ISRAEL JOSSELOWITZ

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WORLD WAR 11

Zebrugge. Awakened in the morning by the Noise of the Ack Ack, & enemy planes dropping Bombs, Shells whistling over Dugout most terrible sensation, later on noise of Tanks firing & Guns going full blast.

Enemy planes brought Waffis & Building on fire, Dont know what is happening Phone out of order, no messenger what so ever, Everything supposed to be. Under control, feel really so sorry for the poor Tanks as they seem to be going through hell, Dug out roof almost caved in from Concussion of Dropping bombs. Thoughts of those at Home wondering what they would say if they could see the Happenings

Afternoon told to take as many Natives as possible on trucks and go towards coast, only had chance to get one great coat, all other stuff left behind in Dugout, told

we would come back later, went to
Place on Detma Road, Congestion really
Terrible, eventually all got together,
Enemy planes over head all the
Time, later told to move towards Coast
on road there, had to take cover
& amazing how we crowded into
smallest hollow not that it would
have afforded much protection
luckily for us, they did not get to
close but things did not feel too
pleasant, Ground at Coast very
dark, Hungry miserable & wondering
what is going to happen next, met
Tom Jo & got a bit of food late, on
went to sleep in the open, Dog tired
& fell off to sleep almost at once.

Really amazing how one gets
used to these things So soon, thoughts
only of the dear ones at Home & what
they will be thinking of when they

were patrolling the sea also their E Boats. Some fellows attempted to get away by going along the coast but Doubt if they managed it as I seemed to be all one. the planes living up the fellows & talking them away. Our turn soon came, we were herded into a truck & taken to Dobruk from there we were marched to the Harbour on the way some fellows were relieved of their watches, wallets & the Trinkets, Stone up all my snaps except three which I took with me, at Harbour had a bit of a wash & some bully to eat but felt really down in the Dumps wondering what next, In the meantime prisoners were being brought in by the Hundreds got some water to drink after waiting for almost the whole day. Enemy traffic was going up the road in a never ending stream nose to Tail & very many of the vehicles we re over ours. Towards Midnight we

hear what had been happening. The following Day Smoke screens all over Gun fire had mouthful of tea but seemed tasteless went to Kitchen of Unit at place we were got a drop of Hot coffee also took few tins of Bully.

Then we were told to burn Secrets et cetera so we knew that it was all over for us. So with sickening feeling we fired trucks & those were run off the cliff into the sea, the Smoke burning vehicles also those that were run into the sea is really a sight that will never be forgotten.

The Day was very hot we formed few sheets of Iron & made a roof to keep the sun off while we waited to be rounded off. Escape was nigh impossible as there was quite a big drop to the sea & also no boats, thought of all sorts of ways & means of trying to get away but all seemed impracticable as Enemy planes

were put into groups of Hundreds & marched a few miles to a few, but the few miles seemed very very far eventually we got to the pen & just lay down where we could find a place to squeeze in & tried to get to sleep but had very little as the crush was really terrible after lying about in the hot sun for most of the day we were given some Bully & biscuits, very little of it too. also a little water we put up Blankets on pieces of wood & were to make a bit of shade to keep the sun off, a few Days later we were told to stand by as we were being moved further up. We were given two Tin Biscuits & 1 Tin of Bully for the trip what a trip it was too, there were fifty of us in a closed truck & was it hot, I then realised that it was my Birthday although by what a way to spend it in. towards evening we got to Tunnimin a place which seems to have been a Salt lake or something. The smell of the place wasn't very pleasant, we found a

place where to sleep, just one blanket which we had picked up, for a base & used our great coats to cover ourselves with, we collected a few bits of twig & grass & made a fire & boiled up some water & made some tea after which we went to sleep. The following morning got up & had a bit of a wash with some water out of our bottles, then made something to eat, which consisted of crushed Biscuit water & some bully heated together in a tin, still it was something to fill the empty space in our tummies, later we were given some fresh water but it was not enough so got some from a river, what water it was too, The camels had a good time in it, what a terrible smell & taste it had too words cannot express the flavour or smell of the water, We were then put into trucks just like sheep with Hardly any standing room & on our way to Benghazi

