CHAPTER SIX

JANUARY

1944

1st

Good start for the New Year with a Yasumi day. Chow not too bad today. Did some sewing and sleeping, mostly the latter. Rather cold day, everything frozen up, outside. If a dixie of water is left in the ablution block, it is frozen solid in ten minutes.

2nd

Another Yasumi day, I do not know why, but it sure is good. Given an injection today for something or other, the general opinion is, that it could be for dysentery. Spent a very peaceful day, sewing and sleeping.

3rd

Work again, on another Chev. Very cold day, a bitter wind blowing most of the time. Feeling a bit sick, probably the result of the shot in the arm. 200 letters received, 2 Australian, the rest American.

4th

Feeling better today. Still very cold, water mains bursting everywhere, I wish it would snow, then it would be much warmer.

5th

Snowed last night, and much warmer today. Received another shot in the arm tonight for something. Still working on the Chev, put a brass sleeve in the oil-pump.

6th

Snowed very heavily today, and also very cold. Still working on the Chev.

7th

Bitterly cold day, feet are nearly frozen off, my heels are frost bitten, and very painful. Finished the Chev, and started on a Ford B.

A Dutch prisoner died tonight, poor chap, he had pneumonia.
was one of the recent arrivals. There are quite a few cases in the hospital now, with that complaint, but our Doc. is a very good man, and capable of pulling the others through, provided he has the medicine.

A serious affair happened today. A Dutchman was caught stealing bread and tobacco from his mate, and another caught having used a tin, in which to urinate, in the barracks during the night. Instead of telling the Japs, Capt. Ziegler, (our senior officer) took three of his strong arm men, who gave the culprits a beating. This was a good thing, except that the strikers were all Yanks. One of them had just come out of jail, having done 15 days for stealing food himself. I think it was very remiss on Capt. Zs. part. Paid tonight, received Y3.19.

8th

Very cold, 12 deg. F this morning. Same work today, things go on, day by day, exactly the same.

9th

Not quite so fresh. Just about finished the "B". A cylinder head burst on another Ford B last night, caused by the water freezing. Another shot in the arm tonight, but that is nothing, my arm is like a pin cushion now.

10th

Yasumi day. No reveille or roll call this morning, a welcome relief. Has been fairly warm. Slept nearly all day. No effect from the injection this time, as yet anyway. Fire-watch tonight.

11th

Bitterly cold day. The road is very slippery, snow melted slightly, on top yesterday, and froze over during the night. Four, out-of-work Nip bus drivers, start work as tractor drivers at the shop today, they are from Tokyo.

12th

Snowed heavily today, not quite so cold. Finished a B engine and started another.

13th

Not a bad day, rather cold though. Tonight I was issued with a pair of size 14 gum boots, many sizes too big, but better than nothing.

14th

Good day, not very cold, a bit of sleet this morning. The Tokyo
drivers knocked a big-end out of a Chev yesterday, through over reverting the engine. Still having a lot of trouble with Chev oil pumps. Things are very dull here again, I've almost given up hope of ever getting out, it is so monotonous, and depressing.

There are blokes all round the place, half mad, they stare at something, then laugh at nothing, and talk to themselves.

I try to keep my mind occupied, and not sit and brood over things, any more than I can help.

15th

Very cold. Changing a Chev manifold over to take a Ford 8 carby. They have put in another stove at the shop today, makes things a bit warmer too.

16th

Cold day. The road to work, is now a solid block of ice. Wrote a postcard home tonight. By gee, I wish I could get a letter from home, and especially some photos.

17th

Same as yesterday. One of the new blokes is trying to re-metal a Chev conrod, and he is not too successful, doesn't know the first thing about it.

18th

Not quite so cold. A lot of clothes came in today, stuff the Nips have captured. American, English, and Australian Army issue. I don't suppose the "Rat" (the present Commandant) will ever issue it to us though.

19th

Fairly nice day, the sun shone a bit. Have been trying to start a V8 all day. Orange ration tonight, but they are all frozen.

20th

Yasumi day. Nice and sunny during the morning. Issued with a British Army-great coat, they took our old Nip coats from us. Couple of fights today, one in the Dutch section and the other in the British.

21st

Good day. More letters tonight, Sparky and Tom, received one each this time. Better luck for me next time, I hope.

22nd
Another sunny day but a bit nippy. Not much work doing now, finished a Chev over-haul.

23rd

Some personal parcels arrived here tonight, all for Americans of course. They are just like kids pulling things out of Christmas stockings, they are really excited. So is everyone else, looking on hungrily.

It is good to see them coming through though, we poor "Orphans" might even get one some day. The parcels, all different, contain clothing, food, shaving gear, soap, as well as other items, all very useful. By gee, these Yanks are lucky, makes a man feel sort of homeless, but I'll bet there is just as much on the way for us, and will get here some day.

24th

Very nice day, quite unusual for winter. Actually this winter has not seemed near as cold as last, although they say the average temperature is lower, next month will tell. Not much work doing, fairly easy.

25th

Same today. Have a V8 overhaul on hand, but it is not bad. We have been given a stupid paper to fill in tonight, listing any battles we fought in. and our bitterest experience. I've had so many, I cannot name any one in particular.

26th

Turned cold again, snowed very heavily last night. Received a Buda engine from the Chasi shop today.

27th

Cold day. Cleaning up the Buda engine, which is very good. G.C.s.g.2No.1sf. (I cannot remember now, (1990) what this code means).

28th

Snowed again today. Dropped a cylinder head on my finger, and by cripes it is damned painful, the nail will probably come off.

K.30 into Y deal?

29th

Bit warmer today. Started on a Ford B over-haul. The Nips are all saying they will be glad when the war is over, they are just as sick of it as we are.
30th
Not a bad day. Rebuilt a Chev generator, did a bit to B o/h. Issued with new Nip uniforms tonight.

31st
Yasumi day. Wood detail in the morning. Nice day, did some washing and sewing during the afternoon. Issued with a pair of long English Army puttees, by gee the Nips at work will be jealous tomorrow, because of our new suits and puttees.

***FEBRUARY***

1st
The Nips were sure peeved at us today. From everywhere, came reports of jealousy being expressed by them. Fancy being jealous of a P.O.W.!! Has been a bitterly cold day, coldest this year to date.

2nd
The water-mains have burst everywhere, and they are carting water to the camp. It is rationed, one small dipper per man, each day. Doing a B overhaul at work.

3rd
Started on a Chev over-haul today. Weather is still bitterly cold. Everyone is rushing around getting clean snow, in dixies, and melting it on the stoves to make tea and for washing. Takes a lot of snow to make much water though.

4th
Finished the Chev. They are trying to rush me on the job, so I slam it badly, but they don’t know the difference between a good and a bad job. It does not pay them to rush me, anyway.

5th
This water business is a damned nuisance, there is no bath, and no water to wash with, in the mornings. It is rather cold, trying to rub the sleep out of your eyes with snow, no time to melt it in the mornings.

