





August 6th

Mr J. Lawrence
93 Macclesfield St.

ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΗ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ
— ΧΑΝΙΩΝ —
ΑΔΕ. όριθ. 65505
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Ειδικότης Μαχη Κρυψης
*Αριθ. 940.542.1/LAN

Burslem
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffs

TO THE MAYOR OF CANEA (CRETE)

Dear Sir,

I send these pictures hoping you will like them, and accept them as a gift. I have kept them all this time hoping to bring them myself one day, but the passing years have not been very kind to me.

I wish you to know that these beautiful water colours were done by one of the boys during his stay in a prisoner of war camp in Germany.

To complete it all for you, or any of your friends who may be particularly interested, I have written a very interesting 52,000 word story which I will send to you, if it be your wish.

Enclosed are a few photos of friends

which you may recognize and they tryed
Ryze and my Pal, as

Jim "WITH THE PICCOLO" AND LOUIE

Yours sincerely
J. Lawrence.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your letter of the 12th
and very pleased to know the color co-
lours have reached their rightful place &
I am sure they are worthy of it.

You may keep the family Photos, and hope
you enjoy reading about them in the
manuscript, and get as much pleasure from
it as I did when writing it. May be
some of the recognized persons on the
photos will be able to tell you more
about me. Please remember me to them
and hope they are keeping well, and my
greatest wish is to see the story published.

All I ask for is copy in book form, and
my profits barely would help the Mayastery
to carry on its good work. Please remember
me to George Michulis who was the security
officer and policeman at our depot situated

23 Sept. 1959
Ref 138 Mayor of Canoeed 93 Macclesfield St.
at his Crete several times Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent
He and Greece at (Stoke-on-Trent)
I have posted the manuscript to you hoping
you will receive it any day now.

Dear Sir, Yours sincerely

Many thanks for your letter of Sept. 12th
and am very pleased to know the water co-
lours have reached their rightful place, I
am sure they are worthy of it.

You may keep the family photos, and hope
you enjoy reading about them in the ma-
nuscript, and get as much pleasure from
it as I did when writing it. May be
some of the recognized persons on the
photos will be able to tell you more
about me. Please remember me to them
and hope they are keeping well, and my
greatest wish is to see the story published.

All I ask for is copy in book form, and
my profits would help the monastery
to carry on its good work. Please remember
me to George Michalis who was the security
officer and policeman at our depot situated

on the quayside at Canea, and he has
a daughter named Coula. We had tea
at his house several times and they know
me and my Pal as (Jim and Lewis)
I have posted the manuscript hoping
you will receive it any day now.

Yours sincerely
J. Lawrence.

Σημ: Τα πρωτότυπα τῶν ἐπιτομῶν καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες
ἀσπίδες βρισκόμενα εἰς ἀρχειογραφίαν νῦν ἀπὸ
138/12-9-1959 καὶ 145/8-10-1959 (φάκελος Τυροῦν)

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INTRODUCTION

Here is a very interesting Prisoner of War story of the Second World War, full of exciting, humorous and sometimes almost tragic incidents. Life in several of the noted Prisoner of War Camps of Germany is described with attempt to explain the hardships and general routine during a number of years behind barbed wire. The many activities of the Camps during the day and night-time, sometimes at great risk, are all explained in full.

The human problem and work of the Red Cross is stressed with great importance, giving much food for thought.

The ingenuity of Prisoners of War was used to such a degree as to become almost an art, and the skill in hobbies was something to be admired. Some of the most fantastic schemes were put into operation and some measure of success obtained by these ways and means.

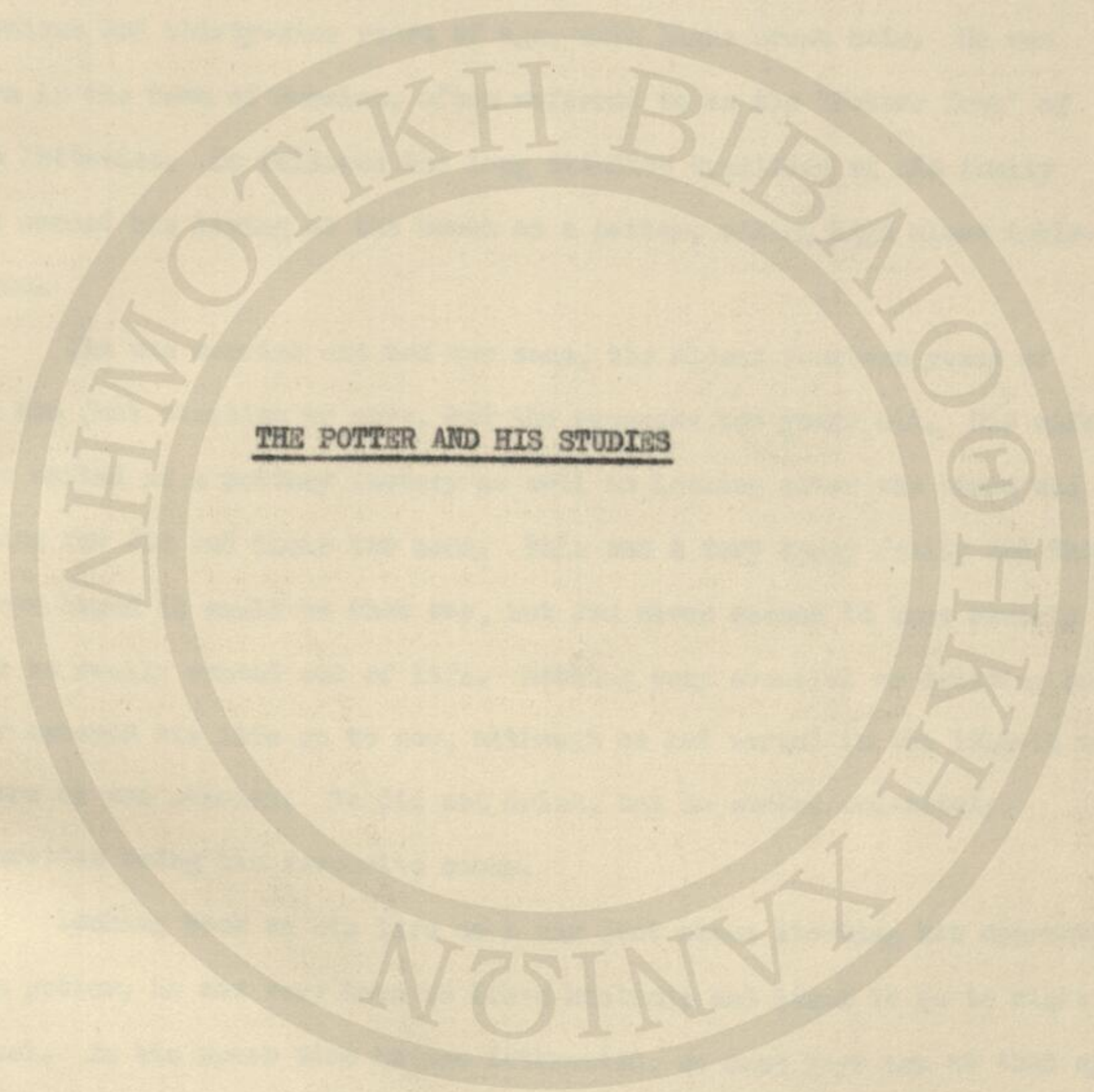
Health and fitness was the first concern, especially there, where the facilities for cleanliness and hygiene were not so good.

To keep mind and body active is a problem in itself, and comradeship with the other fellows well being was enacted everywhere. Art and Culture were never lost sight of, even under most trying conditions, and all this was necessary to keep up the morale.

Small voluntary organisations at home working in close contact with the Red Cross, attended to the Prisoners' domestic problems, giving that extra courage necessary while undergoing such an ordeal, until Repatriation and Rehabilitation completes the story.

This story is compiled from the Diary and the Autobiography of one who was closely connected with all that happened in some of the interesting, and sometimes almost tragic, events.

Fictitious names have been instituted and additional characters invented to make this novel even more interesting for those who would read it.



THE POTTER AND HIS STUDIES

Jim Rawlance was a fine upright and honest man of almost athletic physique and thirty-nine years of age, with light brown hair. He was born in the town of Burslem, often referred to as the "Mother Town" of the Potteries. He followed the long standing tradition of his family and earned his living at the bench as a potter, making high class table-ware.

Jim was married and had two sons, the oldest fourteen years of age and just starting to work, and the youngest two years old. His wife also worked at a pottery factory as well as looking after the house and caring for Jim and their two sons. This was a very happy family and they always hoped it would be that way, but Jim never seemed to know exactly what he really wanted out of life. Nothing very eventful or exciting had ever entered his life up to now, although he had served in the 1914-18 war before he was married. He did not drink, but he smoked moderately, cigarettes being his favourite smoke.

Looking back on his life as a boy just about starting his apprenticeship as a potter, he was very keen to learn his trade and liked to go to night school. In his spare time he was interested, as most boys are at that age, in outdoor life such as scouting, camping, hiking, skating and physical fitness. He soon became the leading boy in the acrobatic and tumbling squad at the local branch of the Y.M.C.A.

Jim was born on the second of January, 1900 and in the year 1914 Jim was fourteen years of age, with the First World War starting just when he was having his first holiday by the seaside in camp with the boy scouts.

From now on things began to change. The older apprentices went into the forces and also did many young men of the neighbourhood, and wartime restrictions were impayed making things a little more difficult for everybody. Jim now became a little restless and was more or less one by himself for the next two or three years. He tried several times to get into the forces under age, and finally succeeded in January, 1918. He took part in the fighting at Arras and St. Quinton and was in the great push of 1918.

December, 1918 saw Jim back again in civil life and searching the five towns for a job. The change-over from wartime to peacetime was taking place with much unemployment everywhere and Jim had much difficulty in finding work. This was not to his liking and he at once decided to go into the forces again, if only for a short term of two years. This took him to the Middle East helping to quell the Riots in Cairo, and up in the desert at Khartoum. Jim was always one of the studious type and he decided to learn music and play the flute.

Back home again almost two years to the day Jim began to settle down and earn a living at the bench, and in two years time he was married and getting a home together. Home life to Jim and his wife was all that a young couple could wish for, but Jim was not quite satisfied with his future at the bench. Time and time again a foreman's job presented itself, but Jim, although a very experienced bench hand, lacked that self confidence and technical knowledge necessary to make a success of it. While still at the bench over a number of years, opportunities like this passed him by until at last, if not perhaps too late in life, he decided to go back to school

and try to make himself equal to the task.

This was a very bold venture, and he knew it as he was now thirty-six years of age, although he looked much younger, and he always knew that he had youth and vitality on his side. The knowledge gained by studies would be very useful and would help make his future more secure. All Jim's leisure hours were now taken up with his music, school and home studies, and with the care and attention of his wife the results were very promising. It was hard going for three terms, and Jim had the courage and ability to match it and eventually reached and passed the advanced stage. Science, chemistry and physics was becoming more interesting as his studies continued, and any spare time was taken up by brushing up his English and Mathematics.

One thing which Jim had not bothered about was the world situation, and the daily newspapers were continually telling him that the threat of war was here again, and the year was nineteen thirty-nine. This affected his job and work at the factory slowed up, putting many operatives on short time or out of work. On the two previous occasions when this kind of thing happened, Jim found the answer by going into the forces. Must it be a third time? This question was often in his mind during the following few weeks, and he explained it to his wife who had helped him so much with his studies. The question was then dropped until the World War II was with us, and then something had to be done about it. No-one was more surprised than Jim when he arrived at the local recruiting centre on the morning of September 11th, 1939, and found his old Regimental Sergeant Major in charge of the recruiting and enrollments.

"Don't tell me you have come to join the old Regiment again, Rawlance"

Jim said he would like to very much.

Here the Sergeant Major reminded him that he was past the age limit, but would take him as a Clerk. This sent Jim home more or less a disappointed man, but at the same time pleased that he had met an old comrade, having a chat about old times in the same Regiment. This "too old at thirty-nine" gave Jim much food for thought for the next few days to come. Now he found himself playing a dual role of age and experience versus youth and knowledge. The thought of going into the forces again was going to affect the whole family and surely they were entitled to some consideration?. After much discussion with his wife, she decided that the best way to help Jim now was to let him make up his mind for himself and she would abide by it. This was not easy as Jim knew from experience that the Government would make up his mind for him, should the war last for any length of time.

Everything now seemed to take on a new aspect. His strong points were becoming his weakness and he wondered if the spirit of adventure would turn out to be his undoing. Going into the forces now would mean the curtailment of all his studies and all that they meant to him. This brought Jim back to earth and face to face with the real facts of family life, its worth and its purpose. Jim had his failings as well as his good points, and the streak of wanderlust was always prominent in his character, as was his indifference to responsibility. Just at a time like the present, when his family needed him mostly, he would be away in the Forces. His mind was torn between his home life, his studies, the final examination and his love for outdoor life, and no matter how he tried he just could not get these important things in quite the proper perspective. He would look at these problems in terms of mathematics and as being out of proportion in size

and importance as compared with what he had in mind. Jim fingered the pages of a book which he was writing on the "Art of Potting" which he hoped to see published one day, and one on which he had spent a lot of time. Must he complete the book now or leave it until he came back from the war? He read one or two of the first pages which told the object of this book to be to help a person following this particular employment as a pottery maker. Practical efficiency was aimed at, in simple, non-technical wording, which could be easily understood by the youngest bench hand. Health must be a first consideration - being clean in all work will help towards this. Remember that dust is dangerous and that dry clay goes to dust, so do all you can to prevent it polluting the atmosphere. Take as your motto "cleanliness is the first step to health" and much will be accomplished. Make full use of all facilities available for hygiene, not forgetting to encourage others to do the same. Go about your work in a happy mood and quiet manner and everyone you meet will be better off for knowing you. At this point Jim closed the book as it lay on his writing desk, and strolled over to his book case which was stocked with books and literature of all kinds. Half conscious of what he was doing, he picked out a world map and glanced at it, probably in connection with the war fronts, and then commenced to go through a pile of papers which he had written on various subjects including small articles which he was hoping to see published in the Works Magazine. Here are a few extracts:-

WHY A WORKS CANTEEN?

Think back a few years, and you will find that it came into being when the boss and the worker saw that it was necessary to have some place where one could sit down at a table and eat in comfort, away from the grime and noise of the workshops and machinery, and for the office worker to get

away from the desk and the clatter of the typewriters, to feel relaxation for a short while. As time goes by the canteen comes more and more a necessity and finds its way into the social life of a worker, not just as a canteen but as a place to hold meetings on any topic from works problems to family welfare. Much can be said for its possibilities, but it all takes time and a lot of hard work by the organisers and all who are interested. Who knows? It may be possible to have your laundry done here or to hold a clinic and welfare centre. The dancing, social evenings, entertainments, music-while-you-work, first aid and discussions etc. are only the beginning of what is possible with a little good-will and enthusiasm. As your interest grows, so does the centre thrive, and this sounds good to everyone of us and costs very little compared with its benefits. Now after our little gossip, let us take a seat at the table to enjoy an ever-welcome cup of tea which brings the works canteen straight back into its own, and then let us settle down to the real problem, hoping for some measure of success.