we climbed all sorts of steep hills & many a time thought that we would Goose the side of the tuneds or that the truck would tip over but the Driver seemed to be able to negotiate his Vehicle all night as we got to a part of our destination without any mishaps apart from a few chaps having loose Trousers & making quite a smell, we were put into a pen again for another day, but managed to have a wash in the sea which although very short was very welcome, from there we were taken on our way to Benghazi, which place we eventually reached about two o'clock in the morning. There were fellows lying about all over the place & the stench was awful, as there were no latrines but only holes in the ground & plenty of "dysentary" still we managed to find a place where to lie down, and had a little sleep, my thoughts being at home - what my folks were thinking of, somehow it was hardly possible

to believe that one was a P.O.W. now.
Next morning we were headed into
groups of fifty & given a few Bivvy tents
& six of us had to sleep in one of them
these size being about 4 foot 6" x 6 ft. &
about 3 foot high, still it was a cover
over our heads, then we got rations
of bread, five men to four loaves
the bread weighing about ten ounces
per loaf. So Imagine how well we
were being fed (I don't think) all
this time I hadn't had a last meal.
Anyway we got together & turned a
steel helmet into a pot & put bread
& bully & water in it & cooked it
up & so made a meal. also
boiled up some water & put in a bit of
tea that we had brought with us
from Tobruk, The meal we had
was to be our usual for quite a
while, only instead of tea we got
some Ersatz (I) coffee, which at
times we also did not get we

burnt the crust of the bread & made that do as Coffee. after a day or two the Ities decided to count us again so we were herded out of the gate like sheep with Dozens of Guards & Counted & recounted & eventually the must have got so tired themselves that they let us back into the pen water was rationed to each man 1 pint for the whole day. Anyway we just had to put up with it all as we had no other alternative or unless we wanted to get shot as the Ities loved pointing their rifle at one for the slightest thing. I suppose they thought that, having had the few Successes which they did, must have gone to their heads, after a few weeks they decided to shift us to the next ~~door~~ pen So the usual shuffle, herding & searching started then we went to the next pen, there I saw Barney who said he was leaving for Italy at any time. which he incidentally did do within a few weeks. we shall had no hot meals & the rations were

still the same. Our mugs were NOV Tins with a wire handle, which when not in use as a pot or mug, was also used for a bath., I became quite an adept at having a bath in a thimble of water, the weather was very hot & we were quite thankful for that as quite a few of us had very little in the way of clothing. The cigarette issue we got was about 3 per day when we were lucky, or when they had it. One evening some of our planes came over on a raid & the Huns started firing at them & got a hit on one of the planes. The cheering & cheering was great but the Huns put an end to that by threatening to stop our wonderful issue of Rations. Gus Terry & myself have been together all the time & got on quite well together.

The pen I am referring to is the enclosure & we were in bare hard ground. Rocky in places & damned dusty. Barbed wire right

round the area mostly. 2 Rows the strands being very close together.
Later on the rainy season started & then a little more worries came.
the place where we were, being in a Hollow. the water came into the tents, So we had to get busy at all hours of day & night trying to keep it out & trying to get dry. Then we got showers which were very welcome Stand, sitor toll in a queue for about an hour & a half to two hours for a two minute shower. we became quite expert at soaping & washing ourselves in the allotted space of time. The showers were actually a mobile one, a Truck whose sides opened up & canvas flaps let down the sides to make a wall & sixteen showers in it eight on each side. the showers of course were cold water as they did not use the heating apparatus. We all used to wait until we saw the truck with the water tank for the shower coming then make a line for the queue as each tank contained enough water to last for

about three quarters of an hour
the water was pumped into the pipes
by means of a small motor which also
conked out every so often. In the
meantime the Hygene Squad had
got busy & had made vast improvements
as far as the sanitary side of the place
concerned & also with the very few
Implements etc supplied by the Ities

