ordered. Was very annoyed to find that I had missed putting beer on my list. Exchanged 1 kilo of potatoes with Steve for a bottle of beer but unfortunately knocked it over and lost the lot (just my luck).

Saturday 9th November 1940

Feeling a lot better but decide to stay in over the weekend. While lying in bed have thought how selfish the boys have turned especially Jimmy. While in bed none of them came forward to get my meals or wash my bowl or even ask how I was. Dinner of a thin soup not much potato. Tea at night of potato and macaroni soup.

Sunday 10th November 1940

Had cornflour soup and bread and jam. Got up after breakfast had a shave and wash then dinner came up consisting of rissole, spud soup and cabbage. Wrote postcard to Auntie Jessie.

Thursday 14th November 1940

Went down shopping. Received this time 3 bottles of beer, 5 kilo potatoes, pudding powder, fruit drinks etc..

Friday 15th November 1940

Received a share of Red Cross parcel. Received a tin of flesh, tomato juice, Farm dinner, boiled beef and carrots, marmite cube, box of cheese, marmalade, egg powder, small piece of soap.

Sunday 17th November 1940

Quite another red letter day. Up at 8 o'clock. Toasted my bread on which I had cheese and marmalade. Detailed to unload gypsum truck. Made a quite nice pudding of Maggi and powder. Received some German cake. Very surprising how warm and bright it was this morning for the time of year.

Monday 18th November 1940

Went on working after tea until 10 o'clock on sand hopper. Guard gave us some bread and butter sandwiches.

Tuesday 19th November 1940

Off until 10 o'clock - had a nice lay-in.

Thursday 21st November 1940

First batch of letters arrived from England. Cyril received a couple but I had none. Heard from Cyril's letter they knew at home I was in the same battle at Calais. These letters made us all very happy and received letter card to write home. Told them about letter we had received from home.

Friday 22nd November 1940

Couple went shopping but not quite as successful as last time. Ordered one of those *curved*?????. Received 4 more Red Cross parcels to be split between 30 of us. Received 1 tin of Hack Flesh, 1 tin of milk, small packet of sugar, 3 cheese 6 cigs.

Saturday 23rd November 1940

After raining in the morning felt very queer with terrible cold in the head. Guard not very sympathetic but went and saw the chemist who told me to go to bed. Guard sent *Tage* and I on potato peeling which took us in about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Received a jam roll and a sandwich.

Sunday 24th November 1940

Had Welsh Rarebit on toasted roll and sausage sandwich for breakfast with a cup of tea. Cooked a fruit soup for after dinner. Saved rissole to make a pudding tonight. Did some washing after dinner which was as usual rissole, spud soup. Received buck-she. Very good tea Marmite gravy very nice. Pudding very good but am afraid I was not too fit to eat it.

Monday 25th November 1940

On ovens until about 3 o'clock then on sand. Saved bread issue as had warmed up mash and pudding which was not able to eat last night. Open tin of flesh Hack for tea which was mash and buttermilk. Stomach still a bit queer.

Saturday 30th November 1940

Received 1 tin of condensed milk and a packet of *Ovo Sports*. These were lovely and a great treat.

Thursday 5th December 1940

Wrote to Vera a postcard. Received 1/2 packet *Ovo Sports* and 1/3 tin of condensed milk. These were eaten at once. Bad chin broke out due to the icy wind that is blowing.

Friday 6th December 1940

Put on gypsum wagon after *ramming*. Terribly cold, snowed later. Still on 1 ½ sandwiches.

Saturday 7th December 1940

Kept working to 6 o'clock in *Trass* temple.

Sunday 8th December 1940

Another rest day. Up at 7:30. Some of the boys going to church. Still on 1 ½ sandwiches. Detailed to unload a gypsum wagon in the morning. Dinner usual rissole and potato soup and for a change sweet pumpkin. Had a sleep in afternoon. Wondered when I am going to receive a letter from home. This

would cheer me up for a little while. Thinking about my birthday on Wednesday - am sure Dad and Mother will be thinking of me this next week. Tea a duck again 1 bowl cornflour soup 1 bowl mash. Baked some spuds and received a sandwich from the guard.

Wednesday 11th December 1940

What a birthday!!! Hope it hasn't many happy returns. Dinner for a change lentil soup and sausage. Tea had thin cornflour and mash but for a little extra opened my 'farmhouse dinner'. This consisted mostly of potatoes and was not as tasty as expected. I'll bet Dad and Mother are thinking of me a lot today. I certainly have had many thoughts of home today. Percy went shopping but brought no potatoes as they are supposed to be under the ground and not able to unearth them because of the frost.