Another article reads "FAIENCE AND FIREPLACE PLUS":-

Faience, as we know, has its roots deep in Italian art and is the work of the sculptor and architect. Several good examples of this work can be seen in Westminster Abbey, Magdalen College, Oxford, and also in some of the stately homes of England. The Tudor Arch is an outstanding example and is usually accompanied by the Tudor Rose. Today, through the medium of our modellers and designers, and in combination with a vast range of fireplace tiles, the famous Tudor Arch fireplace can be seen in many working men's homes and in our public buildings. To own one of these fireplaces is a real luxury indeed with all the advantages which only modern science can incorporate such as conduction, convection and radiation

of heat, plus deflection and diffusion, which all adds up to maximum efficiency and economy. Even today we see nothing so picturesque as in the coaching days, depicting the Tudor Arch leading into the courtyard of an old English Mansion. Many surrounds available today have their history deeply embedded in old English art, plus a vast range of colours to match any colour scheme, whether it be stately home or humble cottage. Almost any type of fuel can be used in the modern tiled fireplace and so enhance its efficiency and beauty and the modern trend calls for faience and tiled fireplaces incorporating all the latest developments giving warmth, comfort and beauty in abundance.

As the Works' Directors had a large expansion afoot, Jim saw it very appropriate to write the following short article "SPREADING ITS WINGS".

How delightfully interesting it is to watch a young fledgling finding its wings for the first time, with the mother bird close by seeing that all is well, and giving help when needed. Later comes the day when the fledgling finds itself with a beautiful plumage and lots of preening to be done. This may be followed by a lovely note and then perhaps a song to let us know that it has succeeded in all its efforts. The time has now come for the fledgling that was, to take flight and streamline the far reaches of the world with a purpose in life. So like this is the works magazine, just a fledgling with a purpose! It needs to be guided through its early stages to follow the progress and purpose of the beautiful wall tiles. Also like the crystal growing in the laboratory test tube, to produce the quality and beauty of the wall tiles and have them world known. A project of such magnitude is no easy task, and needs to be guided like the fledgling to succeed in its devoted purpose. Another article read "LOOK AND THINK TWICE"

An accident makes us all think twice. First we think of the person involved, and secondly of how it could have been avoided, but it is too late when the accident has happened! To try to put it into words would fill whole volumes, and as this is intended for the works magazine, we will concern ourselves mostly of works accidents and accidents at work. Accidents usually occur so suddenly that a person rarely has time to look or think twice, so we have to be content to do all we can to prevent an accident, and in so doing we hope to avoid all the complications which automatically follow, such as pain and suffering, loss of wages, worry and lots of other items where a personal injury is involved, not to mention loss in production, perhaps at a critical stage, during the period a person is away from work. Accidents at work are so varied that they cannot all be grouped or listed complete in rules and regulations, and no-one can give definite advice on how or where an accident will take place. What most of us can do is to take a little more care than is usual and think twice. A favourable suggestion is always welcome, so is a helping hand. Remember that a pound from a donkey is as good as a pound from a horse. No-one enjoys seeing an accident occur, or to be involved, and we would be failing in our duty if we did nothing to try and prevent accidents, so "LOOK AND THINK TWICE."

One more paper which Jim went through was as follows:-

THE MODERN BATHROOM

The modern bathroom takes pride of place in any home today, and rightly so! A tiled bathroom, furnished with porcelain accessories of which there is a great variety to choose from, is the correct answer. The idea is to be able to wash the whole place down from top to bottom and to damage nothing, using a hose if necessary. These modern furnishings

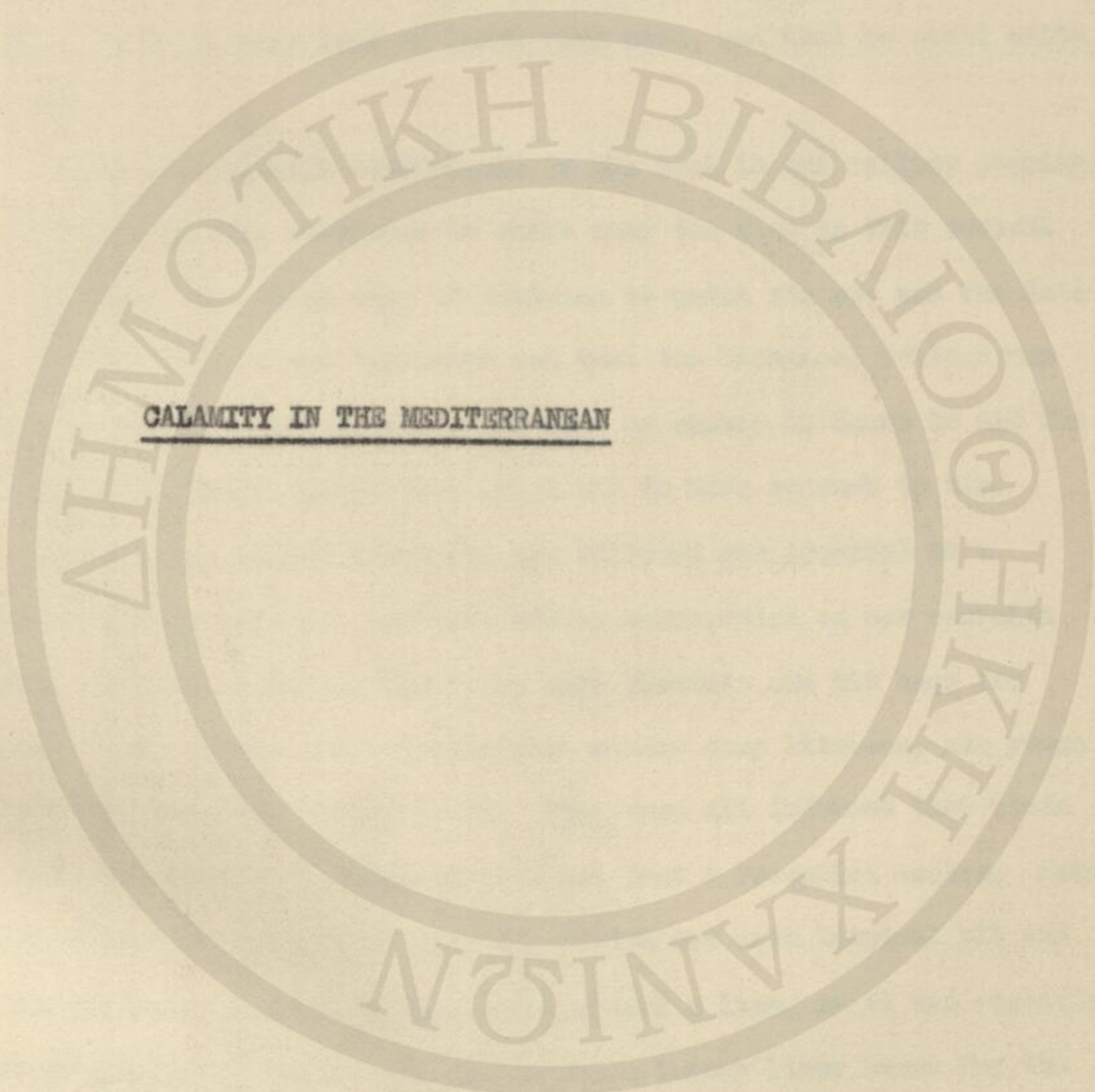
plain, modern or contemporary, when used to the best advantage, and if built in, become part and parcel of an exquisite bathroom, pleasing to the eye, and a feeling of something worthwhile accomplished. How well do we remember the slipper bath or the washtub on the kitchen hearth with all the inconvenience - the only alternative was to pay a visit to the public baths. What a grand improvement in so short a time, and how welcome it is for the pleasure and the satisfaction it gives. Some fine examples of ceramic art play an important role in the production and development of the modern bathroom, especially when it comes to colour schemes, "do-it-yourself" schemes, designing and furnishing. The non-slip floor tile is worth mentioning here on account of its tendency to prevent accidents so common to bathrooms, and with the bath, the washstand, shower and toilet all properly fixed then you have a room in the house worthy of its name. Still thinking hard as he walked away, Jim wondered whether or not he was too ambitious, or was it that he was desperate to make up for the lost years by making a late start in his studies, and now found he had more than he could cope with. The fact is, Jim loved to write and after seeing one of his first short articles published it inspired him to greater efforts. Now he was to leave it all, for how long?

Jim looked down at his feet as he paced the floor between his writing desk and book-case, thinking of his years of experience at the bench where he made almost everything from high class tableware, bathroom accessories, wall tiles and sanitary wares. Yes! pottery was in his blood. It was much easier for Jim when last he went into the forces as he was much younger and had no family ties. Then there was no war and he would be back in two years. Today the project was quite different indeed. Should there be no war on the

idea of going away would probably never have entered his head. It seemed like his decision was troubling him, and now he looked really worried. Should the war only last a year or so he would be over forty when he came back, and this "over forty" was a topic much talked of especially when applying for a job. How best could he explain it all to his wife without hurting her feelings, or shaking her confidence in him. Neither Jim nor his wife discussed family affairs with anyone outside their own family circle, and Jim knew he could not get the answer to this problem from his slide rule, but at the same time he did think a talk with his old Sergeant Major would be worthwhile, so away he went. They talked about the army laboratories as a part solution, and Jim would at least be in touch with something in which he was particularly interested. A quick glance through a few papers by the Sergeant Major showed Jim to be too old.

The Sergeant Major then turned to face Jim and commenced to give some advice. "Being as you are keen to get into the forced again" he said, "why not sign up as a clerk? Later the age limit for the laboratories may be extended and you can apply for a transfer." Jim listened and then went home to explain it all to his wife in almost the same words. After hearing all he had to say she nodded her head in approval and turned away to hide her tears.

Within a few days time Jim was on his way by train to the south of England to be billeted in a schoolroom in a village near Southampton.



CALAMITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

He had said "Goodbye" to his wife Gertrude and the two boys Jimmy and Don on the doorstep of their home, where he kissed them all saying he would be back home on leave very soon, and that he would write regularly.

As he made himself comfortable in his seat in the railway carriage he opened the morning newspaper to while away the time on this several hours journey. The first item of interest to catch his eye was the date to remind him that it was September and that the Technical College was commencing the 1939-1940 Session, and that he should be there to sit for his Diploma and final examination which was to mean so much to him.

The village school where Jim was billeted was acquired as a temporary wartime measure, and soon became overcrowded as new recruits arrived. They all slept on the floor with blankets and kit bags for pillows. Food, served and prepared from mobile camp kitchens, was rough but good and there was plenty of it. They were all informed that their stay there would be very short as this was just a reception centre. Sure enough, within two weeks they were all fitted out with tropical kit and were on the train to Southampton, going aboard a liner as it was receiving a coat of camouflage paint. To Jim it was a luxury liner bound for the Middle East and all the boys were aboard by teatime. Food was served in grand style with the same kind of service one would get in a first class hotel, and this was the first time Jim had slept in a bed since leaving home. The next morning, to his great surprise, the luxury liner was out at sea, and in convoy with several more large liners with destroyers as

escorts. According to rumours, this was a very fast convoy and carried personnel to Gibraltar and Malta as well as to the Middle East, and was really showing its paces as it reached the Bay of Biscay. Here one could understand how these liners became known as Ocean Greyhounds, and Jim stood on deck enjoying the sight of a lifetime, and was settling down to enjoy this trip and make the best out of this opportunity of a Mediterranean cruise. This must have been one of the very first convoys of the war to the Middle East, and the first stop was Gibraltar where one of the ships left the convoys and slowly entered the harbour. After about two hours the remainder of the convoy started to move again on the next stage of its journey to Malta. Most of the boys were on deck to see the world famous Rock of Gibraltar fade away in the distance. To pass the time the boys played deck games and organised concerts, and of course there was the usual life-belt drill each day. As Jim had been this way before he was able to point out places of interest as they saw them at different times on the North African coast, and would talk of places which the boys may be able to visit when they reached their destination.

Everything went well until the convoy was about twenty four hours from Malta, when a calamity occurred. It happened one late afternoon when Jim was resting on his bed and several of the boys were playing a game of cards. Jim kept taking a look at one ship in the convoy which seemed to be coming straight towards their ship. A few seconds later when Jim looked through the porthole again he could see the bows of a ship almost on top of them, and still coming forward. Jim immediately

jumped up from his bed and shouted out loud, "Look out, we are going to be rammed!" Sure enough there was a terrific crash. The ship rolled to the sound of broken crockery and glass as they all rushed on deck to take up positions at their respective emergency stations. Jim was just in time to see the stern of the other ship swing alongside and smash the lifeboats, damaging the handrail on that side of the ship. It all happened so suddenly, and then it dawned on Jim that he was the only one on deck without a life-jacket. He had to make a hurried return to his bunk and get one. Everyone stood at their allotted stations on deck while the captain and officers of the ship made an inspection to ascertain the amount of damage done. The ship had now taken on a list, and the captain announced there was no immediate danger, and the ship would be able to proceed to Malta under its own steam but at a reduced speed, and that we must keep off that side of the ship. Fortunately no-one was seriously hurt, and the ship was taken straight to the floating dock to be hoisted clear of the water with all personnel still aboard on reaching Malta. Later in the day everyone was allowed to go ashore for a few hours, and from the quayside a great hole could be seen torn in the bows of this ship. With a few hours to spare most of the boys visited the Grand Harbour and shopping centre of Velledda, and on returning were transported to another ship to proceed on the next stage of the journey to Egypt.

This ship, like the previous one, was a luxury liner with swimming bath on the lower deck and the journey was continued in the same grand

style, only to end too soon at Port Alexandria, Egypt. Here a small party, including Jim, boarded a train bound for Cairo, and finished the journey by motor lorry to a base camp situated just outside Cairo. Many of the fellows by this time had become firm friends and were now working together in the workshops or stores. Jim got on very well with a chap called Algie, a nice fellow, good looking and with a fine disposition. They had much in common. Both Jim and Algie were interested in music. Algie played the piano and Jim played the flute and they would often play together in the canteen while others sat around enjoying it.