We all used to do a fatigue every
so many days to dig trenches for
the refuse so that flies & cetera could
be kept under Control. The doctors
& Staff also had a very hard time &
with the very limited medical supplies
& bandages at their disposal did
a really wonderful Job of work &
real hard work at that, because
somehow or other being underfed &
undernourished & short of so many
vitamins the fellows became weak
and the slightest scratch or cut
became septic and all types
of sores broke out, but the medicals
did their best — a good Job it was,

The raids of our planes over Benghazi were taking place more often lately & there was quite a lot of High level Bombing, on one raid they got a direct hit on the Harbour & also on an ammunition ship from where we were we could see the whole outline of the outskirts of Benghazi and were also in view of the harbour.

When the ship was struck all we saw at first was a Huge Billow of Greyish black smoke, as the first lot of smoke drifted away a red glow came in its place & as the weather grew Darker, So this flame became lighter & then the Ammo started to go off, then we heard plenty of Bangs & one of the most beautiful of fire works displays at the stuff started to explode there were sparks of practically every colour imaginable & this Kept on for the whole night. I don't think I will ever forget that sight

We were very lucky that we didn't have many casualties from the falling ack ack shrapnel as there were A/A Guns all round us

and we had No protection what so ever.
Anyway we did not mind it in the least because our planes were getting good results & the way the Huns knocked for coves was really great fun, they could never get to their underground shelters quick enough.
There seemed to be quite a lot of Gippo money in the camp & the crowns & Anchor Rings were doing very well indeed. The boys were gambling with money watches, Rings, bars, anything that had any value. a packet of Springbok bigg (50) was bought for £7-10-0 leads Lotto C for £5-10. the few smokes that were to be had were sold for about 7/- per time we here obtainable.
I sold my signet ring for two tins of Jam & then converted one of the tins into cash for the sum of 30/- which bought me 25 smokes. the approximate weight of the Jam was half a pound per tin & one could not really class it as a Jam & really could not say what it consisted of although it was supposed to be apple!

One Day we had a real Heavy Storm, it rained Buckets ful & the net result was that we were absolutely washed out & nothing wet so had to find a new spot for the tent

There were a few fellows with Musical Instruments and they used to get up some entertainments for us & some of them were really good, there was also a lot of music & Songs composed by some of them & I am sure that one day when they will be published in Tin Pan Alley they will be real big hits. These little shows did a lot towards making us forget where we were for a while, but they also brought back very many memories of home

There was also an Arts & crafts exhibition got up. One would be amazed at the amount of wonderful talent that was there, especially as there were NO such things as Tools. The articles made with Pen Knives pieces of wire were really excellent. There were all types of Engraving done on pipes with Knives & razor blades, also aluminium Badges engraved with a Nail really perfect work.

and done by fellows who have never done that type of work before. There were also many pencil Drawings & Colored sketches many of them depicting various incidences that took place such as the view we had of the Ammo ship being hit. also "The rains come" & the dejected look on the faces of the washed out lot. Longanelle Holders that looked as if they were factory made but were done out of pieces of wood used for the fires in the Kitchens, we used by now getting a hot meal per day Consisting of Rice & macaroni & lentils with a little Tomato paste in it the ration was about ½ pint mug full for the day at least it was hot and filled the Tummy. It is really amazing how, when one is Hungry they Sneak of the types of food that they disliked & how they would gladly eat it if it was put before them. When we got the Hot meals they were thick we used to keep some ones to make pies.

The pies were made in this manner we crumbled the bread covered it with water & then rolled it into a dough put it in a tin & then put the 2lb Bully & Hot meal in it and covered it with some more bread dough & then put it in an oven that was made of a Petrol Tin Covered with Sand & a fire underneath.