6th
Still very cold, hope it breaks soon. Doing another B but taking my own time. Bringing a bottle of water home each night now.
PRISONERS OF WAR POST
SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE.

27733 A.C.I. W.K. EDMONDS
Royal Australian Air Force
Australian Prisoner of War
JAVA

C/O JAPANESE RED CROSS SOCIETY
TOKYO, JAPAN

Copy of letters received whilst POW
7th

Started off a good day, but finished snowing, with a cold wind blowing. Inspection by old Hatikayama today. Vegetables and fish very scarce just now, seems a bad time of the year.

8th

About the coldest day this year, snow blizzard blowing all day. The Temperature at 4 pm was minus 16 deg.C. Five more R/C parcels tonight. Still no water, It's a damned nuisance, no decent wash.

9th

Not quite so cold. Marking out a clutch-housing for the Continental. Last night, just after Tenko a stupid boong from the "Black Evil" gang threw out a bucket of hot ashes, and the Nips saw it. They then made us all stand out in the snow until the silly cow owned up to it, which he didn't want to do, because of the punishment he would receive. They are a real menace to us.

10th

Yasumi day. Quite a nice day. They sold us some towels and "C" strings this morning. Water came on this afternoon. Wrote another letter card home.

I have just received two letters from Dorothy, the first mail for 2 years and one month. One is dated the second of May last year. I'm so happy, I don't know what to do, I have written before, but she still loves me and that is the main thing.

11th

Life is not half so dull now that I have received a couple of letters to read. I've read them now, more times than I can count. Apparently Lorna and Dave have a baby, and he must be 18 months old now, as far as I can make out, and he is called Ross. Gee, I would like to see him. He will get a bad shock when he sees me, he will probably say, "Send him back, his eyes slant!"

12th
Snowed all the morning, but not so cold. There is a rumour of more men coming, and some of the officers going soon.

13th

Snowed all day, still warm. It is more than knee-deep now. They killed one of the pigs today, it weighed about 200 lbs. dressed, I'll bet the Nips get most of it. We are supposed to be getting some of it for our bintos, since fish is scarce.

14th

Snowed again, it is very deep now, should soon start to warm up though. Over-hauling the small Continental, valves in bad order. The pig is still hanging up in the kitchen.

15th

Has been rather cold, snow drifting and gets through the smallest cracks in the building. There is another rumour of Red Cross parcels at Hakodate, hope it's true.

16th

About the same as yesterday. Finished a B overhaul today. Well this is the end of my book, I only hope that I can keep it and take it home, just to remind me of the worst time of my life.

(This book was rather small, which was to my advantage, as far as trying to keep it concealed. I managed to obtain another one, slightly larger, which also fitted into the back pocket of my gas haversack, so I was able to carry on the diary)

START OF THIRD DIARY
Feb. 1944

17th

Today has been a fairly good day, but temp. still below zero. Not much work doing, I have been drilling holes with an air drill, which is a very cold job.

18th

The sun shone this afternoon, melting a bit of snow and ice. Everything else about normal. I have night fire-watch tonight.

19th

There has been a furious snow-storm blowing all day, the worst I think I have ever seen. There are 8 officers leaving for Hakodate
20th

Yasumi day. Snowing lightly. Our officers left at 1.30 pm. Sorry to see them go, they did help to keep the Nips in check a bit. It leaves Capt. Z. and Lieut. Humble and the Doc here with us. Our only Aussie officer, Capt Campbell of the A.I.F. was among those to go.

21st

Snowed a bit. Not feeling too well in the stomach, and have a bit of a cold, can’t eat much, and we are having pork stew too.

22nd

About the same today. Working on a V8 over-haul No.209. I hate these old V8s they go to pieces very quickly.

23rd

Very nice day, the sun shone all the time. Working steadily.

24th

Turned cold again. Finished the V8. Today we received a letter from our officers, who arrived in Hakodate alright. That camp had Red Cross on the 11th inst., Yankee parcels, 4 packages to 5 men. We will receive ours soon I hope, only our rats will steal half.

25th

Blizzard raging all day, very cold. Just doing odd jobs at work now. The denky (Nip word for electricity, we tend to use Jap now) is very erratic words for various common things these days) is very erratic words for various common things these days) is very erratic words for various common things these days) is very erratic words for various common things these days). Their poles are too far apart, and wires too slack, they keep shorting-out against one another. Just like Nip trash anyway.

26th

Another bad day. Started a Chev over-haul.

27th

Not such a bad day, temp. a bit higher. Working easily. Weighed tonight, 65 kilos, gained 5 lbs. Getting a bit too heavy!

28th

Very cold today. Nothing to write about these days, it is very quiet. Wish our Red Cross would come along soon.
29th

Last of the month again, time sure is flying, and here we are wasting our lives away. Don't know when yasumi day is yet, hope it is tomorrow. The "Rat" is away somewhere.

***MARCH***

1944

1st-4th

Have missed out these days owing to nothing unusual happening.

5th

The Red Cross parcels landed here today and were issued out tonight, one packet per man.

10th

Yasumi Day. There is all sorts of food stuff being made up from the contents of the Red Cross parcels. Also much trading going on. Writing a letter home tonight. Some Red Cross clothing has landed here today. I have eaten very well. Sweet beans and stewed prunes with creamed rice for breakfast. Curried rice for dinner, and at intervals during the day, toasted bread with butter and cheese, lots of coffee and Chesterfield cigarettes.

11th

Snowed heavily last night and all today. Roads are blocked, trains stopped and the electricity is cut off. Everything is at a stand still. The snow is over 2 metres deep on the Mountain road.

12th

Still snowing and we can only get out of the building from one end. Could not go to work, the road is completely blocked, even to pedestrians. Three Nips killed when part of a bank slipped onto the road. Worked in the kitchen, cutting up wood for the cookers. Had to shovel 5 ft. of snow off of the wood pile.

13th

Went out today, but could not do anything, everything is at a stand still. The road is very dangerous, if you slipped off the beaten track you would go up to your neck in snow, and in some places, right under. Stayed at the 350 meter level.

14th

Up to the top again today. The sun shining on the snow is very
hard on the eye-sight, so glaring it almost blinds you. Not much work.

15th

Things started up again today, electricity is on, and the trains are running. The Nips say that it has been the heaviest snow fall here for over 10 years.

17th

Yesterday was normal. Today has been a good day. Tonight we were issued with 50c of the Red Cross clothing, the rest went to Kamaishi, they say. I got a sweater and a pair of gloves, traded the sweater for a pair of overalls.

20th

Yasumi Day, rather cold and snowing again. Issue of sugar this morning, which cost us 50c each. Much trading is still going on with the R/C food, it is like a Paddy's market.

21st

Snowed again this morning. Not much work just now, taking it easy.

22nd

Still a bit of snow, Boss had the day off. Apple ration tonight, 2 per man.

25th

Today we had a visit from the new officer-in-charge of the Hakodate Camps. He can speak excellent English, probably much better than anyone of us here. He made a speech.

26th

Normal day. Working easy.