After a few months at this base camp, Jim and Algie planned to go on leave together, and later found it not possible because of their duties. It turned out that Jim must take his leave first and when he returned Algie would take his leave, and this was the last time Jim saw Algie who was taken ill while on leave and died. Shortly after losing his pal, Jim found new interest in joining a Hill Billy Band which was organised in the unit. This band turned out to be very popular and was a great success. As well as being a good entertaining band it was a colourful spectacle with full rig of cowboys' outfits and was a credit to all who took part in it. Jim wanted to let those at home know just how he was doing, and of all the places of interest he had visited since arriving in the Middle East. He found a quiet, suitable place where he would not be disturbed, and commenced to write:

"Dear Gertie,

Here is the letter I promised as I feel like writing and I

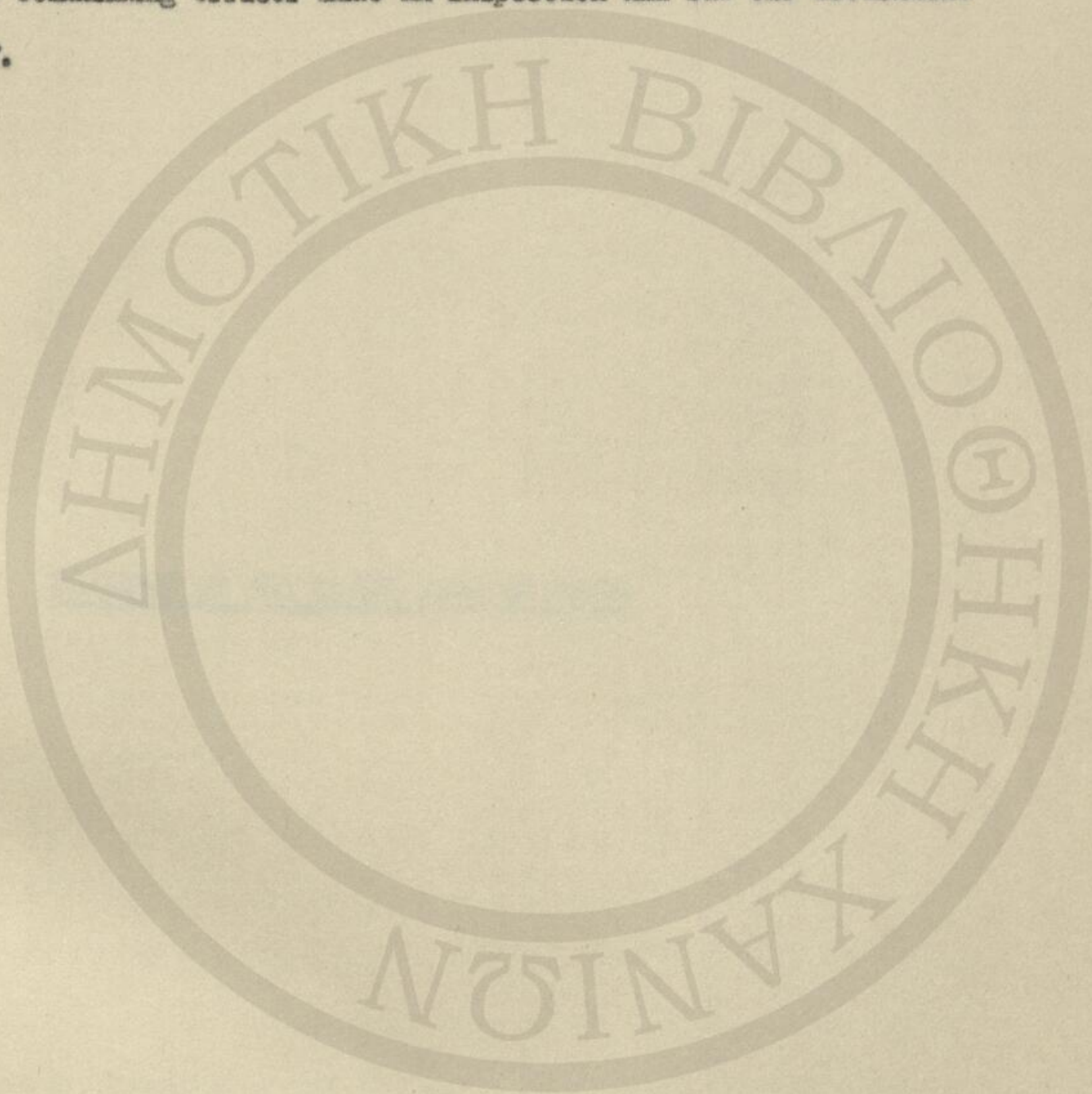
have the time to spare. Hoping I can do it without giving the censor cause for complaint. I am sitting by a palm tree and watching sundown which is a beautiful sight, with a gentle breeze scented with that peculiar aroma typical of an eastern country. I have always wanted to tell of this, but could never find the time to explain it in the proper words. Now for my work! I am working in a large storehouse with a number of natives and we get on together very well indeed. The number varies each day according to the amount of work on hand. They all know me as Mr. Jim and I get to know each one of them by their name, especially those who work with me regularly. They say I must never go away. When they see me coming each morning they run towards me and grasp my hand, sometimes both my hands, and sometimes even kiss the back of my hand, and I have now got used to it. Their ages range between eighteen and forty years, and what peculiar names - Aghad, Azzuse, Ramzii, Abdul only to mention a few of them. Most of these workers have never been to school and cannot read or even write their names. I had fun the other day trying to explain to some of them how to tell the time by a wrist-watch. On reaching the storehouse each morning I find it nice and tidy with the floor washed, the office well-cleaned and dusted even down to the ash-tray which is nicely polished, and now we set to work, sorting and packing the stores. As the day goes on, the workers get a little tired as the weather is a little too warm, and as I walk around the place it is usual for me to find one or another of them fast asleep. I just wake him with a gentle splash of cold water

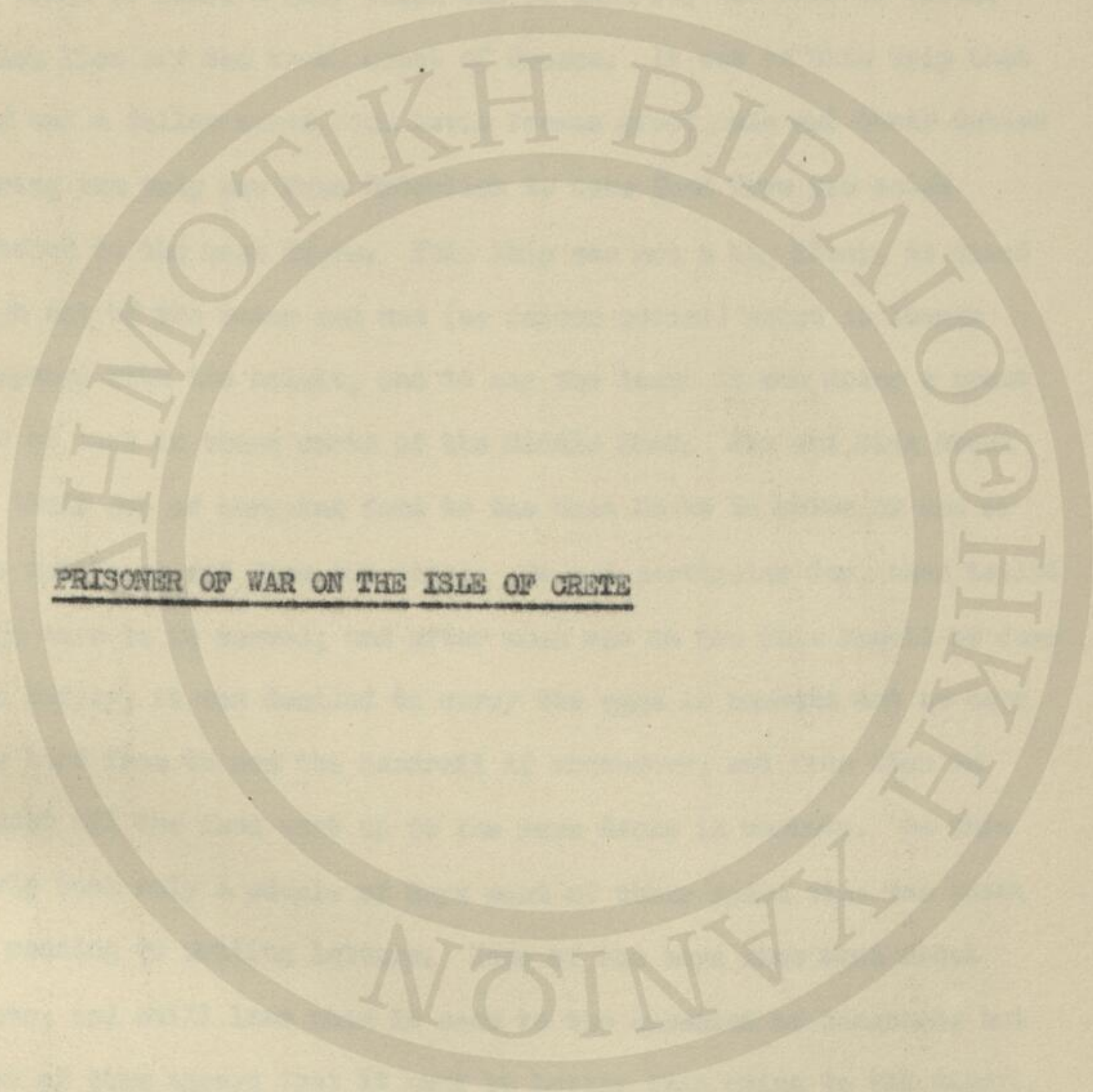
and he then runs all around the place wanting to do all the work so as not to lose his job. As I understand their language a little I get to know something of their family and home troubles, and I have to get so many wood splinters from their hands that I have bought a pair of tweezers. One of these workers named Aghad, came up to me one day looking very sad indeed, and I felt very sorry for him when he told me his baby boy, aged nine months, had died. He said he also had a little girl aged four years and named No-Ah-Nyar. I bought a pair of sandals for her when I was on leave, and when I told him who they were for he could not get home quick enough. The wages are rather small and they get paid each fortnight, but their food and rents are very low. As for clothing - they wear very little and I give them all my cast-offs for which they are very grateful. Towards the end of the day when the work is done and they have time to spare, they clean my boots and buttons and even chase the flies while I sit writing. One of them made a lump come to my throat one day when he told me he prays to his God that I and my family shall have plenty of everything, and may we never be ill. Every time they bring a letter to me they kiss it before handing it to me, thinking it is from you and they often ask about you and the two boys. I dare not show your photo or the boys' photos as I am sure that I would never get them back. I have a few photos and will send them later. When time permits these workers try to show me how to play their games, and oh! what fun. When I send one of them to get a mineral drink and he brings the wrong kind, it is never too much trouble

for him to run all the way back with it. Whenever I say I want to buy a present for you, they all want to go and get it, saying they can get it cheaper, and sometimes I have to stop them fighting over it. Well Gertie, as the day's work comes to a close I go to my sleeping quarters, and as I stroll away I turn round and see them giving a wave of the hand and shouting Cheerio, Goodnight Mr. Jim, Cheerio. I dare not let them know I shall soon be leaving for another station. And now my dear I must give you and the boys my Cheerio, Goodnight. Yours Jim."

Things now began to move very fast here at this base camp and the pulse quickened each day. All leave was stopped due to trouble in Albania with the Italians and Greeks, and this meant to us more work and duties for all. More troops and equipment arrived until it almost reached a wartime basis. Cairo was now having its blackouts as a precautionary measure because the trouble in Albania was now spreading to Greece, and when it became known that the Germans were invading Greece more and more bases were opened up, and it was this move which later brought Jim to Crete. If omens are anything to go by, Jim fell over a black cat one evening during the darkness. Jim's friend picked it up and started to stroke it the wrong way showing a tiny glint of electric sparks. The black cat struggled and got away unharmed, but rather much frightened, and the next morning on his way to the storehouse Jim saw pussy sitting on top of a telegraph pole. The cat was still there at midday when Jim passed that way and he decided to do something about it if the cat was there at teatime, but teatime saw the black cat gone. During the last few months of

nineteen forty, Jim saw his name posted on a list of a small detachment bound for Crete, and when the day of departure came the Commanding Officer made an inspection and saw the detachment off.





PRISONER OF WAR ON THE ISLE OF CRETE

The small party of about twenty travelled to Port Alexandria by train to board a ship which was to sail for the Isle of Crete, which lies off the south coast of Greece. It was on this trip that Jim and a fellow named Dick Levis became great pals and their duties during the trip was Mess Orderlies to take food from the ship's kitchen to the mess decks. This ship was not a big liner, it stood high out of the water and was (or rather seemed) short in length compared with its height, and to say the least it was doing a grand job of work in these parts of the Middle East. Jim and Dick stuck to their job of carrying food to the Mess Decks in spite of one or two spills up and down the steps. On one particular day, when boiled eggs were to be served, and after much ado on how this should be done for safety, it was decided to carry the eggs in buckets and so have one hand free to use the handrail if necessary, and from then on almost all the food went up to the mess decks in buckets. As this strip took only a couple of days most of their spare time was spent in reading or writing letters. None of the boys knew much about Crete, and still less when it came to the question of language, but most of them agreed that it must be better than going to the desert. The shortness of the ship could now be felt as the bows dipped into the waves, the propellers would be out of the water and making the ship shudder a little. Apart from this the trip was nice, and it was a warm sunny day when the ship entered Suda Bay and came alongside to disembark. At this moment the air-raid warning was sounded and

everyone had to hurry and take cover. When the "all-clear" signal was given the small detachment was marched to pitch tents in an olive grove.

As the weeks went by the raids became more frequent and the detachment wintered in the olive groves with very little snow but plenty of rain, although snow could be seen on top of the mountains practically all the time. As the equipment and stores began to arrive the small party began to set up shop in defence of the island. The boys soon found that most of the people on the island could speak a little English, and the Officer in Charge of the detachment could speak Greek fluently. Jim and Dick soon made many friends on the island and found that many of these people had been to England or America sometime or other.

The enemy air-raids up to now were more or less in the form of reconnaissance, particularly in the regions of Malamee airstrip and Suda Bay, and with the very few fighter planes stationed on Crete the raiders were intercepted and driven off. The only other harbour of any importance on the island was Caneu harbour complete with small lighthouse, breakwaters and quayside warehouses etc., but nothing larger than a schooner ever operated from here. This harbour was chiefly for small trading crafts operating among the number of very small islands in this part of the world. As the ground in the olive groves became sodden with rain, the small R.A.O.C. detachment moved the stores into the empty quayside warehouses at Caneu, and the troops lived in brick buildings close to

their work.

There was never a large fighting force on the island, and some of these had been pushed out of Greece by the Germans, and by the middle of Spring, nineteen forty-one the Germans occupied the whole of Greece. The new situation which was now created was that the General in charge set up headquarters on Crete as a temporary measure, as all eyes were now focused on Crete, and this included the Germans who intensified their efforts towards Crete and other small islands lying off the coast of Greece.

The air-raids now were almost continuous during the daytime, the airstrips and harbour installations at Suda Bay being the main targets. During this period a destroyer arrived at Suda Bay with a British commando force and it was Jim's job to get them fixed up with dry clothing and blankets as these men had been in a rough crossing and were due to make a raid on an island and the installations from where the enemy was operating. The project of an invasion of Crete must have been very costly to the Germans in the form of men and material during the last few weeks of May 1941, when a battle raged between the German Paratroops and our few fighting forces, and when the full scale invasion came our Navy took toll of the invaders. The small detachment was now doing a great job of work. When not issuing stores they were manning Lewis gun posts against the raiders both day and night.

Jim listened as the battle for the airstrip at Malamee was being told by one who had taken part in it. Plane after plane was

landed on the airstrip only to be shot up by our gunners, while German fighter planes machine-gunned our ground forces, and the strip was also pounded by our few coastal batteries situated on high ground overlooking the airstrip. When the airstrip was out of action, lots of planes, gliders and vehicles, all damaged, could be seen all over the place, including the hillsides.