Another type of pie was, the Lid of the Bread was taken out & cut up bully & bread put into the Hollow & that was toasted over the fire, what we didnt do to try & get some variety into our meals although it was only Bread & Bully. One time we got a ration of English biscuits instead of the bread & with the biscuits we soaked them and Cooked them up & so made what we called porridge - I met Harry Bergstein in the pen & he told me that he had heard Jack was drowned while being taken to Italy he was on the torpedoed ship.

after a month or two fellows started trading with the Italian Guards who wanted Egyptian money, Woollen clothing, leather belts etc for which they paid in cigarettes, Bread or Jams, which in turn was retailed

to the other fellows at the most exhorbitant prices, for Instance 1/2 lb Jam 20/- biscuits 20/- for 10 bread 20/- loaf of about 12 ozs chocolate weighing 3 ozs 10/- 5 small onions for 5/- I also saw an Egg sold for 9/- Later on Eggs became more plentiful & the price gradually dropped until one could get 160 Eggs for a pound but by that time there were very few fellows that had any money left

Cigarettes seem to play a very big part in the Finance of the P.O.W. World as some how one could buy anything for smokes. One of the pens along side ours were told that they were going to Italy the following day & they would get plenty of clothing on the other side, believing this they started Bartering most of their clothing for smokes Pullovers went for 15 To 20 Smokes shorts from 5 smokes upwards Tooth paste about 20 Smokes also Razors & any conceivable

Stein. The price of Smokes at that time was 35 for 20/-. Leroy & myself went into the wood Business after Gus left us, we would get a fellow from the one pen to get some wood from the Natives in the pen alongside his for cigs we would then remake the bundles & sell the wood at a profit of 2 Cigs in ten the Reason we got the wood from the natives was because they went out on fatigues for the Eks & so were able to get plenty of wood.

We made quite a fair amount of Trading profit for the few days we were in the Business it did help us to buy a little Card Each to send home. which I dont Know whether it ever reached its destination, but it made one feel slightly more contented having written the first few lines to our folks at home after about 3½ months of Captivity & not Knowing whether our folks knew whether we were P.O.W. Alive or dead.

Some fellow decided to attempt an Escape but was caught while crawling through the Barbed Wire and shot on the spot. It was a Horrible Sight. There were quite a few other ways in which some tried to escape but were caught. Thankfully for them not shot. The Ities were very arrogant at that time as they were boasting of their forces being about to enter alexandria which must have been one of the reasons of their wanting Egypt Money. One very Interesting thing happened when a Convoy took place somewhere near Benghazi a Some of our planes were overhead Keeping the Ities very Busy with the A/A & searchlights whilst the Cs did their work One of our planes came overhead at a very low altitude I dont think the Ities were aware of it's Identity for quite a while but woke up right a Clock when

he dropped Something very close to one of their Guns. Our planes started to come over Quite often on Daylight Raids & I dont think they were very far off their targets as we Saw Sometimes a big Dust cloud where they got Direct Hits & more than one ship got the same. About Midday while sitting in our Bivvy Tents we heard quite a Rumble & ran out to see what it was as we didnt hear any A/A Guns going off, but what we did see was a few of our planes going back after doing their Job & the Huns scrambling like mad up the Hill towards their Gun posts it was a matter of closing the Stable after the Cattle were gone.

Another remarkable thing about Baggage was that we didnt get any Salt for quite a long time & yet the camp was right on the edge of a Salt Lake after agitating for a long while we eventually got Some. Every time Some new Prisoners came

into the camp the first thing was to find out how our forces were making out as we got no news what so ever. & Imagine our delight when we heard that we had started to move forward once again & our hopes & wishes were for peace by our Armies In the meantime the Jtes had shifted us to another camp about 2 miles away this was supposed to be the real Transit Camp, we had been in the other almost four months. Somehow or other news started to come into the Camp of the advance of our troops which brought our moral up quite a bit. Then one morning the Jtes called out 500 Names & told us we were leaving for Italy, they moved us to another pen, gave us Rations for the day & left us in there without any cover over our heads from the fierce sun. Our Air force came over & did quite a lot