27th

Today 4 more Yank Medical orderlies and a Doctor, arrived here from the Phillipines. I received another letter from Dorothy tonight, dated Oct. 2nd, 1943, fairly fast work.

28 & 29th

Weather is still very cold for this time of the year, snows most days. Two Chevs have knocked their big-ends out of the side of the crank-cases.
31st

Yasumi Day. Still cold. Had an inspection of clothing this morning. We have to write our impression of the new Colonel's speech. Our Nips are anxious to find out what he said.

***APRIL***

1944

1st

We have been one year in these barracks now, it's high time we were out of the damned place, it really is getting monotonous. I do not know how things are going, but I feel that we will be free, inside 12 months from now. If not, I know that I will be mad by then.

2nd

The weather is very cold for this time of the year, still snows nearly every day. Have 6 new Kodomos (Japanese children) working at the shop now, damned nuisance.

3rd

Another cold windy day with snow and sleet. Nothing else worth a mention.

4th

Today has been just as bad as mid-winter, bitterly cold. Some idiotic boong complained that they are hungry on bread days, which has been every other day until now. As a result they have cut out the bread, except for Yasumi days.

The stupid lazy black cows could always get the usual swap of 2 rations of rice for one of bread if they wanted it, but they are mad. The worst thing we have to put up with here is the "Black Evil", the uncivilised heathens, always causing trouble.

5th

Not such a bad day, did not get to work. Waiting all day in Ohashi for a truck, which never came.

6th

Best day of the year so far, just a bit nippy. Sid Jupp, an Englishman, started work with me, at the shop today.

7th

Good Friday, according to the best calculation in the camp.
Still in this place, same as last year, only things have changed considerably in our favour, thank God. I hope and pray that this time next year we will be out of prison and home with our families.

There are many inevitable rumours floating about as usual, and I think the concensus of opinion is that peace will come during the next 12 months from now.

8th

Rained lightly last night, and most of today. The interpreter, Takita is leaving tomorrow, so they are having a booze-up in the office tonight. Sorry he is going because he treated us pretty well. Small sugar ration tonight, about 3 tablespoons each.

9th

Cold day. Very good day at work, nothing much doing.

10th

Yasumi day, very cool morning, rained during the afternoon. They issued out some of the Red Cross boots today, and as there are not enough for a pair for each man, a pack of the inevitable cards came into action, and as usual my luck drew a blank. Received a couple of packets of cigs and a packet of frog fuzz, for not missing a day at work this year.

The rain, and a little sun now and then, is rapidly chasing the snow away, but it is lingering on the Mountains. The Pussy willows are starting to bud, so spring won't be long now, although we still have cold days to endure yet.

There is a rumour about, to the effect that our camp is being changed from the Hakodate branch, and is being taken over by Tokyo, and the present staff will leave.

11th

Nice day. Red Cross packages came in unexpectedly today, and were issued out tonight. As there is not enough to go round, this time, 4 packages are shared between 9 men. Came as a great shock, so close to the last lot.

12th

Cold windy day. Very little work.

13th

Good day with the sun shining. Issue of apples tonight, 5 per man. The Nip staff are busy getting ready to shift.

14th
Rained all day, got wet coming home from work.

15th

Snowed today, very cold. Wrote a letter to Dorothy tonight, I think it is her birthday on the 17th so it is very appropriate, although it will be a long time before she gets it, if ever.

17th

Very cold morning, snow all frozen, but the sky clear. I would like to know if it is Dorothy’s birthday today, I know it is this month sometime. Anyway I’ll be home for the next one, if not I’ll be giving up hope of ever getting out.

18th

Frost this morning, but warm and sunny during the afternoon. Repairing a Chev timing-cover oil felt today. There are big buzzes about next Yasumi Day.

19th

Woke up this morning with sore eyes, from a flash off the arc-welder yesterday. Doctor told me to stay in, and after treatment, stayed in bed all day. Went through a lot of agony during the morning.

20th

Yasumi Day. Has been raining all night, and still raining this morning. Col. Emoto, (present Commandant), came in and gave us a farewell speech. Tomorrow we change to the Tokyo Headquarters. He was a good old boy and I’m sorry to see him go.

21st

The officers were taken to Kamishi Camp for a visit, and had a swell time, waited on by our”Rat”. Very nice day.

22nd

Official change-over took place. We came in early and the new Commandant was introduced to us by the Commander of the new group. Cannot judge how he will be yet, he is very young.

23rd

Bit fresh today, working at the 500 meter all day, putting a Chev engine together. Some dirty cow couldn’t make the benjo last night, and let it go just outside the door. Whoever it was, would not own up, or clean up the mess.
21st

Nice sunny day. Finished at the 500 m. The new Commandant shook the guards up a bit today, so of course they will take it out on us.

25th

Bit windy and slightly fresh today. Don’t think so much of Tokyo rules. They tried to cut our rice ration. The Comm. is going to reside in the camp, so that is bad, for a start.

26th

Rained most of the day, got wet going to work.

27th

Not bad today. Working at the 350 meter, putting a clutch throw-out bearing in a Chev.

28th

Still at the 350m, did nothing all day except start up the Chev. Weighed tonight, 67.9 Kl., a gain of 2.9.

29th

Cool and windy with some rain. Doing a Ford B overhaul at the 350 now.

30th

Yasumi Day. The end of another month. Cloudy day, with light showers during the afternoon. Issued with British Army gas-capaces and hoods today, to be used as rain coats. Made myself a pliers and screw-driver holster.

***MAY***

1944

1st

Rather good day, bit of wind. Still on the Ford B at the 350. Biscuit ration tonight.

2nd

Very nice day, almost hot. Finished the "B", she’s going good.

3rd

Very warm day. Coming home from work. we saw 3 large monkeys, the mine today.
sitting in a big tree; apparently there are several colonies
living in the Mountains, but are rarely seen.
We have all been issued with new numbers, I am now No.61,
probably to do with the new Command.

4th

Cloudy morning but turned warm. Very little doing. Just slowly
working on the Ford engine.
While working, a man tends to forget time, and place, which is
what I am trying to do. But when are we going to be free? That is
the burning question everyone is asking, and no one can answer.
It is easy to say, "Wait patiently, all comes to those who wait".
If I could see the slightest chance of escaping, I certainly
wouldn't wait, but I know it is hopeless, so what is the use. I
suppose a bed of straw and three meals a sort, every day is
better than facing a 10,000 to one chance of standing before a
firing squad.

5th

Rained nearly all day, but not cold.

6th

Bit fresh with some rain.

7th

Not a bad day but slightly cold. We returned our old Niip
raincoats tonight.

8th

Very nice day. Nearly finished our work at the 350m.

10th

Yasumi Day. A bit cloudy. A search was put on this morning by
the Commandant, very cunning too. They made us put all our
belongings out on our beds, and of course, as usual, as in other
searches, we filled our pockets with things not to be seen. The
first thing he did was to make us empty out our pockets, and the
contents was all he searched. There are ways of doing all things
though, and I think we still won, after some very cunning
sleight-of-hand tricks.
We now have a gramophone pickup and a lot of English and
American records, which came from Kamaishi. It is very nice too,
first real music since leaving Java.