As the month of May, 1941 faded out, the Germans began to take control of Crete. Jim was told by one of the front line personnel that he would be taken prisoner if he did not get out now, but Jim thought it better to wait until night time. The rest of the small detachment had already moved out and gone to Suda Bay as by this time most of the stores and equipment had been destroyed by bombs, but Jim's stores of oil, grease, soap, graphite and other lubricants were still intact, and Jim was very reluctant to leave, thinking that someone may come along to collect them. In the meantime, Jim looked towards the centre of the town of Caneu and saw enemy planes circling round like those one would see at a fun fair. He took this to be a signal to direct the ground forces towards the centre of the town, probably for regrouping. During the rest of the day Jim salvaged food from the damaged stores to feed the homeless civilians living in the air-raid shelters, and later got out of town just in time. Some of the fighting forces told Jim of how the enemy ground troops made sure of getting supplies by plane and by rolling out a long white strip of canvas with arrow-shaped head pointing in the correct destination. Whenever our chaps came across one of these strips of canvas, they

just reversed the direction but it did not always work.

As Jim made his way out of town he often had to climb large piles of rubble and debris which blocked the roads, and lots of bomb-killed fish could be seen floating in the harbour. Jim remembered one of the first bombs to hit the storehouse. It came through the roof where his pal Dick was having a quick shave, and the fact that Dick was standing behind a stack of motor tyres saved him from serious injury. On leaving the town and making his way to Suda Bay to join the rest of the detachment, Jim passed two Greek priests bent on what seemed to be a mercy mission as they slowly made their way through the deserted streets, and the Union Jack was still flying from the General Headquarters as Jim passed.

The few miles walk from Caneu to Suda Bay was a rather frightening experience for Jim as it was almost dark and enemy troops had been dropped by plane on all parts of the island. Jim was always prepared to fight his way out if need be as he carried a rifle, but then he may be shot down without a chance. On reaching his unit at Suda Bay Jim was told by his C.O. that he had been reported as missing and that his Sergeant had been killed. His explanation of the stores etc. was then accepted and he was told to prepare for a long march to Spharki.

While on the way to Spharki, Jim was hearing of yet another battle taking place just outside Suda Bay, where small detachments of British forces were making a gallant stand against overwhelming odds, and battling with the crack German Paratroops, the fighter

planes, light armoured units, trained dog units, mountain trained troops and mechanised patrols. The small unit of British engineers were now dynamiting the roads and mountain sides to slow up the enemy advance while another detachment was fighting a rearguard action all the way back to Spharki.

On the second day after leaving Suda Bay, the small detachment arrived at a small single-storey building situated just off the main road and only a few miles from the beach at Spharki. This building was used as a signalling station and Jim was the one person from the detachment who, along with others, waited outside for orders. As orders came through the units concerned were formed up and marched down to the beach, and this went on all through the night, but no orders for Jim's unit came.

During the day time, when the bombing and machine-gunning became more intense, everyone took shelter in the ravines and crevices and here again he lost contact with his unit and it became difficult to get food. It was now dawning upon all that the chances of getting off the island were very remote. By the time Jim made contact with his unit everyone was practically a prisoner of war just waiting to be rounded up.

It was the first of June, 1941 and several hundreds, including Jim, were taking shelter in the deep ravines from the bombing and machine-gunning by lots of German planes at this little place called Spharki, which lies on the south side of the island. It was a very mixed lot and many had lost contact with their respective units. They had all been in these sheltered ravines for several days and

nights, until the supplies ran out and they had to give in to the enemy. They had marched from different parts of the island in the hope of getting off the island by boat, but were unlucky, and those who did manage to get away lived to fight the Germans again in the African desert.

During this time in the ravines, Jim was feeling very hungry and went in search of food. When he next met his pal Dick they were being counted as prisoners of war and Jim could see at a glance that Dick was badly in need of food, so he shared what he had in his pockets, consisting of a few raw potatoes and a little orange peel. Jim told Dick of how he had been living on berries from the trees, tops of young plants, locus and other vegetation. He went on to tell how he had found parts of a chicken and eaten it raw. After being counted and searched they were all allowed to fill their water bottles from a spring before starting the long trek back to Caneu which took two days. They had all marched here hoping to leave the island by boat and were now being marched back as prisoners of war, with no food to eat until some kind of arrangements had been made. It was a sorry sight to see these fellows making their way back to Caneu with the German guards walking alongside urging them on over this rugged mountainous country. Some of the boys cut their boots to ease the blisters and others walked in socks, and one fellow was carrying his pal pick-a-back. Jim was feeling the strain and to lighten his load he disposed of some of his equipment as it got too heavy for him to carry and he was getting much weaker and exhausted.

Night time came when they all had to sleep in the open and Jim had no greatcoat. The guards were walking around. The night air was cold and Jim had to cover himself with dry bracken and grass to keep warm, and was glad when morning came. When ready to move off again the next morning, having no breakfast and no wash, Jim missed his water bottle and his pal's bottle was not sufficient for the two of them so Jim picked up three small tins, tied them together and carried them full of water. He went very cautiously with the drinking water as it had to be got from the wells by the roadside, and on several occasions it was like mud when he got to it as so many had been there before him and churned it up. Some of the wells are more than thirty feet deep so Jim and Dick had to tie string, bandages and belts and even laces together to reach the water. As there was no food the boys practically lived on water from these wells. At one point Jim came across an onion patch, but all he got was the tops of green onions so he stuffed his pockets with these after first tasting one.

On reaching a small village Jim saw a woman handing out bread. He got two slices of bread and an egg, and for this he gave the woman five hundred Drachmas, which was equal to one pound and which was all that Jim had. He had the idea that money was no further use to him now that he was a prisoner of war. On the roads the crowds of prisoners of war were now thinning out a little and the German guards were trailing along singly and at larger intervals. Their main job now was to see that the prisoners kept to the main roads all the time.

As the boys travelled, they could see small parties of German soldiers in full battledress order searching for any pockets of resistance in the hills. A small detachment with trained dogs passed Jim while on the main road. On leaving a small village Jim and Dick came across a water well where everyone had to line up and take a turn at pushing the handle before getting any water. Further on they came across another well, but the water was so dirty that the German guards would not let them have any.

The villages got all their drinking water from these wells and springs. In some places on the island, the water irrigation is something to be proud of, as a lot of work has been done in the past in cutting channels in the side of the mountain and making concrete channels of six inches deep and about twelve inches wide to carry the water for miles to the fruit and pasture land. These channels usually followed the main and by-roads, and the water was melted snow or rainwater.

A few more miles of heavy-going and they came across a shallow stream and a welcome foot-bath. This was where the first food from Gerry came. It consisted of one tin of corned beef between five men and two packets of biscuits each after nearly two days marching over rough mountain country. The food and wash was very refreshing although there was no soap or towel. All that Jim had was what he stood up in - boots, socks, shorts and shirt - and a havasack. A jack-knife was found on Jim while being searched and the guard broke the blade before

he handed it back, saying that it was a dangerous weapon which may be used to kill the guard and then get away. The tin opener on it was left intact and came in for useful purposes later.

During this trek over rough country, lots of vehicles which had broken down or were badly damaged could be seen, and some had been pushed over the mountain side to make room for other vehicles to pass, as these roads were very narrow in places. Later this same day Jim and Dick were passing Suda Bay, the main port on the island, and here many dead lay just as they had been killed. One body was in a kneeling position by the trunk of a tree, while five others lay face downwards. As the P.O.Ws. moved on they saw lots of small wooden crosses dotted here and there to mark the place of buried comrades. A large wooden cross erected at a place called Galitos marked the place where many were buried. It was here at Suda Bay that Jim picked up an overcoat, and how thankful he was as he was thinking of another night under the stars with nothing to cover him. He did not have the coat very long before finding it was full of lice, and so was all his clothing. This coat was one which had been thrown away by an Italian P.O.W. Many of these Italians were now to be seen on the roads. They had just been released, and Jim thought how things had changed in so short a time. The Italians had been taken prisoner of war in Albania and in Greece by the Greeks and brought here to Crete, and now were being released by the Germans.

Further on was the town of Caneu and looking round one could see planes and gliders and lots of buildings which had been hit badly.

The Monastery road was now in sight, and this caused Jim and Dick to look in that direction as it held many happy memories for them. Some of these roads had only been made a few months ago by our own engineers to cope with the increased war transport in Greece during the fighting there. Jim and Dick remembered Suda Bay when it was a very busy port indeed and Sunderland Flying Boats kept up a regular service from here. These Sunderlands also helped in the evacuation of Greece.

By now the most difficult part of the heavy going was over and they were coming into the olive groves and fruit-growing areas, and Jim paused to have a rest and a good look around. Just ahead, and off the road, could be seen Steven's Cafe where Jim and Dick used to spend most of their evenings off. Jim remembered Steve growing two very large radishes - each one like a large turnip and weighing over one pound. These were the biggest radishes Jim had ever seen and only those who saw them would ever think it possible. As Jim sat down and looked around he ate his onion tops and washed them down with a drink of water from the tin cans, as others passed by heading for Caneu. How Jim wished he had those two big radishes here now.

When this long trek started at Spharki, Jim, like all the others, thought Suda Bay would be the destination as there was a camp here and it would be handy for shipment. The camp was the one from which the Italian P.O.s had been released, but all were heading for Caneu, and later they heard that the camp which they were all going to was a few miles past Caneu and known to all as the Seventh General Hospital.

Very few people could be seen in the villages, they must have thought it better to stay indoors during this period which one might call 'crisis'. Jim knew this part of the island very well and had travelled it many times since first landing here from Cairo. On his way to Caneu Jim saw a half carcass of meat which had been dumped by the roadside, but could not face it because of the flies and insects.

A few more miles and they were passing what used to be the town of Caneu which Jim and Dick knew so well, and what a sorry sight it was. There were very few buildings which had not been damaged with the blitz. Here the people, with tears in their eyes, crowded to see the long line of prisoners of war pass by. Jim recognised several of these people who were his friends and who had worked with him in the stores and depot, and all that he could do was to try and attract their attention. They managed to throw a few cigarettes to Jim and Dick without the guards seeing it. Jim remembered only a few days ago when he tried to get food for these people when in the air-raid shelters and when he had to leave them to join his unit at Suda Bay. It seemed almost incredible for such a vast change like this to have taken place in so short a time.

A few more miles brought them to the Seventh General Hospital which was to be their prison camp until such times as it suited the Germans to ship them to the mainland. This march from Spharki had taken Jim and Dick just two days and many more arrived the next day, lame and hungry. Lots of barbed wire had been erected and a few tents and marquees put up but not sufficient to house all the P.O.s, which meant that many had to live out in the open day and night. Here

gain they were counted and searched. Jim and Dick had never been counted so many times in their lives and now they were beginning to get used to it.

The camp was situated by the sea and this helped them to wash and bathe in something like decent conditions. Here again food was scarce and they all had to get used to soup and one could not help feeling sorry for a big eater. The sick and wounded were treated at the hospital along with the German sick and wounded, but medical supplies were rather limited. One day while bathing in the sea with Dick, Jim felt very tired, so he lay down in the warm sunshine and fell fast asleep, and it was Dick who later woke him up as it was time to go. This was where Jim found himself sunburned on his belly and chest, and the next day this sunburn became blisters and rather painful. As there was not sufficient room to accommodate all the prisoners of war in the tents and the marquees, Jim found for himself a small trench to sleep in and he had to try to sleep on his hands, knees and elbows so that his clothing would not rub or even touch his skin. To make matters more uncomfortable, the ants got into his shirt along with the lice making it more of a nightmare.

The food here was soup twice a day, and bread and coffee once a day. This camp was only a temporary affair and the boys would be moved as soon as the stragglers had been collected from various points on the island. The stay here in this camp was about ten days when they were told of the arrangements made to ship them to Solonika and now the time had come for the march back to Suda Bay to go aboard two Italian ships.

ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΗ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ
ΧΑΝΙΩΝ

SOLONIKA

As the crowd of P.O.Ws. passed through the blitzed town of Caneu again on the way to Suda Bay, Jim thought of the days of the invasion by the German Paratroops and the planes towing gliders laden with troops fully equipped, and the roar of guns out at sea which meant the Navy was on the job. It was said that the navy had caught up with an invasion party and had sunk the lot, while our boys talked of accounting for the cream of Hitler's Paratroops. Jim also remembered seeing the planes circling the town of Caneu as a signal that this was the objective, and looked like a merry-go-round as they kept the distance equal. Jim and Dick took a long look at what used to be the General Headquarters, now deserted, as they passed. Further on and near to Suda Bay was the Monastery just visible through an avenue of trees.

On arriving at Suda Bay Jim found that his sunburn blisters had burst and raw flesh was showing on his belly and chest for which he could get no treatment. While waiting to go aboard Jim took a good look round the bay and thought he might call it the ships graveyard as he counted no less than thirty small craft all sunk with their masts showing above the water. Among these was a cruiser, badly damaged, below her water line. This cruiser had played a noble part in defence of the island, even when crippled her guns were used on shore to defend the island.

Before going aboard each P.O.W. received one tin of corned beef and three small packets of army biscuits, and told that this

A of food was to last for a two-day journey. It appeared that
s food was salvaged from our own food depots on the island. When
hese two ships had been at sea for twenty four hours, the boys were
told by the Captain to make the food last for three days and more food
would be available when they reached land. When the P.O.Ws. complained
they were told that there would be plenty of food available if it were
not for the British submarines operating in these waters.

The P.O.Ws. were accomodated in the holds of the ships, which
were not very clean, and only allowed on deck for toilet use, six men
at a time for an interval of about ten minutes. During these few
minutes on deck, Jim could see that this area was a mass of small
islands. It was while lying on his back in the hold of this ship that
Jim began to realize that much of this hardship and suffering was the
circumstances which followed the misfortunes of war - such as food
depots being blown up, road and bridges destroyed and transport dis-
located.

During the night on the ship, Jim did not sleep much and was
always thinking there was a chance that the British Navy might inter-
cept these two ships. As soon as tht two ships docked at Solonika
with their human cargo, food was brought aboard and consisted of army
biscuits and water. As Jim climbed out of the hold of the ship he
looked back at the broken barrels and hoops which lay in the bottom
of the hold. These barrels had contained oil and grease which looked
like what was left from the ships previous cargo, and as each of the
chaps climbed out he found a large patch of oil or grease on his

nothing making it very unsightly. When going down the gangway to disembark, it looked like half the German Army was there to see that none of the prisoners escaped during the process of unloading.

The railway on the quayside looked a very busy place and was something new to Jim as there were no railways on Crete, and here on the quayside the P.O.s. were lined up and again counted over and over. The counting finished, they were marched through the streets of Solonika to some Greek army barracks which was to be their home for the time being. Jim and Dick will never forget the sights and the crowded people who were nearly all in tears as the prisoners passed by, with German guards on both sides with fixed bayonets, spaced every two yards. Everyone who tried to pass bread or anything to the prisoners was immediately pounced on by the guards. All these offenders caught by the guards were made to walk behind the troops with their hands on their heads and were dealt with later.