Thursday 12th December 1940

Still on 1 ½ sandwiches. On ramming until about 10 o'clock after which we unloaded 2 sand trucks. Dinner today of a very good soup potato with specks of rabbit and very small pieces of kidney. Very tasty. Snowing nearly all day. Tea thin spud soup. Issued with 120 Polish cigs and 1 packet tobacco also 1 packet of leaf from the shop. Miss the extra baked spuds.

Friday 13th December 1940

On gypsum, this is probably a regular thing even on these cold days. Turned out very nice but cold. Would have been nice in England with proper food but this food is not enough or good enough. Dinner certainly very nice today but evening meal of barley and spud soup a duck. Felt very miserable and hungry and cold in the evening.

Thursday 19th December 1940

Issued with a letter card and post card. wrote letter card home.

Friday 20th December 1940

Mail came up again with the 'essen'. One for me from Eva Davies this was a very nice letter and certainly encouraging. I know now that they know at home and also that there must be letters for me from England on the way. I have one wish to get one before Christmas. Thought how nice it was of Eva to write.

Sunday 22nd December 1940

Handed letter card and postcard in. Spent day sewing up gloves which have worn out with perpetual shovelling.

Tuesday 24th December 1940

Very cold and snowing. On ramming until 8:30 then emptied coal truck at *kesal* house with Dennis Kidd. Hoped to knock off when finish but no such luck. What a Christmas Eve. Guard put us on shovelling sand until Limpy came along about 4:15 and knocked us off. Factory gave us a special meal 2 rissoles, kraut, mash and pumpkin, cake and biscuits. This was quite a good meal. But feeling very depressed because of other boys buck-shes. There seems to be plenty cake knocking about. Stayed up with Percy, Cyril and Doug V. until about 12 o'clock. Looking forward to tomorrow's '*niche arbitor*'. Read Eva's letter and looked at my photos and thought very much of all the folks at home.

Wednesday 25th December 1940

Guard roused us at 8 o'clock. What a Christmas morning. Very thin snow all round. Breakfast of 2 butter sandwiches. Paraded at 9 o'clock. Issued with 150 cigs (terrible Polish things). Went to see the old man on the coal hopper. Struck lucky received a piece of cake (very plain with couple of sultanas in), roll and piece of sausage and cigar. Dinner usual Wednesday potato soup and rissole. Locked in from 2 o'clock to 4 o'clock. Played solo for fags. Tea 2 thin sausage sandwiches, baked 3 potatoes up at the ovens. After tea Doug and I went over the wall for some cabbages. Had a Christmas tree with candles on, this is very popular here. There is a big tree outside the house. Had a little sing-song and told stories. Lets hope that it will have been the worst I have spend. Was glad to be able to say that I

had a bottle of beer at dinner to wish them all at home a Merry Christmas as I know they will be wishing me.

Thursday 26th December 1940

Again '*niche arbiton*' roused at 8 o'clock. Breakfast 2 thin jam sandwiches. Thin snow on ground.

Sunday 29th December 1940

Fairly heavy snow, freezing hard. Usual breakfast - told they could not get the dinner up to the factory so we had to go to the other factory for it. Issue of potato soup and ½ tin of meat each. Walked there via railway, came back by road. Saw kids skating and sledging on the roads and ponds. Detailed to unload 6 coal trucks with Alf., found only one to do when we got there. Promised a ½ sandwich from guard in the morning. Barley soup for tea after which mended mittens.

Monday 30th December 1940

Snowing heavily all day. Started off on gypsum truck but pushed off after breakfast by Cement Packers. Unloaded coal truck at boiler room, got soaked through. Dinner up late and cold, put it in copper to warm returned to work at about 2 o'clock. 6 boys went shopping . Received 2 bottles of beer, spuds coming up tomorrow.

Tuesday 31st December 1940

Very heavy fall of snow during the night, carried on snow nearly all day - about foot deep at night. Dinner very thick barley oatmeal soup with peas in. On sand hopper until 3:30 then on *Trass*. After tea of potato soup spent evening sewing. Did Simm's boiler fatigue for which I received a sandwich from the old man. Spuds came up 5 kilos per man. Sat up until 12:30. Played nap with Steve, Parky and Jimmy for Polish fags. Was able to wish all folks at home a happy New Year with a bottle of beer. Hope sincerely that I will be home for the next. Very good not to be working New Years Day. Spent the day lazing about. Some unloading of trucks but it did not take us long.

Note: The diary ends here but the following items were written on the last few pages. Also the 'Addendum of the Diary' includes entries/notes from the 17th May'40 to 1st Jun'41.

'A Day's Me and You (as thought of while in a German Prison Camp) - June 1940

Breakfast - 9:30

Porridge with cream
and
Haddock with scrambled egg or
Thick ham and eggs, mushrooms, chutney, fried potatoes (cold fried up) or fried Scotch scone.
Hot buttered toast and marmalade, tea.