of Damage in the 22nd Gobern
and set fire all ships on fire
so they were unable to move us
that Day. they then put us back
into another pen where we were
for quite a few weeks. by this time
it wasn't only Fleas that were troubling
us but lice as well, we used to put
our clothing through the Disinfecter
but when they came out there
seemed to be very many more
animals we did our best to Kill
them but the more you killed the
more you found. They decided
to give us a hot shower but the
shower henry must have got such
a shock that it caught alright so
there was no hot shower as they
had to use the water to put the fire
out. The RAF Came over again
& did some more Damage & set
an oil Tanks on fire & this one
Burned beautifully for about 5 Day
the Jews told us we were moving
out the following day. So there
was packing of our Goods & chattels
which were very few

That evening while we were lying in our tents. some fellow was saying Goodbye to a friend of his in the opposite pen. They were talking to one another across the wire, we heard him saying cheerio. the Next thing there was a shot fired a few seconds later some one tripped over the ropes of our tent which was about 30 yards from the fence. then some one said help me carry him to the medical tent as he has been shot in the knee. This fellow having fallen on my side of the tent I got up + put my Hand under his neck to lift him up. Imagine my feelings when I felt my hand get wet with some warm liquid. the poor fellow had been shot through the neck + not the knee + a minute later he died. The Etis excuse was that he attempted to climb over the wire, but that was not true. but the fact remains an innocent. Helpless Starved man was shot in

a most cold Blooded & Callous way.
The following Morning we were marched for about five miles to the Harbour & what a march it was, being Underfed weak & Sick we just about managed it. when we got to the Harbour we were put on board a Cargo Boat Santa Maria by name. & a little distance away was the oil tanker that had been hit four or five days ago. still burning faintly. Eventually they started unloading the Hold & then put the Soo of us down it was Dark Cold & miserable & the Steel plates were damn Cold the Air was musty, So what could we do, they gave us a few lifebelts to wear but we used them as pillows. The Ities said it would take us 2 Days to get to our destination & the rations they gave us was for 2 Days. Towards evening we steamed out. Some of us were upon deck to relieve ourselves as we left & the sight of the burning Ship as we passed it was a real Good sight. Feelings amongst us must have been very Mixed as one

of the sailors told us that our troops had retaken Dobruk. They had taken us away, just as our chances of being released was almost true.

The trip instead of lasting 3 Days took 8 Days the rations we got was 1 biscuit & Tin of Bully for 24 hours then was later reduced to one Biscuit only. Apparently our Navy was some where about so the Jtes had to deviate their course & went via the Greek Coast: but we were feeling Hungry miserable & didnt give a Damn what would happen. We did have a bit of luck as they did let us go up on the deck for a while to get a bit of fresh air. The ship stopped at quite a few Ports on the Greek Coast to try & get some Rations for us. I saw Athens, Pyraeus, Patras. where they managed to get a few cases of Biscuits & while taking them on Board they dropped

most of the cargo in the sea. So we got some Salt water Soaked Biscuit for our Ration. It is really amazing the strength one has in going through Hell a Starvation. We also went through the Corinth Canal & it is a really wonderful bit of work. On the 8th Day we got to Toranto Italy that morning our Ration was four biscuits for ten men. Here we were promised Hot Shower & hot meal. We got Hot Shower, had all our Hair shorn off beards & moustaches taken off after that they put us through the Showers & our clothes in the Disinfector for delousing after about three hours we were marched to the trucks & about fifty men to a Cattle Truck & promised food later, towards Evening the train moved off. We were Cold & miserable. No warm clothes No Tucker & No Food. We then got to Bari after 2 nights & Day. we were then herded out of the trucks & marched for miles how we did it Lord Knows