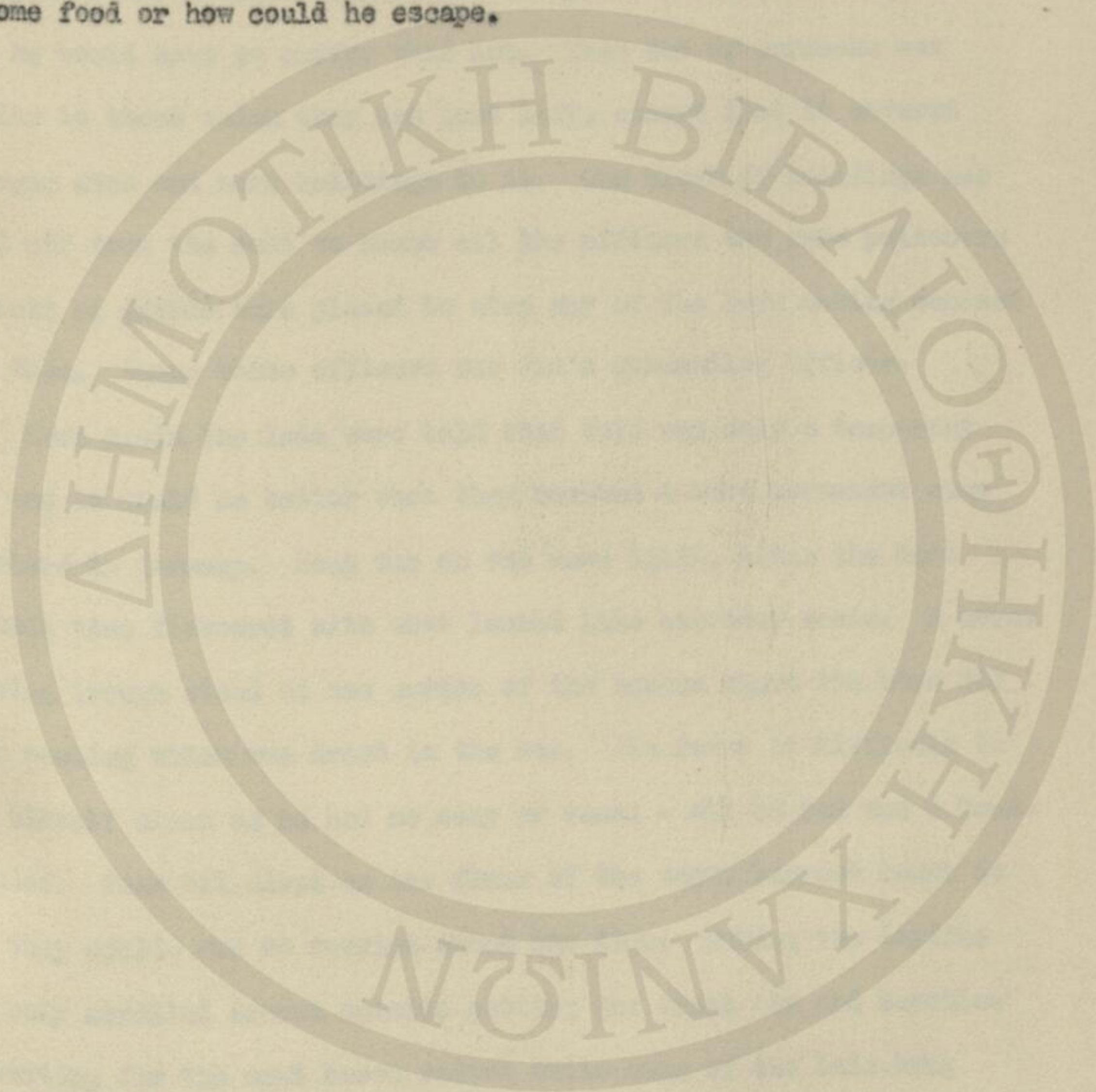
On arriving at the barracks, the P.O.s. were told that their stay here would be very short and sure enough they moved out that same day, but not without incident. They had not been in the place many hours when some of the chaps had the manhole covers open and were searching for a way of escape while others kept a lookout for the guards. While this was going on a crowd of Greek civilians had gathered at the gates and had brought loaves of bread to be given to the boys, but the German officers would not allow it until it was done through the proper channels and this meant through the Red Cross. The lads got the bread eventually in addition to the normal ration.

Army mobile kitchens were brought into the barracks square,

offee was prepared and soup served later in the day. It began to rain and the boys sheltered in the barrack rooms which had already been stripped of all furniture, and the rain was at its worst when the soup was ready to be served in the open air. Everyone had to queue up for it and some of the fellows were very reluctant to stand in this downpour so they hung back a while and others dashed off to get their soup with just a towel wrapped round them and some even stood naked during the rain to get their soup. They all knew that they would be moving out of here in a few hours time and wanted to go with dry clothes, not forgetting that his overcoat was blanket at night and no-one wants a wet blanket.

These barracks were typical of any English barracks with red brick two-storey buildings and barrack square, cookhouse and officers' quarters. The boys moved out of here late in the afternoon, but not before being lined up and counted several times, and it was not sure that anyone was missing or that it was Gerry not so good at counting, and this hanging around to be counted and recounted began to have its effect on the chaps morale and patience. Eventually the mass of P.O.s. began to move out in silence except for the tramping of feet and the feel of the guard's hot breath on the back of ones neck. Jim and Dick found it a very bad experience to be marching in a foreign land as a prisoner of war, which was totally different from marching with a victorious army which marches on its stomach. These P.O.s. were marching on an empty stomach to another Greek barracks situated on the outskirts of the town. As they moved along no-one did much

ang and singing was well out of the question even if it was
mitted. The foremost in Jim's mind now was how to get hold
of some food or how could he escape.



On reaching this fresh place, Jim noticed that there was plenty of newly-erected barbed wire everywhere, and wondered how long he would have to suffer this lot. This set of barracks was similar to those which they had just left, except that it covered a larger area and more buildings to it. One block of buildings was wired off from the rest to house all the officers who were prisoners and lots of guards were placed to stop any of the boys making contact with them. Among these officers was Jim's Commanding Officer.

Here again the lads were told that this was only a temporary home and it would be better when they reached a more permanent camp somewhere in Germany. Soup was on the menu again, minus the meat and this time flavoured with what looked like carraway seeds. A horse drinking trough stood at one corner of the square where the boys did their washing which was dried in the sun. Jim found it difficult to keep himself clean as he had no soap or towel - all he had was a handkerchief. They all slept on the floor of the empty barrack rooms as best they could, and no worries about the time. During the daytime everybody strolled around outside getting the fresh air and sunshine and waiting for the next bread ration while some of the lads hung around outside the cookhouse just watching and hoping to get a job of work.

During the stay in this place, some of the boys were asked to go out to work in different parts of the town under guard. Jim and Dick volunteered for one of these jobs one day just to see what it

was like and what they could get out of it. Dick went to a hotel in the town to do some washing up, and Jim went to do some tidying up in some hutments where German soldiers were billeted, and they both brought back some food. Dick brought back a can of condensed milk and some raw potatoes, and Jim brought some mouldy cheese, and this was the first time for several weeks they knew what it was like to have a fully stomach.

Sitting out in the open one day, Jim saw the officers at exercise and one of the lads attracted the attention of his Commanding Officer who shouted back asking how many of his lot were here and that he hoped it would not be too bad for them. During the stay here all Irishmen were sorted out and sent to another camp, but no-one understood why, and later the officers were moved out.

One day came an issue of dried mint leaves, one handful per man, to make mint tea, and nobody had the fuel or the means to make a drink of tea so Jim gave his away. Later he saw several of the chaps smoking the stuff in the form of home made cigarettes. This kind of life took some getting used to and the strain of the last few weeks could plainly be seen in everyone.

In his quest for food one day, one of the lads was caught by the guard while in the act of poking a long stick through a hole in the wall of a building where the bread was kept. The next day all P.O.Ws. were paraded onto the barrack square to hear a charge read out by the Commandant of the camp, saying the prisoner was caught stealing bread and this was a punishable offence, and for this offence the prisoner

got thirty days detention. The Commandant went on to say that this kind of thing could not be tolerated and should any more cases of this kind come along he would deal with them more severely.

Thanks to the weather it was fine and warm with plenty of sunshine and everyone sat or walked about in the camp to get the fresh air and sunshine and while away the time. As Jim sat outside the barrack room one day he saw a bird pecking away at something and a close inspection showed it to be a lump of dirty bread which must have been lying about for days, and Jim was glad to eat it after first trying to wash it and clean it. On another occasion, Jim hung around the food stores when a sack which had contained loaves of bread was slung out and several of the lads scrambled for it in the hope of finding a few lumps of broken bread. Jim got the bread sack after a hard struggle, and all it contained was a few crumbs. He tried to eat a handful of these bread crumbs and almost choked with the hairs off the sack being mixed in, so Jim took the sack and shook the contents on a doorstep of the barracks and commenced eating the crumbs of bread one by one.

The Prisoners were encouraged here to do a little physical training as most of them were now in a sorry state of health. Jim for one could not do the physical jerks as he hardly had the strength to walk, and after sitting for a period he would have to use the wall of a building to get about as he was so weak, and now beginning to think of the survival of the fittest. Several prisoners escaped from this camp but it was never known if they were successful. There was no kind of organisation here,

It was a case of hoping for the best to happen each day.

During the stay in Solonika, Jim was always scared of malaria and this was a likely place to get it. He was pleased when the news came that they were to be moved to a camp somewhere in Germany.

Now came the time when they had to prepare for a long train journey, and the two miles march to the railway station. On the way to the station they passed a large cemetery with a big white marble monument to the fallen in the first world war. The streets were again lined with people, very quiet and in tears, and one young woman was sobbing her heart out as the P.O.Ws. passed. These people of Solonika threw lumps of bread, fruit and cigarettes to the fellows as they went by, even if they got caught and punished for it. An old lady handed Jim a loaf of bread as he went past. The guard saw it and tried to stop it, but it was too late. Jim got the loaf of bread and the old lady got bowled over in the rush by the guards and Jim could do nothing about it as he had to make himself scarce. Many incidents similar to this happened while on the way to the railway station. Two women stood on the doorstep of a house and were throwing chunks of bread to the prisoners from a basket and the guards rushed to stop it and the door was slammed in their faces. The last one saw of this was the guards banging on the door of the house with the butts of their rifles.

Just before reaching the railway station a fruit vendor had left his barrow full of fruit by the roadside for the boys to help themselves as they passed. It was something to know that these people were all ready to help if only they had half a chance, and the Germans knew this

which accounted for such a lot of guards.

On arriving at the railway station each P.O.W. was counted as he entered the train, minus the few left behind for hospital treatment, the few who had made a break and the one doing thirty days detention for trying to steal a loaf of bread. Nobody ever heard of what happened to the Irishmen who were sorted out. All the prisoners were put into goods vans, thirty six to a truck, and the door was locked. Two guards were posted outside each truck, one on each side, until the train was loaded and ready to move off.

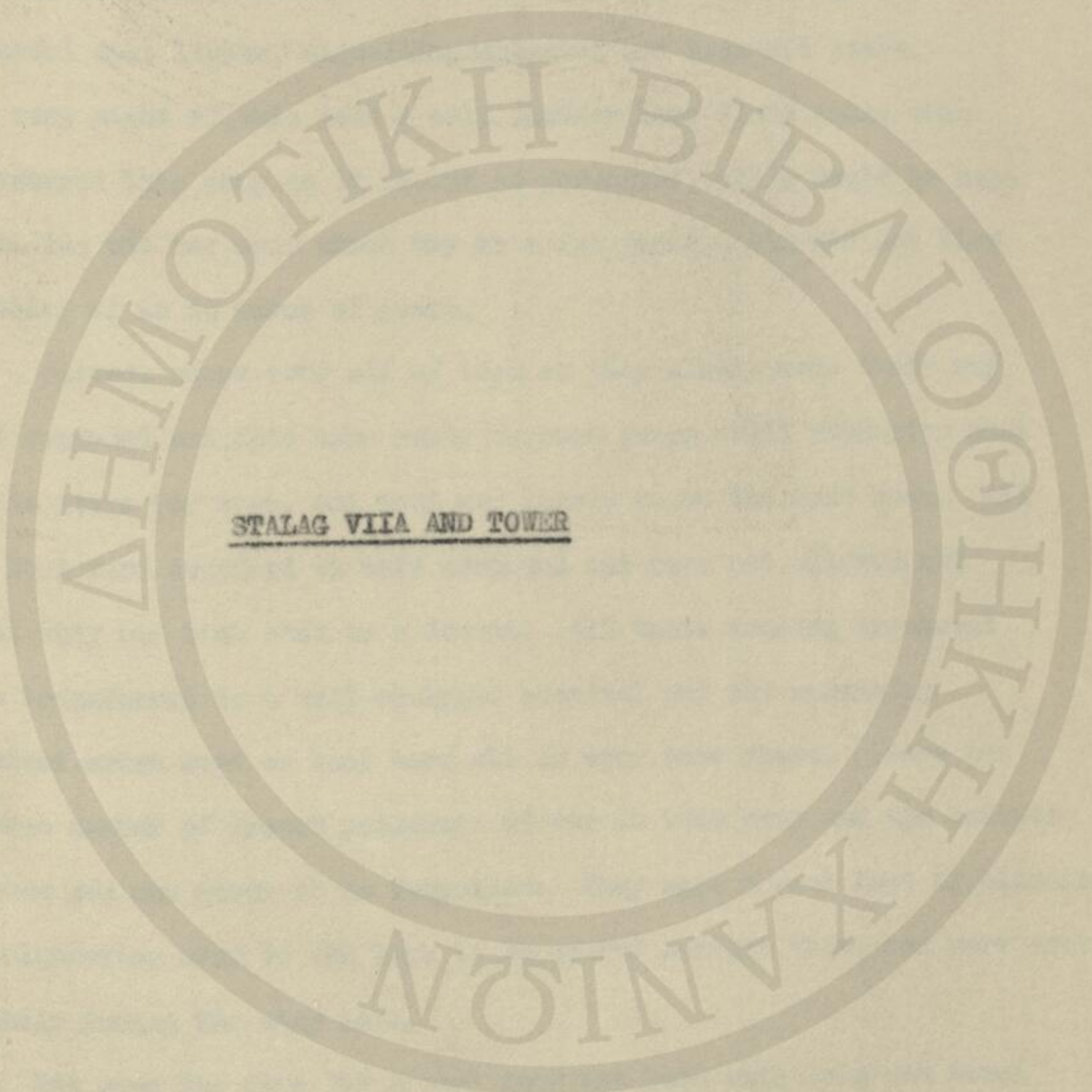
As the train moved off the lads used two small ventilators to scan the countryside and it was rather dark in the vans as there were no windows. This was a very slow train which stopped at every siding, and the journey lasted about six days as it had to move without interrupting the regular train service.

Camp kitchens were to be seen at many of these sidings and soup and bread was given and the water bottles could be filled with drinking water. These kind of sidings were like a miniature camp and were used by German troops when on the move. All the prisoners washed and made use of all the facilities when and where possible at intervals along the route. None had any idea of the destination except that it was somewhere in Germany. Most of the time was spent catching lice and smoking all kinds of dried vegetation. It was a lucky break for all when the train steamed into the railway station at Belgrade. Here the Red Cross workers were waiting to supply some good food. Every one of the prisoners received a small tin of meat, six biscuits, a

It can of mint tea, properly prepared, a few cigarettes and all the water bottles were filled with drinking water. The sick and wounded had the best of attention and the serious cases taken into hospital, and only hospital cases were allowed to leave the train.