11th

Has been a wet day but not cold. The cherry blossom is all out
now, looks very nice, but the rain kind of knocked it about a bit. The trees on the Mountains are starting to get leaves on them too.

Working at the 350 level. Getting as much to eat these days as I can manage. Having picked up to normal weight, it takes very little to keep me going.

12th

Rather nice warm day. I went up to the 550m today to overhaul the big Continental again.

13th

Cool night but hot day. The Tokyo Colonel came today, and he really is a fiery old cuss. He said nothing was right, the food was too good, and the bread was the best he had seen in 3 years, now it has to be polluted with spuds. He spoke to us in Nip, and naturally we did not understand very much of it, but the Commandant interpreted. Everyone is of the opinion that the best thing he can do for us, is to fall over a cliff and break his neck.

14th

Warm again today. We have a lot of barley and hard beans, mixed with the rice now, due to the damned Colonel. Just about finished the Continental.

15th

First really hot day we have had this year. Started having tenko outside from tonight. There is another inspection of the camp tomorrow by some silly coot with nothing else to do.

16th

Fairly warm day. Fitting new big ends to a Chev. We have been told that soon we may expect some more letters and Red Cross, as 300 officers at Tokyo are sorting mail there now.

17th

Terrible rumour that the permanent Army guards are coming here again. If so, we sure are down on our luck. Has been a fairly fresh day.

18th

Today, the largest fall occurred in the mine since we arrived. The 600m fell into the 550m at 5.00am. The 550m fell into here. The 600m fell into the 550m at 8.30am. Our blokes working in there, had to come the 500m at 8.30am. Our blokes working in there, had to come through falling rock, to get out. Six were wounded slightly, but
many Koreans and Nips were killed around them. Only an act of God must have saved them. The damage inside the mine must be very extensive.

The Tokyo Captain inspected the camp, quite appropriate. We all came home after the fall; it was a sight that reminded me of bomb raids, to see all the dead and crushed bodies outside the mine.

19th

The miners had to go up again today, but only the 450m went in; the drillers only, the others carried wood from the Mountain. The levels are not working yet, and are not likely to be, either.

20th

Yasumi Day. Left fairly well alone. Five apples issued per man, cost 35c. Had a good sing-song tonight.

21st

Very foggy morning and started to rain during the afternoon. Not much work done today, boss away.

22nd

Very cold day, with a little rain. Finished off a Hercules engine today, it is a new one but the 2nd & 3rd con-rods were too long. Good Nip engineering!

23rd

Nice warm sunny day. Fitting the Hercules engine in the frame. Cigarette issue tonight, 20 for 7c. The new Commandant has made a big difference in the prices, some one must have been making a bit out of us.

24th

Fairly warm day. Started up the Hercules, she runs very well. Tonight a competition was started, for the best recipe, using the few ingredients available to us from the galley. First prize is 30 packets of cigs., rather unusual I think.

A new railway line, replacing the old one to Kamaishi, is being constructed, and it runs very close to our camp. Rock blasted out of the Mountain side, keeps knocking holes in our roof, the Commandant is making the contractors repair them though.

25th

Rather warm, nothing much doing.

26th
Another good day. Repairing a Continental flywheel-housing.

27th Cloudy., looking like rain. Nothing to do. Raining tonight.

28th

Rainy day. Still the same.

29th

Working at the 350m. Rained most of the day. I am getting a fair sale up, with my algebra now. Professor Lindy is a good old boy as a teacher.

(I started a course of lessons in algebra some time previously. The Dutchman, Professor Lindy, (I forget his real name), taught several subjects to people interested in them; just to pass the time away. This was one way to gain a bit of knowledge from a first class teacher, who was very willing to do it. Obtaining paper to write on was a big problem.)

30th

Very foggy today. Still at the 350m.

31st

Yasumi Day. Trying out some of the recipes today. Breakfast did not come up until 10.30, an English bloke’s recipe for baked spuds, rice and lots of other stuff. Dinner at 2.30 was Yankee, boiled sweet pinto beans with spuds and salty measo-paste. Had a wood-party before breakfast.

“Schmidt the Spy”, (Our nickname for a Nip civilian, who worked for the Company, and was suspected of being a spy, spoke rather good English, and turned up at odd places any old time, and was always taking photos), brought his radio pickup and records in to today, some good records too. The Commandant came in and issued new summer uniform.

***JUNE***

1st

Not a bad day, still doing the Buda at the 350m.

2nd

Got the Buda going today, with a bit of trouble. Weather slightly fresh. The Commandant made a stick merchant apologise, to a Dutch boy, whom he had hit with his stick.
3rd
Up the top again today, working on a "B"-model rebore. fairly warm.

4th
Rained a little today. Paid tonight in the barracks, for the first time. The new guards are OK so far, the Commandant has them bluffed.

5th
Very warm day, working easy.

6th
Warm, with a few clouds. Finished assembling the Ford B.

7th
Not a bad day. Things very much as usual.

8th
Same today, assembling a Ford A.

9th
Thunder-storm today. Some Red Cross boot repairing gear, has arrived.

10th
Yasumi Day. Nice hot day. Wood party after dinner, afterwards there was an inspection of underclothes with a view to exchanging worn out articles.

11th
Caught in a bad hail storm on the way back to camp. The hail fell in jagged lumps of ice, some bigger than a hen's egg.

12th
Hot day. There is much talk of the war now, in France, so our people must have crossed the channel. Well I only hope it will soon be finished over there, and here, soon after.

13th
Very usual sort of day.
14th
Fairly warm day. Put another Ford B together.

15th
Working at the 500m on a Chev. Issue of soap tonight

16th
Finished the Chev today.

17th
Did nothing, all day today. Waiting for the boss to get a part for a carby. Bit cooler.

18th
Good easy day. Jack Graham, one of my mates, was put in the brig today for 5 days, charged with refusing on principal, to carry out an order, issued by a civilian guard. It is a very stiff sentence, but he asked for it, really.

19th
Nice warm day, nothing much to do. I have caught a cold.

20th
Yasumi Day. Big clean-up; everything taken outside. Also the new barracks were cleaned out, ready for the new prisoners, said to be coming soon. Had the Company’s amplifier in from Ohasi today.

21st
Rained quite hard all day. Started pulling down a Mack engine.

22nd
Rained a bit. The civilian guards were at camp drilling today.

23rd
The bedding for the new arrivals, came in today. Good hot day. They are now said to coming on the 28th again, full of wogs too. They are now said to coming on the 28th again, full of wogs too. They are now said to coming on the 28th again, full of wogs too. There may be some "Orphans", (Australians) and from Singapore, so there may be some "Orphans", (Australians)
among them. It has been a long time since we have seen any of our
country-men, although we are happy enough, the 8 of us, among
ourselves.
Sugar ration tonight, but it is a bit light-on this time.