Know but I was in the early hours of the morning that we got to the Camp. Cold rice table they gave us some hot coffee that morning. about small tea cup full. we were kept there until about ten o'clock then the Search started they took away our blankets, & practically anything that we had pocket Knives etc. They then gave us a clay bowl & cup for our food & gave us a Blanket Red x one. & put us in Tents about 25 men to a tent with straw on the ground for a mattress. The Soup came up & that was pumpkin water with a bit of cabbage thrown in & now & again some macaroni. I am sure the pigs at home got better swill Still we were pleased to get it. Twice a week we got a piece of meat the size of a match box the cheese we got was about the same size & the thickness about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an Inch so we were doing well

On the whole we had no Candles so we Smoked chest nut leaves & were they terrible, still it was Something

The bread we got was very small abbs seven ounces, Some of the old Hands told us about Red x Parcels & their Contents & Smokes as well; Did one Month wate!? but there were no parcels in the Camp so we went without them

Some of the fellows got hold of Some cabbage leaves & Stalks when they had to throw Some rubbish to Away, they passed Some rabbit Hutches & were the leaves good. we ate them with relish the first Green Stuff we had in five months. The Rain came down like Hell one night & the wind blew for all it was worth the tent was half blown away & we were Soaked to the Skin, Blankets & all. Being in the Night & Dark we Could do nothing but Huddle up against one another & try & keep warm & just wished for Daylight to come.

when Daylight Came, We did our best to straighten things up & also sent a complaint in to the Dtrs, after a few days they put us into Bungalows & we got beds for the first time & also straw Palliases & after about 17 days we got 6 fags British Red & ones & were they good. Later we got some Eti smokes as well. Then there was another move. We were Marched to the Station herded into trucks & off to a permanent Camp Gravina is the name of it we got there late at night & had to stand in the Cold until we were Marched again then put into Groups & sent to different Sections & here Jerry & I parted he was sent to Section 5 & I to Section 8.

We were put into Bungalows No beds, Straw palliases & had to sleep on the concrete floor NOT too Good at all. Still we Could take it

some of the Boys who were there from before. Gave us English Smokes & Some gave us tea with Milk the first we had tasted for very many months. Also told us about Red X Parcels which we would get in due course. I will say the old Hands treated us very nice indeed. The following day we got our issue of Parcels one between seven. The excitement was Great & we also got 25 Cigs per man. When it Came to dividing the parcel, our mouths were watering, & we were very eager to taste the food, we each got a taste of Salmon, Sardines, Bully, Butter, meat Roll, about 2 Biscuits some milk, Coffee or tea. with seven men sharing the stuff didnt go very far but was it Good, eventually 4 of us made up a Group & so the stuff went further, & later one man took the parcel at a time, So we got settled & worked out quite well. The four in our Group were two Brailsfords, LeRoux & myself. The month we got at Gravenstein was December 42 & the

Boys were already speaking about Xmas parcels. Still we were only too pleased to be getting parcels because to taste the food after 5 months was really something worth while. For Brews we got Klim Tins with wire Handles & these were put over the Fires at the Kitchen, when the Tin & Billy had been taken off. For this we also had to queue up & wait our turn. We termed this the Klim Tin Derby, after the morning check we would be waiting with our Cans & Dixies & the moment the bugle blew check over there was one big Rush for the Kitchen to get the brew going. On muddy days which were plentiful we had many a Good laugh as 1 pan would see fellows sliding & slipping in all directions. Trying to be first in the queue. Some of the older Hands had stoves they called Blowers they were a bellows

Type of affair & Embers were put in the
Fire box as they pumped the bellows
it Kept the embers glowing & so
the brew went on. But the main
question was the obtaining of wood etc
as the empty boardboard Containers of
the Parcel made one brew. The parcels
were of two Kinds English & Canadian
and there was quite a variety of Items.
Some of them also contained Oats, Egg-
Powders, Mustards, Yorkshire Puddings
apple or Fruit Puddings. There were
all sorts of Cakes, & Blancmanges
made with Canadian Biscuits,
For the early part of my Stay in
camp 65. I was feeling really miserable
and in a perpetual State of Hunger.
The Huns had not given us much
in the way of clothing although
they had quite a lot of Red x Stuff
but at the same time there was an
element of Doubt as to who was
responsible. for how I came the people
in charge of the Huns. what I got
was 1 pr Pte Pants & 1 Shirt. I had
1 pr of Shorts & Pullover, no boots or Sox Etc.