These people must have been warned in advance of the arrival, as everything was in readiness when the train reached here, or maybe they had been waiting for hours to attend to these prisoners' needs. These people did their job very well and every single case needing treatment got it before the train steamed out again. It was a late hour and dark when the train moved out, and everyone settled down to a more contented sleep. There were no toilet arrangements aboard the train and everyone feared dysentery as several were taken short only to find the door locked. It was only unlocked when the train stopped for this special purpose where there were long lines of latrines in the open fields.

The journey ended after a very trying time for all at a place near to Munich, known as Moosburg. Now came a short march from Moosburg railway siding to Stalag VIIA, and what a pitiful sight they all were on arrival. Some were in slippers or bandages and wrappings on their feet. Others had their boots cut to pieces and lots of tin cans were hanging from their equipment and swinging with a clatter as the prisoners bundled along. What a sight it was! Jim had to laugh to kill his sorrow.



STALAG VIIA AND TOWER

At the entrance to Stalaf VIIA stood a tall tower overlooking the camp, complete with machine guns, search lights, powerful spot lights, signalling apparatus and look-out posts. The very sight of this sent a cold shudder down Jim's spine when he entered this camp as it looked so permanent, and he would be here until the war was over which may be a few years. Jim did not like to think of it in terms of years.

Silence swept over all of them as they slowly made their way to a compound and into some empty barrack rooms still wondering what was in store for them, and what was likely to be the next move. All the boys were confined to this compound and were not allowed out until they had been seen by a doctor. All those needing treatment were transferred to a well-equipped hospital and the remainder received extra food as they were all in very poor shape. There was a large number of French prisoners of war in this camp and the welcome by them was one never to be forgotten. They sent a real feed of biscuits and cigarettes over to the boys to be shared amongst them, and were very friendly during the stay here.

Now came the time for a real good hot bath with soap and towel for the first time since being taken prisoner, and how welcome this was. Everyone was given a clean sack filled with clean straw and two blankets. A complete change of clothing was issued, all patched but clean, and that night Jim slept soundly, free from lice and filth.

During the next few days they went through the usual procedure

of inoculation, inspection, hair cut etc. and many of the fellows had grown a beard by this time. This was where all curls and waves went by the board with the barber's shears from front to back.

Each man received two Reich Marks equal to four shillings to spend at the canteen, also a letter card to write home, and you may imagine the things Jim wanted to tell his family and friends, and the things he wanted from home, and how Jim missed his writing desk.

Later came the day to be paraded in front of some German officers to give particulars of age, unit, trade, married or single, and to answer many more questions. Everyone had his photograph taken for identification purpose and was given a disc on which was a number and which must be worn at all times by all prisoners of war, but Jim looked on his as a souvenir.

The Stalag was a vast place built to accommodate hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war. They were allowed to mix with other prisoners on the roads and in the compounds, and they were now getting back to something like normal health again and were asked to do a little work each day in the gravel pits situated at one corner of the camp.

One day the boys had a surprise - the Red Cross came to the rescue with food parcels and cigarettes. Each man received a food parcel and fifty cigarettes, and how they all appreciated this to think they had not been forgotten after all.

They all joined in some good sports on a large sports ground provided, with loud speakers placed at intervals round the camp giving music and news in French, which the French P.O.s. tried to interpret. Another item of interest was the square in front of the canteen where almost everyone had something to sell or exchange. Here it was possible to get something to eat in exchange for a watch or a cap badge or a belt. Jim would spend a lot of time here just watching the exchanges and getting a kick out of it. Each one walked round with his goods displayed and open for inspection and this went on for a few hours each day, usually about midday and again in the evening after teatime.

In the evenings the boys spent many hours of interesting talk on their personal experiences and learned much from it as some of the P.O.s. from Crete had been in action in Greece and some of them had gone through it. How sad it was to hear of how pals got parted.

German guards with trained dogs patrolled the camp day and night. During the night the dogs were off the leash and all barrack rooms locked.

While in this camp the boys had two lectures on discipline and were told they must salute all German officers. They were marched up and down in the presence of a German officer to practice salutting and were told that this discipline must be strictly observed by all prisoners of war.

One of the boys died whilst in hospital here - he just could

not get over the ordeal of the past few weeks. Others who were ill on arrival here managed to get better with the special care and attention at the camp hospital.

Through the interpreters it was explained that this was a kind of base camp or a central camp where prisoners of war were prepared and fixed up, sorted out, and then sent out to working camps in a radius of several miles. After about one month at this Stalag the boys were told they were expected now to go out to a working camp, where they would be looked after properly and would get paid for working. Some of the fellows looked forward to this as a welcome change for at least they would be in contact with civilian life and a little further from German militarism.

All the prisoners of war now registered came under the rules of Geneva Convention and the Germans must account for every prisoner of war. The few hundreds which came from Crete were now split up into small groups and one group, including Jim and Dick, was sent to a small working camp near to Munich, known as Walfreedof. This meant another train journey, but better travelling conditions, and all the boys were in much better shape, and the distance was only a matter of a few miles.

Jim could not walk out of this Stalag without having another good look at the large look-out tower which dominated the entrance of the camp, and the guards who were always alert and who would not hesitate to fire a few warning shots at the least provocation.

The train was boarded at Moosburg, and as the train moved out the tower could be seen through the slits in the boards until it

slowly faded away in the distance. A few hours later saw the arrival of this train at a small siding close to a camp known as Walfreedom Kriegsgefangenen Lager, meaning prisoner of war camp. Everyone was very much surprised to find it was a brand new camp and this was the first time it had been used.

There were a number of wooden huts, something like the British army huts, complete with furniture and two-tier beds. There was a bath-house, and a canteen which was used as a dining hall and also for concerts. The furniture, including tables and chairs, were all in orange and lemon colours, but the biggest surprise was when porcelain bowls and a spoon were issued.

It may be that this camp was originally built as a civilian working camp and the barbed wire erected later making it into a prisoner of war camp, as there were many labour camps in Germany as was seen later.

This camp stood in a stretch of flat ground, mostly pebbles, and just off the main road about three miles from Munich where most of the prisoners went to work. Some walked to and from work and some were provided with a lorry by the contractor employing them. Jim's work here was to keep the camp tidy, using a brush, shovel and hosepipe and wheelbarrow. Being a camp cleaner Jim had access to the officers' and guards' quarters and was allowed to take rubbish and tip it outside the camp on the waste ground. There was very little soil in the camp so Jim tried his hand at rock gardening. As pebbles were plentiful, Jim tried to use these to good effect and outside the bath-house he

outlined hearts, spades, clubs and diamonds. The clubs and spades Jim filled in with coal bits, and the hearts and diamonds with red brick dust and it looked very effective when finished. In front of the canteen Jim put KRIEGSGEFANGENSEN LAGER. The Commandant was very pleased with this effort and asked Jim to do something like it outside the officers' quarters. The design Jim had in mind was to be tulips, and after the outline with small pebbles Jim filled in the petals with red brick dust, and for the leaves and the stems ground glass was used which Jim got from broken beer bottles. When finished the job looked quite nice, but Jim had not reckoned on how the rain would affect it, but after the rain it looked even better. Jim was next asked to do a German eagle and was just putting the finishing touches to it when an officer noticed the head of the eagle turned in the wrong direction. For his next masterpiece Jim decided to make a beautiful star, using pebbles, coloured brick dust and glass. He worked hard preparing the various coloured stone dust and ground glass and then set to work planning the outline with great care. The coloured materials were then carefully used and the finishing touches added when a German officer came along to look at it. In less than a few seconds he started to destroy it, saying it was the Soviet symbol. After this Jim went to work with the civilian storeman who was employed in the camp, but he could not speak the language and this made it a little more difficult, but they got on well together. He made Jim understand that he kept rabbits and wanted some weeds and dandelion

roots. He noticed the young trees and it looked as if they were planted about the same time as the camp was built and they were coming along nicely. All this helped to take that naked look off the camp as very little plant life and vegetation could be seen.

There was one main gate to this camp, complete with sentry and sentry-box painted in camouflage colours, and not too much barbed wire, and in general it had a rather pleasing aspect as camps go. Jim got no pay for working in the camp, but he did get small favours in the form of a small bottle of lager and a few lumps of bread from the guards when tidying their quarters.

Jim and Dick were still the best of friends and shared all they got. They shared the lumps of bread and cigarettes and talked of the day's happenings when Dick came in from work, usually at five p.m.

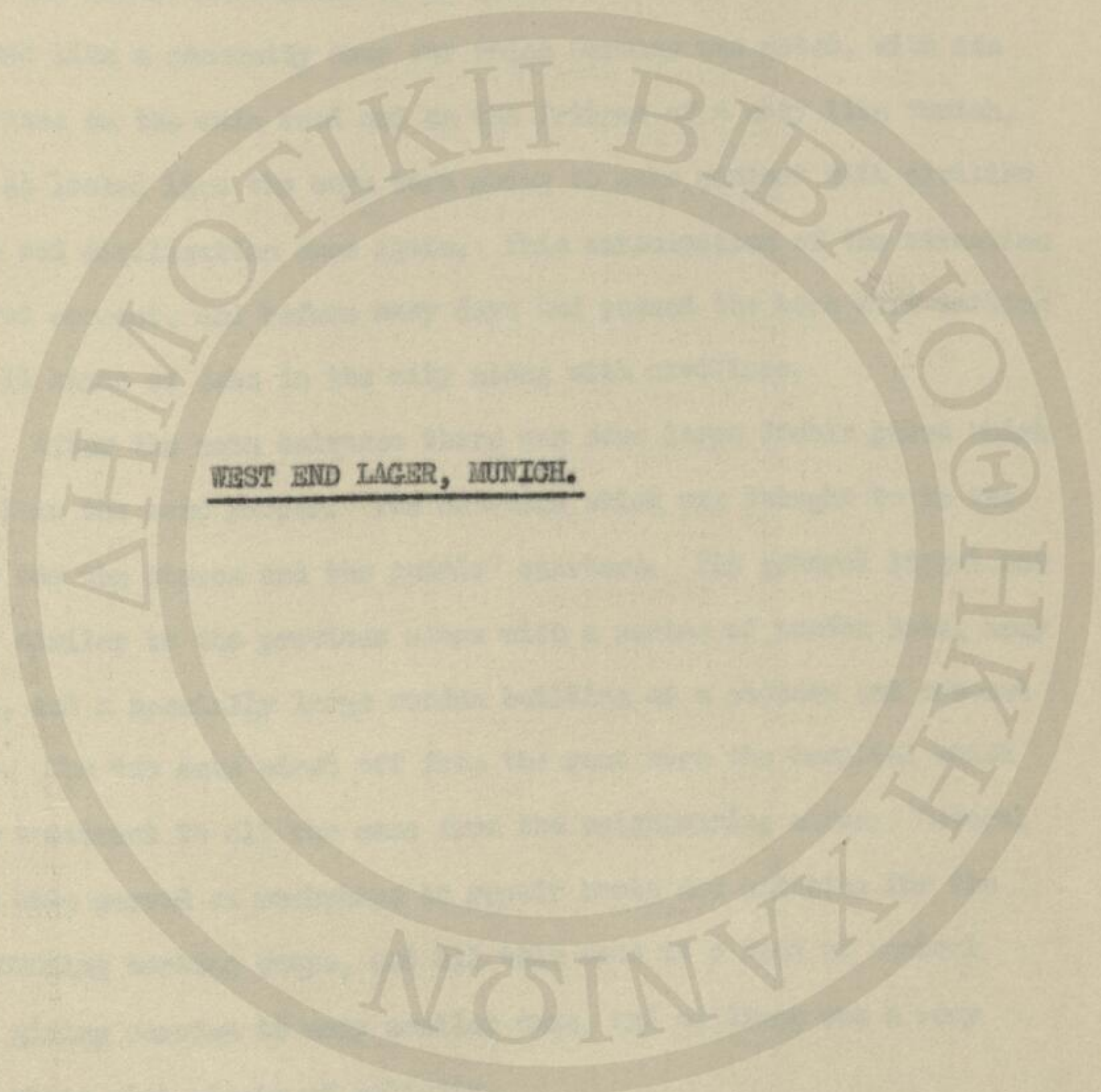
No-one had received any mail from home up to now, but they were expecting some any day now. One of the boys was now chosen as the confidence man and interpreter to explain everything when necessary. The confidence man and the German interpreter usually worked together and on many occasions they had to go out to the working parties to explain to the P.O.s. some difficulty concerning the job.

After having soup one day, Jim decided to mark his soup bowl so as to recognise it when mixed up with other bowls, and he marked it "OLIVER TWIST - PLEASE SIR I WANT SOME MORE" around the top of the bowl, using the aluminium spoon handle just as one would use a pencil.

One day Jim went along with the guard into the village of

needed to get some stores and at the cross-roads was a large
board fixed upright on a concrete platform and a notice which read
"Englischen Missile" which were the only words Jim could pick out.
It looked like a bit of German propaganda, and the guard would not
comment upon it. Jim enjoyed the walk to the village and thought he
might try and get on a working party sometime just to see whether or
not he would like it in preference to being on the camp all day. The
time seemed to drag during the evenings after tea and most of the time
Jim and Dick were trying to keep themselves clean and tidy and making
the place as comfortable as was possible as this was now their home.

They had not been in the camp many weeks when they were told
they would be moving at short notice to another camp. This was where
all the soup bowls, spoons and blankets were handed in, and they were
later marched to another camp on the outskirts of Munich known as West
End Lager.



WEST END LAGER, MUNICH.

On approaching this new camp the impression of most of the boys was rather favourable as no guards could be seen, and it looked like a community camp for which Germany was noted, with its entrance on the main road and on the fringes of a city like Munich, and it looked like the boys were going to make contact with civilian life and civilization once again. This anticipation of the situation proved correct, and before many days had passed the boys were working on all kinds of jobs in the city along with civilians.

After the main entrance there was some large double gates which led into the camp proper. The entrance which was thought to be the camp was the stores and the guards' quarters. The general layout was very similar to the previous camps with a series of wooden huts, army type, and a specially large wooden building as a canteen and concert room. The two huts wired off from the rest were the hospital which gave treatment to all who came from the neighbouring camps. Several more huts served as workshops to repair boots and clothing for the surrounding working camps, and all this made it a kind of central camp giving service to many smaller ones, and at times was a very busy place with plenty of activity.

It was quite common to see a civilian come to this hospital for treatment.

Opposite the main entrance was a tram and trolley bus station, on the north side was a large timberyard and sawmills, and on the west boundary was a railway siding and marshalling yard with large

open spaces and plough-fields to the south of the camp with a view of the Bavarian Alps in the distance.

The German doctor in charge of the hospital was a giant of a man, and working with him was a British medical officer and several orderlies of the R.A.M.C., and in all cases the German doctor had the last word. Jim had to go before the German doctor one day to explain the job he was on as a navvy was too heavy for him.