24th

Nice weather still. Nothing new. Working very steadily on a
5-ton chassis for the new Mack engine.

25th

Rather hot day. Nothing unusual happening these days.

26th

Same old bludge. Cloudy day. Changing wheels on No. 4.

27th

Raining very heavily this morning, but became fine during the
afternoon.
The Commandant has said that the new blokes are not comming now.
The ship never reached Japan. I do not know what they are going
to do with all the stuff. Apple ration tonight.

28th

Very hot day. Doing repairs to a Chev engine all day. I really
enjoy a cold shower on coming back to camp these days.
I wish some more letters would come in. Can't understand the
system of P.O.W. mail, it is so erratic, like Red Cross packages.

29th

Nice hot day. The old man keeps poking around these days, he is a
damned nuisance.

30th

Yasumi Day. Wood party during the morning. The guards were
changed today, the old lot were a good bunch. Very hot day.

***JULY***

1st

Fairly hot, inclined to rain. Started the Mack engine today.

2nd
Not so warm today. There was a bit of excitement tonight, when an Honorable gentleman was hit on the nose, with a piece of flying rock from the new railroad. Every day they blast rock out, and, it is only about 120 yards above the camp, rocks rain down on the roof making lots of holes and breaking windows. They got the civilian police in about it, anyway and started measuring distances. I think they will sue the construction company for damages. It broke the Nip’s nose, so they took him to the Kamaishi hospital.

3rd

Nice weather. Have been doing a few running alterations to the Mack all day. I had to go with it every where it went, and I do not like going in the mine.

4th

Working at the 550 today, not doing much though. We had a ration of cherries tonight, which was a surprise, about three parts of a bowl each. First I’ve tasted, in 3 years.

There seems to have been an alarm on today, sirens sounded and danger flags hoisted, but of course we were told nothing.

5th

Raining this morning, and kept up all day. The rice ration was cut today.

6th

Warm day. For several weeks now, the Nips have been drilling the top of the Mountain at the 700m level, and then they filled the holes with about 20 or 30 tons of dynamite. Last night they fired it, and blew the whole Mountain-top in, they had no idea what was going to happen, it felt like an earth quake.

7th

Not very busy these days. They say that the Commandant has gone to Tokyo on some business.

8th

Nothing unusual, still at the 550m. There are only 4 tractors left there now.

9th

Everything as usual.
10th

Yasumi Day. Wood party straight after tenko. Cleaning up the camp ready for a big inspection. Very hot day, wish we could swim somewhere.

11th

Work again, fiddling around with some generators.

12th

A General, in charge of all P.O.W. camps in Japan, came today. He inspected the mine and other work places. Issue of fags tonight.

13th

Another inspection today by a Tokyo Major, everything went off very well they say. Sid is off now, with bad ears again. Cool today.

14th

Raining heavily at 6.30am and continued all morning. Working at the 500m. Pulled down a Chev engine with a big end gone.

15th

Raining again, but eased off during the morning. Working at the 500m, finished the Chev. Went down inside the mine to the 450m level.

16th

Working on the 5 ton V8 today.

17th

Still the same.

18th

Another interpreter has arrived at the camp, he can speak English fairly well.

19th

The Commandant and the new interpreter came around the works today. Rained heavily this morning.

20th
Yasumi Day. Rain continued all day. Left alone today so able to have a good rest.

21st

Working at the 550m today. More rain.

22nd

Still raining, it can’t stop, I’ve never seen such a damned wet place, outside the tropics. My gas cape leaks like a sieve.

23rd

Did not rain today, but is very cold. "Hitler" is putting three new men on our job tomorrow, and I am trying to get Colin Hinds from the Denki gang, also. Our little job looks like it is about finished, too many will spoil it.

24th

Another misty cold day. The new blokes started out OK. We have a hot water system in the kitchen now, piped to the outside; it is very convenient for making tea etc.

25th

Has turned fine after the rain at last. Six men at the shop today. Some blankets came in to the camp today, ready for more new men coming. They are supposed to be coming from several different camps in Japan, so they may get here this time. Another cig. issue and tea.

26th

Very warm day. Did a lot of work, I have to do my own and the others, as well. Tired tonight. The Commandant is to be changed again. It came as a shock to us, as the present one is good, and we will be sorry to lose him.

27th

Warm day, bit cloudy. Working well again today, finished a tractor for the 450m. We are having a bit of trouble to get our rice ball supplement.

28th--

29th

Hot again. Half of my gang have been at the 500m and the other half, at the 550m today. The Commandants have been changed, and
the new one does not look too good.

30th

Very hot today. All the gang at the 550m, we are sent where ever there is work these days.

31st

Yasumi Day. Washed another blanket, the last, thank goodness. It helps get rid of some of the fleas. Had a good quiet day. Cigs and soap issue, also flea powder, which is no good. Allowed to write a good letter home of two pages, about 200 words. Guards changed.

***AUGUST***

1st

Hot day. The new guards are very bad. We have another new interpreter, so called, anyway. The guards raised hell tonight, first when somebody let go the gas from his stomach with a loud noise. When Capt Z. tried to intercept, he was pushed around a bit. He then rushed over in his night-shirt to get the interpreter, but that silly individual proved useless.

Anyone going to the benjo during the night, was made to salute the guard, whose beat was around the lavatories, I guess he did not appreciate the smell. What with the noise and the fleas, I could not sleep at all.

9th

Due to an inspection of personal property by the Commandant, it has been necessary to keep this book concealed between the above dates.

The inspection, ordered by the Comm., took place on the 3rd at a few hours notice. The interpreter told us that all our personal clothing and gear was to be taken away, while we were at work on the 3rd. Everything was laid out for this when we left, but on our return, we found that only some of our stuff had been taken. They even took some of their own issue clothing, thereby ruining all of their books and records of clothing issue. Before, every man had the same, now all are different.

One good thing that came out of it though, is that they made us throw all rags, tins and rubbish, out of the building.

The fleas are a real menace now, it is almost impossible to get to sleep for them. We are not the only ones though, the Nips have them also.

The guards have been particularly bad, causing much trouble at nights; hollering and shouting. The "Mad Tiger", who went away on
the first, came back tonight.

10th

Yasumi Day. Rained during the morning but stopped after lunch. Fairly quiet day.

11th to 22nd

Further period of unsettled disorder, owing to inspections. Shelves have been put each end of each bay, for our clothes to sit on, neatly folded, in accordance with Japanese Military regulations. This is a good idea, but being out of our kitbags they are exposed to all the dust and fleas.

The fleas, during this period have eased off a bit, I find that sleeping with a sarong on, gives some relief.

Everything has been in full inspection order since the 16th, when some officers from Tokyo were supposed to inspect, but they didn’t come until the 20th, hence our rest day was put off until the 22nd.

We have been living on sea weed mostly, they had to keep the other stores for the inspecting officers to look at. Also our rice ration has been low, the miners complained, but all they got was an order prohibiting them from speaking about it to anyone outside the camp.