Lunch - 12 o'clock

Couple of pints, biscuits and cheese with gherkins

Dinner - 3 o'clock

Cream of tomato soup
Roast Goose or Roast Pork, mustard and apple sauce
Baked potatoes, cabbage, peas
Christmas Pud (Mother's Special) White Sauce
or Apple Charlotte and cream, Port Wine and cigar

Tea - 6 o'clock

Crab and cress and cold pork sandwiches
Hot Scotch scone buttered , strawberry jam, cream
Treacle Tart, potato cakes (hot and buttered)
Fruit Cake (Mother's Special)
Tea

Supper - 11 o'clock

Bubble and Squeak, cold pork and Pan-Yan or Branston pickle
Finish cold pudding up
Cup of Chocolate
Cigarette and so to bed.

Try Bread, butter and jam sandwich fried in batter
Brandy snaps (hot)
Australian Jack
Marron Glace (Chestnuts in syrup crystalline)
Bacon bake (Rasher in dough baked)
Scotch Eggs
Malt Bread
Potted Shrimps
Date Slice (made like mother's current slice, thin pastry top and bottom)
Choc coated banana (Joslin's Tonbridge)
One-eyes (Egg fried in hole of fried bread)
Fatty's (Dough rolled out, spread of lard and sugar and done like a thick biscuit)

Remember Me

Remember me, dear,
Though the miles divide and our paths lie far apart.
Remember me, dear,
and the dreams we dreamed, when we loved - so light of heart
When the future looked rosy and life was gay -
in the flush of wonderful yesterday
In that world that has faded so far away
Remember me.

Remember me, dear,
When the days are drear - and our hopes seem all in vain,
Remember I wait - for the turn of Fate that will bring you home again...
Though Life's distant horizons be overcast -
I shall never break faith with the sacred past
Till the long hours of waiting be spent at last
Remember me.

By Patience Strong
(taken from 'Quiet Corner in the Daily Mirror)

Red Cross Parcel

Received 21/2/41

1/4 lb Bournville Chocolate
Bag Maltesers
Box 8 Farmers Wife Cheese
Packet Army Biscuits
Tin Meat Loaf
Tin M & V Ration
Tin Milk Powder
Tin Syrup
Tin Peas (Exchanged for pkt biscuits)
Tin Salmon
1/4 lb Tea
2oz Sugar
Packet Pancake Mix
Packet Prunes (Exchanged for sardines)
Tin Ovaltine
Tin Marmite Cubes

4th Red Cross Parcel (Scottish)

Received 10/3/41

1/4 lb Tea
2 oz Sugar
1/4 lb Coffee (Twinings)
Tin Mustard (Exchanged for Marmite Cubes)
Tin (small) Cod Roes (Exchanged for Nestles milk)
Tin Orange Marmalade (Cross & Blackwell)
Tin Beef in gravy
Tin Chicken Galantine
Tin Baked Beans
Tin Lingfoam Milk
Tin Oatcakes
Tin Beef Dripping
1/4 lb Bournville Chocolate
Packet Cheshire Cheese
Packet Salt
Tablet Roxall Soap
Tin Golden Pudding (very small)
Packet Toffees
6 Cook's Eggs
Packet Bermax

Received 27/2/41 (The same as 21/2/41 except)

2 Cadbury Milk Chocolate instead of
Bournville

Did not exchange the peas,
but exchanged Ovaltine for margarine.

Things Wanted

Ships biscuits and Ginger Snaps
Pencil and note book
Cod Liver Oil and Malt or *Vinol*
Heating
Ship's Cocoa
Underclothes and Pullover

"A man's place in the scale of civilisation is shown by his attitude to women. There are men who regard a woman as something to live with. There are others who regard her as someone to live for."
Extract from *Beau Ideal* by P.C. Wren a very good book afforded me great enjoyment.

Addendum to Diary of 1940.

The following notes (one liners) were included in the engagements section.

May 1940

Fri 17th Last Paid Army Pay.
Tu 21st Left Kennington in early hours of morning
We 22nd 1:30 Arrived Calais
Su 26th Captured & taken Prisoner of War

June 1940

Fri 21st Arrived at Lambdorf Prison Camp
We 26th Red Cross Card sent off

July 1940

Mo 1st Wrote post card home
Tu 2nd Wrote letter card
Tu 16th Wrote 2nd post card home & number taken for working party. Wangled it and started work at cement factory - Frauurdorf
Su 27th Tasted first piece of cake since England

Aug 1940

Th 8th Wrote 2nd Letter card home
Fri 9th Rec'd bumper meal Soup & Fish
Mo 19th Wrote post card to Grandpa & Granny
Th 22nd Paid 14 marks 70 Pfg.