The boys were now settling down and getting things organised, but with a little caution this time until they could see they would not be moved in a hurry as on the previous occasions. Here the conditions got better, and the facilities more in line with their needs. Some of the barracks were centrally heated while others had the old-fashioned stove pot in use. Each barrack had long tables and forms, two-tier wooden beds, lockers and electric light, but there was always that barbed wire and guards planted all over the place, both inside and outside the camp and boundary.

Within a few days of arriving here everyone was put into a small working party and went to work each day excepting Sundays in the city and suburbs, accompanied by a guard. Jim and Dick went as navvies on a building site, but after a few days Jim found it too heavy as he had never been used to a pick and shovel, and he refused to do it any longer. The guard at once telephoned the Commandant of the camp and the interpreter, and as soon as they arrived on the job they at once classified Jim as a trouble maker and told him he would be punished for it.

Later in the day it was usual to have a break for lunch and the contractor who usually supplies one pint of beer and a lump of bread to each worker came and took Jim's away from him, saying "Nicks horbite, nicks essen" meaning "No work, no food". The next day Jim had to go and explain it all to the camp doctor and it was for him to say whether or not he was fit for heavy work. The doctor decided in Jim's favour and Jim was found a job in the camp, similar to the job he had during his stay at Walfreedof.

Red Cross food parcels began to arrive more often, also sports kit and indoor games such as cards, chess, table tennis etc. and everyone received a lettercard to write home each week.

Now the boys were starting to organise on a grand scale for their own benefit, such as a concert party, a choir and a band. They started off with forming an Entertainments Committee and A Sports Committee, and looking forward to weekends now to enjoy a singsong with the harmonica band and a solo in between. The camp interpreter did much to help the boys and saw to it that all complaints went to the proper quarters, and the confidence man was also doing his best for the boys. Books arrived from the Red Cross Society and the Padre acted as librarian and kept a record of all books on loan.

The boys were still wearing the patched clothing issued at Stalag VIIA, and this one suit of clothing had to suit all purposes in all kinds of weather.

The German interpreter formed a class in the evenings for all

who wished to learn the German language, and many of the boys accepted this opportunity. One of the guards whom the boys called "Yank" said he had lived in America for a number of years, and it caused many a laugh when he got his American accent mixed with his German.

Should a book come into the room it was passed round and read by all before being returned to the library. In a very short time the boys found amongst them were teachers, clerks, artists, musicians entertainers and men from every walk of life, and some proved themselves to be very clever in more ways than one. During the long dark evenings, some of the boys took up a hobby of some kind and before very long became very proficient. Jim started to collect a few souvenirs in the hope that it would not be very long before he could distribute them among his friends at home.

Most of the fellows were now working on snow shifting in the City of Munich. Jim and Dick became parted again when a small party of about one hundred, including Dick, were moved to another small working camp about four miles from here, but they met again at intervals when coming to this camp hospital, and this helped to cheer the boys up. Jim felt a little downhearted at times when he received news of the illness or the death of a dear friend, although most of his letters brought fairly good news, but this was not so with some of the boys. It was not very nice to receive a letter saying that everything was not as it should be at home, or to have the news of a broken engagement

when they were fastened up here and could not do anything about it. To receive assuring news that your family and their needs are being looked after is really good news indeed. If any of the chaps received bad news or any drawbacks in their efforts they took it as it came, after so much uncertainty of the past few months.

One evening when at a loss as to how to pass the time, Jim took a walk into different barrack rooms and it was good to see tableware made from tins, knives from scrap iron, slippers and belts made from waste materials. Even the Red Cross wrappers and cartons and string came in for some good purpose. The labels from the tins made lively pictures and were used together with photographs to decorate the room. Here a fellow would be busy with a typewriter and would be typing out parts for a future concert, or perhaps hymns for the Sunday Church Service. In another room the chaps were rehearsing their part for a concert and another would be writing songs. In another room a game of chess was in progress and one fellow was going through all his old letters. Going over to the canteen one could see again a rehearsal in full swing. The scenery used on the concert stage was all done by the boys, some of which proved themselves to be real artists and had every reason to be proud of their work. These fellows came in from work, and after having a wash and feed went straight over to the canteen and the stage to work until bedtime. They included painters, joiners, cleaners, artists and musicians. Even the bill heads and posters for the concerts were the work of an artist and reflected all the humour and items of

the forthcoming show.

It was almost Christmas now and they decided the concert was to be a pantomime "Cinderella" and Jim had never laughed so much in his life and never seen anything so funny. Everyone laughed until their sides were sore. A small charge was made for admission to these concerts and the money helped to pay for the hire of costumes make-up etc., and also to make the next concert even better. The German interpreter was the person who got the hired costumes from outside the camp.

Jim was always trying to piece it all together and try to make his letters as interesting as possible for his family and friends at home. Really cold weather was here now with lots of snow and, of course, the boys had to have a good snow fight and a large snowman stood at one end of the camp, complete with tall hat and stick.

Everywhere one went in the camp, one could see work being done just as a hobby and to pass the time. Watchrepairing, sewing, darning, wood carving, photo frames or decorating an album, while real good arguments were going on next door. One week the Entertainments Committee would put on a variety show, and the next week a good thriller or a whist drive with prizes. Several "go-as-you-please" competitions were held at different times and here again much latent talent was discovered and it was good entertainment, especially when the time came to judge the winners. Prizes would be given for this and there was always a good number of entries. It was difficult to get someone to play a ladies

part at first, but as the shows made progress this difficulty was overcome. Later came the improvements to the stage lighting and colour effects, until at last it was possible to take photographs of the artists while on the stage.

The largest Committee functioning in the camp was the Escape Committee. Every one of the prisoners was a member whenever the topic of escape was mentioned everyone had plenty of suggestions to submit and all practical help given, and it worked smoothly and without suspicion. Several fellows managed to get a musical instrument of some kind and every little helped when it came to entertainments. One chap got a mandoline, another fellow got an accordion and Jim managed to get a flute, and they could always put on a show in one or another of the barracks as a practice.

All the winners of the "go-as-you-please" concerts were now asked to appear in a forthcoming concert. The progress up to now was remarkable as all the material necessary was very scarce, such as wood nails, fittings and paper. There was a full and complete band now as well as a dance band section instead of the harmonica and old piano which would not stand tuning. The Y.M.C.A. sent new band instruments and the British Red Cross sent gramophones and records. Several of the musicians composed tunes and words to go with them and one tune in particular turned out to be a big hit in the camp. It was called the Kriegsgefangenen Swing, meaning the Prisoner of War Swing. One could not go very far in the camp without hearing this song being

sung or whistled, in fact it was on everyone's lips.

It's the Kriegsgefangenen Swing
You'll lose all your blues and
You'll swing all your troubles away,
You'll be happy all day
With the Gefangenen Swing.
So sing, Gefangenenans, sing.
It's a new melody and you all
Know the music is sweet,
You'll be tapping your feet
To the Gefangenen Swing.
Sing out loud, Boopie Doopee Doo,
Don't be proud, Boopie Doopee Doo.
Let your hearts be happy
No matter what may come
Just start in to hum
The Kriegsgefangenen Swing.
You'll be in the pink,
Everyday happiness you'll find,
You'll leave your troubles behind
With the Gefangenen Swing
Make the rafters ring
With the Gefangenen Swing.

The song certainly made everyone in the camp forget his trouble and everyone came away from the concert hall feeling very pleased indeed. The manner in which it was kept secret until the very evening of the concert and the way it was put over helped to make it a great success.

On several occasions the Commandant and his officers attended some of the concerts and always came away very pleased. On just one occasion when he was not very pleased was when the band played "God Save the King" at the close of the concert, and all the P.O.s. joined in and stood to attention. The next day the Commandant told the interpreter to make it known that this was forbidden in the camp and at all future concerts.

The concert hall was a large wooden building capable of seating up to five hundred people, with central heating and electric lighting. As the lads got more settled in this camp the hall was used for some purpose every day and evening. Very little could be bought at the canteen, but it was a good sheltering place for parties visiting the hospital on a wet day, and when several parties arrived here together the place was a hive of activity until it was time for them to depart, and there was always plenty of posters to attract one's attention while waiting.

During the long dark evenings a literary society was brought into being, with the medical officer as chairman and Jim as the clerk. The aim was to arrange for two or more lectures each week, and each person must be an authority on the subject he chose to lecture on. These lectures proved very interesting and were well attended. The medical officer lectured on health and an Australian farmer spoke on sheep farming and corn growing. Jim lectured on "Pottery and Clay Products" which was very interesting, and was asked to speak again at a later date. The use of the hall for various purposes was in great demand and it became very difficult to fix dates in advance, and this meant that many activities had to be cancelled, postponed or fixed to take place in one or another of the barrack rooms. Most of the boys usually had their own bit of fun in their own barrack room and invited a few pals, and this was where one saw tap dancers, comedians, impersonators and singers at their best, but it all has to be finished at ten p.m. lights out.

As a great surprise to all a professional photographer was to come to the camp and take photographs which could be bought and sent home. The boys could hardly believe it, but sure enough the photographer arrived and did roaring trade. The photos turned out very good considering the boys were wearing old and dirty clothes. Jim was wearing a pair of Dutch wooden clogs, a French army jersey and British battle dress trousers. Everyone made the best of the opportunity and hoped he would be allowed to come again, but this never happened.

Now came the day which all had been looking forward to - Christmas 1941. Everyone received a food parcel from the British Red Cross Society. The day commenced with prayers and a service and the band provided music for the hymns, not forgetting those who had fallen in the struggle for Crete. Here during this service Jim's memory took him back to Crete, the Monastery and the Monks who always made him and Dick very welcome when visiting the Monastery during the dark days of the invasion and all that followed, which resulted in all of them being in this prison camp. After the service the band stayed on to play selections and was applauded by the prisoners and the guards. Dinner was served a little earlier and a bit better than usual as pork was on the menu and potatoes were served separate instead of being in the soup. The pork was a little fat and more was wasted than eaten and was not to the boys' liking. On the whole it was a good Christmas under the circumstances, and

some of the boys had gone to much trouble to decorate their barrack room to make it look more like Christmas. Most of the barrack rooms looked very nice and coloured paper from the food parcels was used to good effect, and no detail was left out. One room looked so nice that it was photographed with the table set out, and some-one had made a good job of the icing on the cake. Another room managed to get a small barrel of beer from the canteen where everything was set in readiness for the Christmas pantomime "Cinderella" which was a great success. All food waste went to feed the pigs which were kept in proper pig sties at one corner of the camp, and this was where the Christmas pork came from. A fellow called Monty Carlo had the job of looking after the pigs and got the name of swine fuhrur. One very cold night during the winter one of the guards had to wake Monty from his sleep as the pigs were very restless, and he had to go and put more straw down to keep them warm as the temperature was below zero.

Christmas now over, everybody was back on their usual job of work during the day, and the long dark cold evenings spent mostly in the barrack rooms, which always seemed crowded. It was usual to lie in bed after lights out and talk over the events of the day, and this leads up to almost every topic under the sun, until one by one they fell off to sleep, and every day brought incidents worth mentioning.

One evening after teatime, several of the boys were wondering how best to pass the time and one of them suggested that each person should get up and do a turn of some kind or pay up, while the acting

judge looks on eagerly to give out punishment, and it proved a success so it was tried again at ~~difficult~~^{ERENT} times. Another night after lights out someone decided to put on the gramophone and it sounded lively.

Most of the boys took books to work with them. Jim spent most of his time writing - writing of his wasted years behind barbed wire. It turned over in his mind of the days back home when he forsook his studies, his job, his family and everything which meant so much to him, and just at the most critical years of his life, when his whole future was at stake. That golden opportunity was as good as lost now, and it was useless to ever dream of catching up with it for a second time at his age, and he was now living to regret it. What was hurting Jim mostly was the fact that his wife must be thinking of it in the same manner, with her confidence in him shaken right down to the very foundation. Just what could anybody think of such a man who would do such a thing? What made Jim do such a thing? Was it cowardice to shirk his responsibilities, or was it that very strong urge for open air life, because if it was Jim was now getting more than he bargained for, and had nothing at all to gain. The very thought of it made him feel sick at heart, and nobody could do anything to help even should he decide to open up and try to explain it confidentially to someone.

Letters from home were arriving more regularly now and they told him that his two sons were growing up nicely and the oldest one, Jimmy, would soon be going into the forces. Jim saved all his letters and read them over and over again. As Jim loved writing, he would enjoy writing a long letter and then condense it to fit the letter

cards issued which were rather small. Even should one letter-card be bigger Jim could not write just what he liked as all letters were censored, and to console himself he would write it all down in a book and try to make it as interesting as possible for anyone to read. It pleased Jim very much to receive a letter telling him that the articles he wrote for the Works magazine were now being published, and that several people had called at different times to seek his services. All this good news made Jim want to get back to it as quick as possible, and he hoped there still may be a chance of making good, and during one of these moods Jim brought out his writing kit and commenced to write:-

"To all who suffered in the prisoner of war camps in Germany during the second world war, and to all whose untiring efforts helped to relieve this suffering, this book is dedicated. It opens up the gates of several of these camps and with the author as guide it takes you on an adventure filled with the humour and pastimes of life in such camps as Stalag VIIA, West End Lager, Stalag 344 and others. The tragedy and the suffering of wasted years behind barbed wire which words fail to explain, and the splendid work of those working in close contact with the Red Cross is here depicted. Many outstanding incidents, which one would like to forget, are lived over and over again during the passing years, giving much food for thought. The courage and ingenuity of some of the prisoners to overcome real difficulties as they did is worthy of the highest praise, without making any attempt to glorify the prisoner of war. The manner in

which his domestic problems were dealt with by small organisations of voluntary workers at home, give him that added strength to face the ordeal filled with hardship, and to these people I, for one, feel very much in debt. Getting ourselves organised in these camps to try and help each other would fill pages of interesting reading, and at times taking big risks to accomplish this. In a place like this, comradeship and the other fellows' wellbeing is seen being enacted every day, even down to the plans for the future, ready for when this kind of living is over and done with. Finding oneself flung into a prisoner of war camp, without any previous knowledge of this kind, confronts one with many problems, and much can be said for this effort to explain the real situation. To sit back counting the days, weeks and months without taking any actual part in the activities of the camp when able to is altogether wrong, for in the end someone has to take risks and perhaps lose his life or a limb to put into operation projects beneficial to all. Health and fitness is your first duty, particularly in a place like this where facilities are not too good. To look upon life in these camps as an adventure has its consolations if only one could pack it up when all the enthusiasm is exhausted, but this is just the point where the real test of courage and endurance begins. The experience of the first world war was now showing us how to make the best of a situation like this. To try and piece it all together, to make sense, is a real problem in itself, with plenty of time on hand but no material or proper facilities to do the job."

All the most fantastic schemes were carried out, and should they not be successful it did at least kill time which was one of the bugbears. Taking everything into consideration, very little in the way of art and culture was ever lost sight of or wasted, in fact it was always needed, if only to keep up the morale.

In many cases it required the highest qualities of everyone in camp to overcome existing difficulties, instead of leaving it to chance. As one ventures on into these prisoner of war camps the ingenuity of hundreds of P.O.s. can be seen in operation with some measure of success, and "Ways and means" are exploited to such a degree as to become almost an art.