I managed to get hold of a pair of second Hand Pakkies, the weather was starting to get cold so wasn't feeling too pleased with myself. The water position was not too Good at would come on now & then for abt 15 minutes to ½ an hour & During that time you were lucky if you got your bottle filled up & to have a wash one was a good man. it was almost impossible although we managed it now & again. The house position was really very bad it seemed impossible to get rid of them it was Itch Scratch & off with your shirt etc & start on Killing them off, have a bit of peace for about 10 minutes & the same thing all over again, It seemed ~~at~~ as if we would never get rid of the damned pest no matter where one looked the Bloody things were there in their thousands. I am really amazed that they did not carry us away. we only had

cold water with which to wash our clothing & with the Hail Brush we were able to Borrow managed to keep them Down to a Minimum.

There was a canteen in the camp as well we per paid 20 lira per fortnight with which we were able to purchase Figs, Onions, which ever was in the Canteen, The Rush that took place every time the Cart came Figs in the Canteen I am sure, had nothing on the Diamond Field Rush, that took place in the Unions. and the price was between 18 & 20 liras per Kilo so you see how far ones pay went. at times the quality was fair but at other times worse than awful. Onions was definitely the best buy of the lot they cost between 4 & 5 lira per Kilo & went about 5 or 6 medium ones to that weight which is supposed to be 2½ lbs.

These onions were definitely worth their weight in Gold as they helped us out with many a meal, Fried Onions, Boiled Onions & Raw Onions & did we enjoy them? I will say that we did. as it was one of the few vegetables that we were able to get Oneals. It was. Hearing Xmas Time & the

talk turned towards Xmas parcels and what the contents were, & what we were going to have, & different menus, but it all depended on what kind of Parcel we would get seeing as there weren't enough Xmas parcels to go Round. Anyway the Issue was 2 Xmas 1 Canadian & 1 Indian parcel between 4 and 100 Kgs per man. Being so Hungry & the first month of our receiving parcels most of the fellows just ate until they were sick, especially as we were not used to eating plenty of food of the grade & Quality in the parcels. Another thing that Happened was Smoke Eyes. Quite a few of us could not see a thing our eyes were Smarting & Burning I have never before Experienced such a thing it was due to the heat of the fires & the cold air that we were subjected to while making our brews & warming up our food. But with all that we

were very well satisfied with our Xmas fare & thanked God & the Red X for their wonderful work that they are doing & I am sure that every P.O.W. Blesses them every time he has a meal. because I am sure that without the Red X Parcel many of us would have been under ground for Good P.O.W. life has been a wonderful school for many of us & we have seen the best & the worst of our fellow men & one would be really amazed at the way some of us have turned out. Fellows that previously seemed to me to have been real fine fellows showed their true colours & what a difference there was. Still we live & learn. Anyway after Xmas our group of four split up & Jane LeRoux & myself worked together with our parcels & I was not sorry about my choice as he really proved himself to be a true & staunch friend. I am sure one that I shall never forget. I was not in very pleasant spirits as some mail had started coming through & I was always expecting to get some but seemed to slip up every time eventually on a real, wet, cold &