Sept 1940

Su 15th Wrote post card to Auntie Dora
We 25th Letter to Dad & Mum

Oct 1940

Su 6th Wrote post card t Auntie Janet
Mo 21st Wrote post card to Breda
Sa 26th Rec'd 21 marks 22 pfg 240 cigs, 2 pkts tobacco
Mo 28th Letter sent home

Nov 1940

Fri 15th Rec'd share of Red Cross Parcel Food
Su 17th Wrote Letter card to Auntie Jessie
Th 21st Rec'd first letters from home and wrote letter card home
Fri 22nd Rec'd share of Red Cross Parcel Food

Dec 1940

Th 5th Wrote post card to Hawkhursts
Fri 6th Rec'd ½ Ovo Sports & 1/3 tin condensed milk
Th 12th Issued 120 cigs & 1 pkt of leaf
Th 19th Wrote letter card home
Fri 20th Rec'd my first letter from Eva Davis
Su 22nd Wrote post card to work Mr. Timmins
Tu 24th Special Tea (see diary)
We 25th Issue 150 cigs

Jan 1941

We 8th Rec'd 3 letters from Breda
Su 12th Post card to Breda
Mo 13th Rec'd 1st letter from home dated 16/9/40
Tu 14th 1 from Breda, 1 from Mr. Lindsay
We 15th Rec'd Red Cross Parcel Xmas ones.
Sa 18th Paid 9 marks 10 pfg
Su 19th Bumper day for food. Bucks & Red Cross, Wrote letter card home
Th 23rd Letters up - none for me
Su 26th Letters 5 from Breda 14,15,19,30/9/40
We 29th Went sick with flu

Feb 1941

Mo 3rd Started work feeling a lot better

We 5th De-loused. Letters up - none for me. Post card sent home
 Su 9th Rec'd 8 marks 40 pfg
 We 12th Rec'd letter from Breda 25/9/40. Wrote letter card home and post card sent to Grandpa
 Sa 15th Letters up - none for me
 Th 20th Red Cross parcel up. Went sick with wrist. Wrote letter home
 Su 23rd Rec'd letter from Renee Cox News of another parcel
 Mo 24th Started work
 Tu 25th Went crank again
 Th 27th 3rd Red Cross parcel came up
 Fri 28th Started again
Mar 1941
 Sa 1st Rec'd letter from home 29/9/40, Grandpa 5/11/40, 4 from Breda 26/9,2/10,9/11,28/12
 Mo 3rd Rec'd letter from Reg Allen 3/11 3 from Breda 20/10,21/10,19/11. Wrote post card to Uncle Dave and letter card home
 Tu 4th Rec'd bulk parcel
 Sa 8th Letters up - none for me
 Mo 10th Rec'd 4th Red Cross Parcel
 Tu 11th Rec'd 3 letters from Breda 18/11, 5/12, 22/12
 Th 13th Rec'd 2 letters from Renee, 1 from May, 5 from Breda
 Sa 15th Paid 8 marks 40 pfg & cigs
 Tu 18th Rec'd pkt Polish tobacco
 We 19th Rec'd 3 letters from B. 3 Xmas cards Newton S.
 Th 20th 1 from Aunt Bertha
 Fri 21st Rec'd letter from Jean B dated 22/11, 1 from Breda 19/10
 Mo 24th Rec'd tin of milk. No letters for me but rec'd new battle dress & boots Rec'd 7 marks 70 pfg.
 Th 27th Rec'd Personal Parcel from home
 Fri 28th Wrote letter card home and card to Uncle Alex
Apr 1941
 Tu 1st Rec'd letter from Renee
 Tu 8th Rec'd 2 letters from Breda 7/1, 12/1
 Th 10th Rec'd 5th Red Cross parcel and 50 Gold Flake
 Fri 11th Worked on Good Friday
 Su 13th Wrote letter card home. Post card to Reg
 Mo 14th Had a holiday for Easter
 Th 17th Rec'd 8 marks 40 pfg
 Sa 19th Rec'd 6th Red Cross parcel and 10 State Express
 Su 27th Wrote letter card home and post card to Jean
May 1941
 Sa 3rd Rec'd 7th Red Cross parcel
 Su 4th Rec'd letter from Breda
 Fri 9th Went crank with cold
 Su 11th Wrote letter card home, post card to Len Mason. Rec'd 8th Red Cross parcel
 Tu 13th Rec'd 7 marks 70 pfg
 Fri 16th Rec'd letter from home dated 18/4
 Fri 23rd Rec'd 2nd Personal parcel and letter from Renee 18/4
 Mo 26th Wrote letter card home and Auntie Bertha
 Fri 30th Rec'd 11th Red Cross parcel
June 1941
 Su 1st Wrote letter card home and post card to Eddy B.