The guards have eased up a bit since the “Tiger” came back. Last night, 3 Dutchmen were caught smoking in bed, after lights out, and were severely punished, being beaten to the ground with rifle butts, and kicked for 2 hours. Then they were made to stand to attention all night in front of the guard room. It really serves them right, as it is a dangerous habit in a timber building with everything inside made of timber, a fire could easily start.

We had a big clean-up in the barracks today (22nd), mats taken out, disinfected and swept.

23rd-28th

Usual period, things are going along as well as can be expected with this Commandant. Kept going fairly constantly at work these days, although I do not do so much now, more or less have to keep learning fast, the Nips have not got much heart in their work learning fast. I hope now, and they all say that the war will be over this year, I hope they are right, but then they may-be, for all I know.

29-30th

Has come a bit cooler now, especially at nights. At work we have been repairing a couple of Chevs. I am finding my algebra getting rather difficult these days. What with the library, and it, I have no time for anything else.

31st
Last day of August, and it is Yasumi Day. Special celebrations by the Dutch today, it is Queen Wilhelmina’s birthday. The galley turned out good chow and sweet tea, after dinner.

The guards change today, the present lot have been a bad crowd, but I think it is mainly due to the damned Commandant, he doesn’t like us a bit.

Has been a nice quiet day, did a bit of washing this morning. Have no dirty togs now, thanks to a bottle of caustic soda I managed to get hold of, hope the clothes do not fall apart through being washed in it.

***SEPTEMBER***

1944

1st-10th

Things are getting very bad, every day something turns up to dishearten us. We now, frequently have to cart wood on our backs, after coming in from work, also sawdust from the saw-mill up the road, for our stoves during the coming winter. It’s all a bit much, after having done a day’s work. Sometimes too, we have to clean up the camp.

Our own officers are partly to blame for our troubles. They do not complain on our behalf at all, in fact Lieut. Hoony leads them in their “Don’t care” attitude, I think. The Doctors will not let sick men stay in, unless they are nearly dead, although if they are Americans of course, they can remain in camp with the least little complaint of sickness.

Everlasting kit inspections are being imposed on us, and much of our clothing is being taken away, especially the good stuff. The Sneaker (New Commandant) is jealous of every stitch we have on our backs, his own clothes hang on him, like sacks.

I am starting to dread the coming winter, I only hope, that by some miracle, we are free by then, but it is probably only wishful thinking. The weather has already turned colder and it rains nearly every day. The food is not nearly as good in quantity or quality, as it used to be. The rice is pure red, there is so much other grain in it. It’s just like eating boiled wheat, only a bit worse, and it has a lot of blue metal in it also, which does not do our teeth much good.

11th-18th

This has been a very rainy period, we have been wet through several times coming home from work.

Talk about “Cheesed off” as the Tommys say, it’s not in it.

I have read a book from the library called “The Illustrious Prince”, it was a good forecast by that author.

There is another big inspection on the 13th of next month, they say that the office staff has gone to Tokyo regarding it today, 18th.

An Englishman was presented with some fags and sugar, for bringing in grass for the rabbits every night. There seems to be
very little fish in the country now, we seldom see it at all.

19th

Very nice sunny day after the cold spell. Work is not too bad these days, it is no strain.

20th

Yasumi Day. Nice and sunny. Issued with another blanket, which will come in very handy for the winter, always provided we are not out by then. Like hell! We have brought our winter's supply of wood in, from up on the mountain, to just outside the camp. We had to buy it; it cost us 500 Yen. There is no coal this year, in fact there is very little of anything at all here now; but there will be plenty of snow, we can be assured of that.

21st

There has been a purge on this type of book today, while we were at work. They found none, luckily. I bet the interpreter couldn't read mine anyway. Fortunately it goes everywhere with me, but it is a bit of a worry, I think if they ever found one, the owner would be taken away, and probably shot.

22nd

Very cold night but nice sunny day. A Gardening competition has been started between the English, Americans, Dutch, and us. Each nationality has a patch of ground, behind the new barracks. Jack Benson, our oldest member, is our entry. We reckon that he should be a very good gardener.

23rd

A batch of letters came in today, they say they are mostly British, but some for us Aussies, I hope that I get one. Some of the staff are back from Tokyo; Tigerhasi is not back yet.

24th

There are letters for all the English except 3, and all the Americans except 2, but they are not given out yet. We are eating whale-meat now, and horse heads in place of fish. There was some kind of Nip celebrations yesterday, they made us a big mogi each, in the galley.

25th

Nice day. Plenty of work these days, all tractors are U/S. Doing gardening, after tea, at nights now. Bit of a misfortune tonight. While carting contents from the benjo, the bucket broke on the
concrete path outside the washroom, and talk about a stink! Sparky and I were on the yo-yo pole.

The garden got called some nasty names, as well as the Nip idea of benjo fertilizer, including the transport arrangements!

26th

Cloudy weather. The interpreter has put out some letters, but he is so slow. I don’t know when he will get to mine, if there are any there for me. The latest letters received so far were written in July this year, air mail cards of some sort, which is very good.

27th

Rather cold. Everything the same. The Interpreter has not got to my number yet.

28th

At last I get some more mail, two from home and one from Dorothy; June, July, and August, last year. I feel very happy now, although it is very old news. I’ve read them several times already, but I will read them many more times yet, I know that. God, but I wish this war was over, a man is here, spending the best years of his life, in prison. But it is great to know, and to be reassured that my loved ones at home are thinking of me, and longing for me to get home. At least the suffering we are enduring has not been in vain, they are safe, and our country is safe now. That is some consolation to us.

At times lately, I have been very depressed, but thank God my health keeps up.

29th

Working in the stores all day, stock-taking. I am about in charge of everything up here now. What I say goes, and needless to say I work things accordingly! There is a fast running stream just outside the storeroom window, and a few irreplaceable items have been known to disappear into it.

30th

Yasumi Day. Cutting wood all the morning. Wrote a letter to Dorothy. Guards changed.

***OCTOBER***

1st
Getting very cold these days, otherwise things going along as usual. The new guards do not seem too bad as yet. Brought wood in tonight after work.

2nd

A little warmer tonight, after a cold day. I suddenly remembered a little birthday dinner tonight when I started to write, that it is my birthday. Wow! Quarter of a century, and what a birthday dinner; a tin of red rice and a bit of raw cabbage stalk; lovely I must say. But tonight we have had the first apple ration for a long time, 7 each.

Well, I will be out and home this time next year, I hope, and I bet I will be drunk, or have a terrible stomach ache, or both.

3rd

Wood party every night now, I carried 5 bundles in tonight, to save going out tomorrow.

4th

Raining nearly all day. The old man is at the shop again now. It is 3 years since I left home; I’ll never forget that day.

5th

Bit fresh tonight, otherwise the same. The first train ran right through to Ohasi on the new track, today.

6th

Cloudy, but not so cold. Some Dutchmen were beaten up tonight for not working properly. Autumn is well here now, the Mountains are beginning to get bare on top again, ready for their cap of snow.