miserable day I got my first letter. I was really very delighted + pleased especially as I don't knew that my folks at home knew that I was alive + well + am sure relieved from a lot of worries. Later on Jamie + myself decided to make a blower for ourselves (Blower incidentally is a small stove forced draught, not unlike a blacksmiths forge) so we had a look round + scrounged some Klim tins, cocoa tins etc + got stuck into making one, the very first one was not too successful. So I tried again + the second one worked alright these blowers used very little fuel, the tools we had was a pen knife a stone + a pair of scissors, the job wasn't too good looking but that didn't worry us, as long as we were able to make our brew. after a few days I decided to improve on my model + did so then some one asked me to sell them my

old one for some smokes & I did so & at the same time got the idea of making them & selling them to the boys in the other bungalows. So I put Jane on the job of getting tins were etc & I did the assembling. Well we got on famously & sold the first one a to our surprise the fellow was so pleased that he brought down his mate to ask us to make him one, we were getting between 40 & 50 smokes per blowe. it all depended on the force of smoke. the business flourished & we were averaging a blowe per day & at the same time became quite proficient at the manufacture of them. So now we had plenty of smokes & also traded the smokes for extra foodstuffs, bread & thus were able to have some good meals now & again some one would want a tin box which we also made. the wood wadnt of a wonderful standard, but was quite well made

considering the tools at our disposal.
The wood question was quite serious but after getting together Jamie & myself managed very well especially as we pinched a log or two from the cook House, Our slogan was the Brew must go on, & so it did
Then the Cpls started sending out working parties, Jamie was put on one of them, So I had to do the blow / manufacturing on my own, I managed alright & had no worries as to selling them
Then we were shifted to Sabre 5, there I was put in the same Bay as Jerry R.B. Barney J. we also in the same section. after I got settled down there I started on my Blowers again & Jerry was my salesman & he sold them quicker than I could make them, with the lira or Smokes that I made I went to the market & bought foodstuffs

bread etc & was never short of a good meal I can assure you that it was very welcome as the Ities didnt give us very much in the way of food. Then on June the 26th we were shifted further north to Camp 52 there I shared a parcel with Barney G. we got on quite well together I also met Gus there & we were very friendly with one another. At this Camp I didnt make any blewers as they all seemed to have them. We had quite a few Lira between us that we had brought up from Camp 65 as we had done quite a bit of loading there & we also received pay of 20 Liras per fortnight so were able to buy Fruit Tomatoes onions etc from the canteen. I didnt take up any subject in the school as I couldnt concentrate & also as we always seemed to be on the move every few months. after

being at the new camp for a few weeks the Ities stopped our parcels their reason being that we were making pro-Jpaganda on the way up from 65. by throwing chocolate meat etc to the Ite populations. It may or may not have been so still they did it. We went without parcels for about three weeks. when they gave them back to us after a few deputations had gone to see the Commandant, but the news made up the back losses. at this camp I did quite a bit of reading. The news was very good & it seemed as if it wouldn't be very long before Italy was out of it especially after Sicily was invaded & then Russia was thrown out.

a Imagine our Joy & excitement when the news came out that Italy had capitulated. The plans we

had made ~~ewhat~~ what we were going to do. The Camp leader called a meeting & told us that we should not escape as we would be interfering with our forces etc & that we would be taken away within a few days. Imagine our feelings when the following morning the Jerries arrived & just took over the Camp & we were cooped in unable to do anything. Some tried to get away but it was impossible as the Etis who had not as yet been taken off by Jerry would not assist in any way. Well I kept us there from the 9th until the 12th & then we were told that we were being taken to Germany. What a shock it was to us. Still what could we do. On the march up to the station B managed to get away. at a place where we were given a few minutes rest-

much as I wanted to be with him I couldnt as the guards came & stood right at the place, I was just hoping that he wouldnt be seen. We were then marched to the Station & put into Trucks.

Longing

Oh! How I long, & I pine
For the Beloved Sweetheart of Mine
Oh! How I long to embrace
and gaze into her lovely face
Oh To be able to Kiss My Darling ~~Dear~~ again
and to put my arms round her once more
Oh for the Day to Come, as before.
The Blasted ~~Hellish~~ War.