7th

Rained all day and rather fresh. Clothes wet through tonight.

8th

Continued raining all day and last night, wet through again. Preparations are going on for another big inspection soon; they would drive a man mad. Have a cold coming on.

9th

Very fresh day. Cleaned up the camp tonight after work. Things are getting tough.

10th
The sun actually came out a little today. The inspection party did not arrive in time to visit the works today. Issued with a small hand towel to put over our dishes, on our shelves.

11th

The inspection went off all right, and they have gone away, thank goodness.

12th

Yasumi Day. Very cold. The new railway is being opened today for official use. They have got some nice looking engines, and quiet too, after the clanking old things that used to go along the old track.

Ohasi has a special Mountain Saints celebration today, big eat-up, and everyone yasumi.

13th

Raining a little. The damned Sneaker (Commandant) can't leave things alone these days, he keeps prowling through the barracks, looking into people's boxes and clothes.

( The reason for all these inspections and stealthy searches was to try to find out if we had a secret radio. There was no doubt that they thought we had one, but were unable to ever discover it, although they came very close at times. )

14th

Rather cold. Not much work today, have caught up again but not for long, I bet.

15th

Heavy frost, but nice warm day. Our camp dog "P", was killed by a heavy truck today. The Nip cook wants it be to put in the stew, the dirty cow. Very slack at work.

16th

Bit fresh, otherwise the same.

17th

Very disturbing day at work for us today. A Stick Merchant, (works official) got all sakkied up and came looking for trouble. He belted two of my men up, awfully, for supposedly talking on the job, then he gave me the worst walloping I've had for a long time. He said I should not let the men talk while working. This mongrel is a noted notorious cow when drunk, it is not the first time he has done it.
18th

Not feeling any worse for yesterday's episode. The cow tried to smooth around us today by offering us cigarettes. I refused, and thought for a while I would be in for another bout, but I hope it is all finished now. The old man, our boss at work, is quite upset, but of course he cannot do anything.

19th

Rainy day. Things have smoothed off now all right, I hope. The Commandant is away somewhere.

20th

Vasumi Day. Nice and sunny. Feeling very hungry, the grub is very light on these days. Another batch of letters came in yesterday, almost all written this year, and only bearing 25 words. Two of our boys were lucky, and they said that our post cards had been received in Australia. That eases our minds a bit.

21st

Fairly cold. Everything the same, as usual.

22nd

Nice day. Making myself a pipe. Two of my party stayed in today.

23rd

Rather cool, same old monotonous routine, day in, day out. God I am sick of it, but complaining does not help. It is just a case of "hang on in there", until something happens.

24th-26th

Weather has been fairly good. We have had an apple ration, 17 per man. Not much work, very slack.

27th

Cloudy, with a little rain. Sixty sacks of apples came in today, we should get a few of those anyway.

28th

Have a bit of work to do now. A lot of pork came in yesterday, so we eat meat again. I am not feeling very well tonight, running a high temperature.

29th
Stayed in today, have a fever. Slept all day, not feeling too bad tonight. Apple ration of 23 per man.

30th

Stayed in again, but feeling much better, fever has almost gone, stayed in bed all day.

31st

Normal Yasumi Day. Guards changed. I have an upset stomach now, so can't eat much. Wrote out a radiogram to be sent to Aussie, I bet it never gets there.

***NOVEMBER***

1944

1st

Went to work, but rather bad in the belly. A lot more letters came in today, I hope I get some.

2nd

Still a bit sick. Has been a nice sunny day. I have just finished reading a good book, Anthony Adverse, I must read it again, after I get out.

3rd

Warm weather for a wonder, most peculiar for this time of the year. Ration of 25 apples each tonight, I have to take them easy, or they make me crook.

4th

Weather getting a bit cooler. We are putting carbide generators on two of the tractors, because they cannot get petrol any more.

5th

Cold wet day. Had a blood test for TB this morning and an Xray this afternoon. Everyone is being done, because one bloke has contracted TB. The test we had the other day, showed that quite a few people were positive.

6th

Very cold, snow on the big Mountain this morning. Overhauling a V8 from the 500m. The crest came off my ring this morning, I have worn it continually since Mum gave it to me on leaving for overseas. I have the crest and will solder it on again. We are supposed to get our letters tonight.
7th

Very cold night, but the sun shone most of the day. I have got a damned sore jaw, I do not know if a wisdom tooth is trying to come through or not, but it feels like it.

8th

Has been a fairly cold day. We received our letters tonight. I have two from home and two from Dorothy, and two photos. I am so delighted, I do not know what to do. At first I could not recognise young Jack, I didn’t know who it could be, he has altered so much. Although Kathleen has not altered much, I did not recognise her immediately, but Dorothy and Esther have not altered a bit.

I am so thrilled with those snaps, and yet they make me feel so very homesick, I cannot express it, especially when I think of how much longer we must be apart. The latest letter was dated May this year, which is amazing, and they have received two of my letters, written from here, which is something, anyway.

I will not sleep tonight, I bet. At least one of my prayers has been answered.

9th

Fine sunny day. The Doctor says that my wisdom tooth, which is causing me so much agony, is coming out crooked. Not much work today.

10th

Yasumi Day. Raining here but snowing higher up in the Mountains, on all sides. We have one sawdust-burning stove going today. Had to bring wood in for the office, 3 bundles per man.

11th

Snowed last night, about 6” on the 550 level. Damned cold, I think winter has set in properly now. More wood carrying tonight.

12th-13th

Very cold days, a little snow and very cold winds. Bit of work. More wood tonight in the dark, and it is a very dangerous track down the Mountainside, even in daylight. Issue of flags tonight.

14th

Not so cold today. No wood party.

15th

Rather cold, everything as usual.
16th

Cold day, tried to snow. We are now reduced to bedrock in the chow line again, after a short period of good chow. It's either a feast or a famine in this country, mostly famine of course. The beans have to be kept for some silly damned inspection in the future, and we are living on pumpkin, cabbage and spud. They have other stuff in, but will wait until it goes rotten before using it. We have seaweed, preserved in some mustard-like muck for tiffin. One good thing, is that the rice ration is holding up very well. Went on sick parade tonight for my heartburn, it has been giving me hell lately, given some powders to take.

17-19th

Cool days but no snow. Things going normal. Work very slack still, which is a good thing, the less I have to do for them the better I like it.

20th

Yasumi Day. Wood-cutting on the Mountain all the morning. Nice sunny day, but of course the sun goes down here about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and then it gets cold. What I would give to be somewhere that one could see more than 2 miles, without seeing a hill or a mountain in front of oneself. I am sure that I must walk with a perpetual lean either forward or backward, from climbing or descending mountains. It is no good moaning though, I must just keep going, until something happens, which will, in God's good time. I think I have ceased to speculate on time, I only know time now, by the seasons, days have long since ceased to be anything but a certain amount of daylight, and then night comes and blessed forgetfulness in sleep, only to lead on to light again, and so on it continues, until one sees that Nature has changed things, and one knows that time has moved on.

21-22nd

Very cold, especially today, the wind is blowing a gale. Apple ration tonight.

23-28th

The weather has been exceptionally good for this time of the year. There have been preparations for an inspection, which went off OK today. Tobacco is almost nil now; it is a job to get a smoke of any kind. I never thought I would suffer so much without a smoke. It's almost agony at times. We are going to have a big "do" on the first of next month, to celebrate our foundation, the Nips say.
29th

Fairly cold today. The new Chinese prisoners are working on their camp-site at the 350m level.

Things are really going ahead for the celebrations, the first sports programme has been drawn up, and also a musical programme. The band is allowed to practise every night.

30th

Cold day. Much excitement tonight and speculation about tomorrow's festival.

***DECEMBER***

1944

1st

Well we have been here two years now. Rained all last night and continued all day. The sports were cancelled. Presentations in the morning.

The band played in the hospital, and to the assembly of Nips, Company officers, soldiers, and general hangers-on. They were all drunk.

We had a good concert to ourselves after tea, but it was stopped by the office staff, who were still drunk at 8 o'clock. The chow was the best we have ever had it, from the Nips anyway, plenty to eat. Big earth tremor tonight.

2nd

Cold day. More letters tonight, I got three this time, and three photos, my luck is in, I'm sure, just what I have been wanting. I cannot help but to keep looking at them.

3rd

Snowing today, rather cold. Working at the 500m for a while. Paid tonight 70 yen.

4-6th

Still more snow, otherwise the same. I was taken by the old man, to a place over the other side of the Mountain yesterday. We had often heard of the place, which they call "Sasi-nay".

I think the old man just wanted a day off and decided to take me along. It was a terrible climb, first, right up through the mine to the 700m level, where no other prisoners have ever been. There we came out of an opening, which led up a goat track to the top of the Mountain, and what a breathtaking view was to be seen from there.
Following a track down the other side for a short distance, I was amazed, to see a hut made of crude hand-trimmed timber, with a very steep roof, in which was an opening, with a set of steps extending to the ground outside. We climbed up these steps, through the opening, and then down another set of steps to the floor inside.

Ochial San, "The Old Man", explained to me that most of the year the snow was so deep that the only way of entering the hut was through the roof, as we had done. There was about 18" of snow piled up against the walls then, and the winter was only just starting.

Inside, sitting at a rough table, there were several small old men with long straggly beards, eating their midday meal. The old man said that they were Mountain men, who had never been off the Mountain in their lives. He was barely able to converse with them, their dialect was quite different to his. Of course I was unable to understand them at all, but I was certainly the centre of attraction. I'm sure they had never seen a European before. They seemed to be asking Ochial San all sorts of questions, continually pointing at me.

As we had brought our own bintos, we started to eat as well. They must have thought that my little bit was not too good, as they piled me with rice and some sort of preserved vegetables. I thought this was very nice of them, and I had a good feed, while they looked on.

Apparently these Mountain men do something up there concerning the mine; what it is, I do not know. After our lunch we left the place and returned back to the 550 M. again through the mine. It was a very interesting day.

7-9th

Has been quite a bit of snow and fairly cold too. There is a rumour of Red Cross parcels coming in for Christmas, they sound fairly authentic.

10-12th

The stoves are all in now, and it makes things nice and warm inside the barracks. Have been extremely hungry lately, they say that the R/C is still coming.

13th

Yasumi Day. Blanket inspection this morning. Very cold outside. Finished the concert tonight, Sparky and I came second with Sparky's silhouette drama, called "Dr. Epapley". We received 10 fags for our prize. This morning I tried to play a guitar and found that I couldn't. I felt so disgusted with myself, after having played for 2 years at home. I'll never try here again.

14-15th
Very cold days. The old man is back from his holiday. There is talk of Christmas and chow already.

16th

Snowed a lot today

17th

The Red Cross parcels have landed here at last, 575 packages they say, Boy! what a Christmas we will have this year. Everyone is so excited tonight, our spirits have gone up 100%. Apple and fag ration also tonight, I will not sleep much, I bet.

18th

Cold, a little snow. A Javanese-Dutchman was caught drawing 2 rations of rice for breakfast today, the sly cunning black devil.

20th

Snowed fairly heavily all day, about 15” at the 550 level, the wind has been driving it a bit, too. Fags, frog fuzz and mandarins, rationed tonight, they are really treating us well just now.

21-22nd

Snowed again. I have tried to save half a loaf of bread for Xmas, but after keeping it for a day, I had to eat it tonight. It is hard, trying to save any food these days.

23rd

Very cold. The rumours about the show for Xmas day are really good, the galley says we will get a really nice do.

24th

Fairly nice day. We received a Red Cross parcel each, on getting in from work tonight. Boy! What a happy moment, children opening their Xmas stockings are not in the hunt with us. Everyone is half mad with joy, smoking American cigarettes, and opening their Xmas stocklings were extinguished and Halfway through the proceedings all lights were extinguished and we sang Silent Night, and several other carols.

It was very beautiful, and I am sure everyone’s mind was on
home and loved ones there. A Catholic service was held at midnight.

25th

The third Christmas in Japan, and by far the best. Everyone is happy, and in real Xmas spirit. It is now 4 pm. Has been a cold day outside, but no snow. Inside it is nice and warm.

What a vast difference from the first Christmas, when all we had to eat was a small loaf of stale bread.

For breakfast today we had sweet beans, white rice and bread. In between then and tiffin, coffee and raisins, from our boxes, plus smoking many Chesterfields and Camel cigarettes. Recorded music through the amplifiers kept us in a happy mood.

We Protestants, held a nice little service at 10.30am, presided over by Dr. Tucker and Lieut. Humble. Dinner consisted of nasi-goring and meat monjews and an apple. We eight "Orphans" had a tea party during the afternoon, meat paste sandwiches, washed down with apple cider, provided by Sparky and Fred, a very nice party, with music played from Schmidt's records.

My thoughts are all of home today, everyone thinks it will be the last Christmas here, it must be. I am very glad of my photos, I can't keep from looking at them today, and wondering what the folks are doing.

It is now 6 pm I could hardly eat any tea, I am absolutely full. Tea consisted of white rice and thick stew with large meatballs in it, also a bowl of apple stew. There will be a little community singing tonight to finish off one of the happiest days I have spent as a P.O.W.

26th

Getting over Xmas OK. Have been in the mine nearly all day, doing running repairs.

27-29th

Extremely cold weather. A Ford engine froze up and busted the cylinder head and water tank. Much cooking going on in the barracks, with the Red Cross food.

30-31st

Nearly a thousand letters have come in, things happen in heaps when they happen these days. The weather is very cold, but we do not notice it very much, with this R/C food to eat. Wrote a letter home.

Well this is the last of another year in the boon, it has been the best yet, if there could be a best; and I think the next will see us out easily. We had an air raid alarm yesterday morning, which lasted for an hour, and we could not leave the camp, for that length of time. Although we saw no planes, some people reckon they heard them.