It was usual for one or another of the boys to throw a party on his birthday and invite his pals for tea, as he had saved a little of his food parcel for this special occasion. Jim went along to one of these parties one day and oh! what fun it was to see table manners and mockery at its best. Someone would take a sip of tea from a tin can, holding it as if it was a piece of expensive china, while his pal was doing his best to open a tin of fruit with a penknife, and no-one was ever stuck for wisecracks and jokes. The tins of fruit were opened alright, if not with a penknife, as there were many ways of opening a tin. The boys would try until their patience was exhausted, then the tin was bashed on the floor and burst open. Here in this room was a miniature letter box which was made by one of the boys, painted red and decorated down to the last detail, and when a letter was being posted a ceremony was held and this was very

amusing with lots of laughter. In another barrack room hung a picture of "The Laughing Cavalier" which was the work of an artist who did much of the concert stage scenery, and everyone admired this lovely picture in water colours. Several of the boys took a fancy to photographs and albums and were very clever at decorating them, and when finished they were very attractive, being a blaze of colours.

Parcels and clothing now began to arrive from home, also new uniform from the British Red Cross, and everyone was now beginning to look like a British soldier again. All the prisoners of war were now going out to work with an overcoat and a good pair of boots, looking very smart. So smart and clean did they look that the Commandant reprimanded one of the guards in the presence of the working party waiting to go out to work. The guard was told about his boots not being clean, and his uniform was not so tidy as the prisoners' uniform. This smartness of the prisoners was noticed in the city of Munich, and one day a notice appeared in the camp and signed by the Commandant to say how much he appreciated this effort, but all P.O.Ws. must in future march on the road and not on the footpath when going to and from work.

Wages for a weeks work was about six Reich Marks, equal to about twelve shillings. The Reich Marks were in paper money of a special kind and could only be used in the camp and canteen. The civilian contractors who employed the P.O.Ws. openly admitted that they preferred the British worker to any other.

Special metal containers, something like a milk churn, were

used to send dinner to the working parties by motor lorry, to reach them at the proper time and hot. These working parties turned out to work at about 5-30 a.m. and commenced work at six a.m., and were back in camp by 5-00 p.m. The same guard usually took the same party each day, and it was also his duty to wake them up in the morning from their beds. The parties were inspected before leaving camp, and again on their return. One fellow returned with three loaves one day and said he had got them for a few cigarettes. It was possible sometimes to exchange working parties, and break the monotony of it all, or to get fresh experience. Some went to work on road repairs, others on salvage or on building sites etc. The Commandant paid a visit occasionally to these jobs to see that all was well.

Then there is washing to be done, and each man sees to it for his own benefit, and every day is a washing day for some of the boys who seem to like it. A tablet of soap is always found in the Red Cross food parcel, and when the soap run out away the prisoner would go to exchange a small item from his food parcel to get another tablet. The pipe smoker would exchange his cigarettes for pipe tobacco, and the non-smoker his cigarettes for chocolate, and so it went on and everyone was satisfied. This exchanging served a good purpose and everyone got much pleasure from it. Jim used to go to the different barrack rooms many times in the course of a week for exchanges, until he found himself doing it for others until it became a full time job. During a visit to one room Jim found that somebody had made a lovely job of the electric lamp shade, using coloured paper,

and he thought at the time that an exhibition of handicrafts would be very appreciated, and all that was needed was someone interested, to organise it on the proper lines.

Jim had now received his first clothing parcel from home after waiting almost one year for it, and it did not take him long to find someone to give his cast offs to. One fellow had just received a parcel containing a pair of pyjamas and was walking around the camp in them feeling very pleased with himself. Here Jim was afraid to wear his as he did not like having them to wash. It was while admiring the pyjamas that a fellow walked into the room and asked to borrow a pack of cards, and someone asked him to do a few of his card tricks before taking them away, and he did. He then repeated the tricks in slow motion just to show how simple and easy it was.

One rather unhappy incident which happened was when the guard came around the rooms to wake up the working party, shouting "Rouse, rouse" meaning "Wakey wakey". During his excitement he struck one of the fellows who was still in bed, and it finished up with the guard brandishing a bayonet, and a P.O.W. having to go to hospital for treatment.

This winter had been a particularly severe one with temperatures well below zero, and icicles forming like stalactites at various places in the camp. It meant that working parties went to work and returned in the dark, and most of the outdoor activities were curtailed or impaired. The biggest problem was how to get the clothes dry after being out in the wet all day, and having a spare change of clothing

helped to solve this, and as the months passed the weather got slowly better. As the weather improved, so did the outdoor activities, and the first to get going was the keep-fit or physical fitness classes under one of our own army instructors. These classes were voluntary and well attended and properly organised, and were in full swing in the hope of putting on a display at a date to be fixed.

Now came the time to clean up the camp, and try to get rid of rats which overran the place. Some of the boys set to work placing improvised traps at different places, and in less than an hour seven rats were caught, and it was great fun.

One night Jim lay on his bed and saw several rats come into the room through the open window, and scamper off again at the least sound. Jim told his room mates of this the next morning, and they decided to see it themselves to get fun out of it if possible, and the following night everybody in the room lay awake with the window open, and before very long several rats were seen playing about on the window ledge and swinging on the iron bars, and one rat ventured into the room. Just at this moment Jim jumped up and shut the window so that the rat could not get away, and all the boys set to work to hunt it with sticks, brooms and boots. After getting complaints from the next room about the noise, they decided to abandon the hunt and get into bed, and they all watched the rat make its exit through the open window before going to sleep.

Jim was now looking back on his early prisoner of war days,

during one year he had come into contact with comrades who had been ill with different ailments such as dysentery, malaria, typhoid, yellow jaundice, rheumatism, septic sores, scalp disease and many more. All this made him forget his own ailments, but he at once decided to take a little more care and try to improve his health from now on.

An electric steam kettle was in use at the hospital which ejected a fine jet of steam, and most of the P.O.s. needing treatment used this before seeing the doctor, as the steam jet contained cleansing properties and also helped to release sticking bandages and dressings painlessly. There was always a queue waiting for treatment at the hospital, and who must Jim meet here one day but his old pal Dick. He had come for dental treatment, and he gave Jim all the news and the rumours of his camp. The small camp hospital was always full of patients, with special diets for those needing this, also several who had met with accidents whilst at work. Any one of the boys who went for a sick report was almost sure to get a few days off from work. Saturdays and Sundays were visiting days.

As the weather improved the Escape Committee got into its stride, and when any of them decided to make a break many of the fellows would really help them, and sometimes have a party to celebrate this occasion. One morning it was found that the leading man of the concert party had made a break and his absence was missed by all when it came to concert time, and all the boys could do was to wish him every success in his venture. He was not the only one

so had been waiting for the nice weather to come along before arranging to carry out his plans, which were made during the long dark evenings of the past winter. Up to now Jim's health would not allow him to make any such elaborate plans, but he was always willing to help others.

As the really nice weather was now here, much time was spent outside in the open air, and Jim would take a stroll around the camp all by himself dressed only in shorts and slippers, and before very long he found himself gazing through the barbed wire. He would then go back to his barrack room, lie on his bed and think of the things he would be doing or things he could do if only he was on the other side of that wire. Here his thoughts would wander back home until he was tired of it all and would fall off to sleep.

The next morning mail had arrived at the camp, and a letter from home to Jim. This told him of another of his small articles being published, it was OPTIMIST OR PESSIMIST, and Jim could remember every word of it, and later got out his pen and paper to see if he could write it again from memory.

"Optimist or Pessimist. How can I best describe him? Maybe I should take a good look at myself first! Anyway, let us take first the faces as one would imagine them to be. You have probably met this kind of person. He spoke to you only this morning on your way to the factory, when you said what a wretched day it was, and he put you completely at ease saying it would be better later when

the sun came out. Yes! that is the person and he always tries to help drive your cares away, sometimes with a cheery smile or perhaps a kind word. He is just an ordinary person like yourself and does not like publicity, and he never seems to have any troubles of his own. Just to see this person pass by on the factory and say "Good morning" seems to put you in a good mood for the rest of the day. You look at him at a distance and try to study his character. You try to get to know more about him until you come to confide in him and ask his opinion on different subjects as you may have something in common. The day's work goes on much smoother and easier by the fact that an optimist and not a pessimist is in that particular vicinity. To try and copy him would be a big mistake, but to try and follow his example and his reasoning makes common sense, and oh! what a difference from the other fellow who looks on the suspicious side of everything, and anything he says has no real meaning. He is difficult to get along with and is best avoided. You meet this kind of person everywhere in everyday life, always ready to express his sentiments, but he does not know just how or where to start and when to stop. Your answer to this kind of situation is in your own good judgment of an optimist or a pessimist."

How very often one sees a fellow turning the whole of his kit out on to the floor and in a hurry to find some small article, while others can put their hand on any article of kit even in the dark.

There was always an argument whenever the grammophone was available. Some wanted swing music and others wanted classical music,

and while the argument went on somebody put on a hymn record to everyone's surprise. It came round to be Jim's turn to play the records after lights out, and it was a wet and windy night with the window open. He sat at the table in his shirt and all was very quiet except for the wind and when he heard someone snoring he hopped into bed shivering. In Jim's barrack room a list of names hung on the wall and instead of the proper names there were nicknames such as Curley, Blondy, Lanky, Ginger and so on, and all the fellows worked to this list as in all the rooms there were always a number of jobs to be done and everybody did their share.

Whenever anything was required for the concert or the band, money was the least worry. Spending it was the difficulty, and the German interpreter who got these things had to get permission from higher authority and it all took time. Sometimes it would be weeks before an electric light bulb could be obtained, and all this was slowing down the progress. Everyone knew that when it came to wanting anything in the way of material, the P.O.W. was the last to be considered.

A news bulletin was put on the notice board several times each week, and here one could read of one or more of the P.O.Ws. who had escaped and had now been recaptured, and occasionally it would read of a P.O.W. getting punished for an offence of some kind. This made little difference and the boys still kept trying. A camp newspaper in English explained how the war was progressing in

favour of Germany and of how many times the British Navy had been sunk. All the lads could see through this and it made little difference to their morale.

In every barrack room there was always one or more fellows who were the life of the parties, and nobody got tires of their wisecracks and crosstalk with comical actions. There was times when one or another of the boys was a little depressed and they did not feel like taking part in the fun, and then someone would come along with a nice hot drink of tea or cocoa to try to cheer him up. Little by little this kind of life was getting Jim down, and was nothing like what Jim had in mind when he was trying to make those very important decisions at home, two years ago. Home sickness was creeping in, and like the others he was continually fighting it off. Oh! how he envied those lads who had escaped or tried to escape from it all.

Most of the P.O.Ws. now spoke a little German and many a lively joke was passed this way. They were a mixed crowd of chaps here consisting of north and south country men, Welsh and Scots, also a few Australians, and when listening to conversation Jim found it a bit difficult to follow, especially when a little French and German was mixed with it.

One or two of the fellows tried to grow a beard during the stay here, just to see what it was like, and what it felt like to have a well-kept beard, and when wearing the large Dutch wooden clogs which were issued instead of slippers, one had quite a job

to recognise the person, although he was well known in the camp. The wooden clogs took some getting used to and were a poor substitute for slippers, and when trying to run anything was likely to happen.

Touring the camp one day Jim came across a few lines in verse which appealed to him, and fancied he would like to try and enlarge upon it, and the results were similar to the following:-

THE BATTLE OF CRETE

She slept in peaceful solitude that little Isle of Crete,
And the lazy eastern waters skimmed gently round her feet.
Her pleasant fields were yet unmarred by man's destructful hate,
She slept in peaceful solitude unmindful of her fate.
She spoke not of the tyrant's power, but of the still of peace;
She dreamt not of din and strife, but of her hope's release;
But the sound of guns grew nearer as the Spring unveiled her face,
For the sound of war had gathered Crete within her embrace.

The golden dawn was breaking when the silent air was stirred
By the droning, like the humming of a huge and deadly bird,
And from the skies of blue above the bombs came tumbling down
To hurl despair and terror on a slumbering little town.
The morning calm was shattered by the thundering of the guns,
As two mighty nations battled with their gallant hero sons.
The God of War cared not for broken lives and blasted dreams,
He quenched his thirst for murder with a hundred little schemes.

The bullets whined, the guns crashed out, and still the bombers came
To sweep away the ones who would defend their country's name.
Crete awakened from her slumber with Springtime's fragrant breath,
And this isle of peace was turned into a battlefield of death.
Through the grim and desperate struggle flowed the hatred of the years,
For Hell, in all its glory, could not bring such pain and tears;
And one by one the guns were silenced as the foe grew nearer still
And the breezes from the ocean murmured softly, "Must we kill?"

But they pressed forever on, for only victory would suffice,
And they left a trail of broken hearts and useless sacrifice.
They battered down the stubborn walls of those who would defend
And the breezes from the ocean murmured softly, "Tis the end!"
She sleeps again in solitude, but War has left its mark,
And through her pleasant meadows death has trodden grim and stark.
Both friend and foe lie sleeping in valley, field and cave,
And the breezes from the ocean sigh a swansong o'er their grave.

On that mountainous little island in the Aegean sea,
By the drome of Ratimo, Herackleon and Nalance
Are the graves of our comrades, in dozens there they lie,
Their death was the kind that only gallant people die.
On that mountainous little island with its peaks all capped with snow,
With its grape vines and olive groves, row on row;
From its ocean wreathed with white caps to the mountains wreathed the same
Are the fields where they fought so bravely, and carried the flag to fame.

During the nice weather it was usual for most of the boys to stroll around the south side of the camp and get a glimpse of the Bavarian Alps in the distance on a clear day, and it was a lovely sight from this angle while waiting for check parade previous to being locked up for the night. While out working in the city one day, one of the boys saved the life of a child. The Commandant sent for this P.O.W. and told him they looked very kindly on this act, and a report would be sent to the proper quarters. Several weeks later saw the P.O.W. presented with one hundred Reich Marks for a very gallant act.

The time came when the officials decided to make some improvement to the roads in the camp, and some of the boys worked on this with their shirts off and their skin was as brown as berries. The cinder paths were now concrete, and the place was all the better for it.

Quite a number of civilians were employed in the camp as gardeners, clerks, handyman, joiners and charwomen. Jim had several lectures from the medical officer and Commandant about his job as sanitary man. He was told of how important it was that the sewers and lavatories should be kept clean, and so avoid an epidemic which could be very serious. On several occasions Jim was fetched out during the night as a sewer or drain was blocked and it must be put right at once. It was in cases like this that Jim began to think that he was really an important person after all. Jim got his material and gear from the civilian storeman, and also had access to all parts of the camp. If ever the job was too big for him, or he had not got the proper tools, the City Cleansing Department was

brought in and Jim worked along with them. Jim watched every manhole and sewer and where these led to, taking size and shape into account as it may be a means of escape in the future. When lunchtime came these workmen would offer part of their food to Jim and he would offer a cigarette in exchange.

As the Commandant and interpreter came on the usual round of inspection of the camp one day, he told Jim through the interpreter he was very pleased and should he need anything to help do the job better he must go to see him, and he could go to the canteen every Saturday afternoon and get two litres of beer at the Commandant's expense. Jim remembered the day when the Commandant and the guards used the canteen as a dining hall, and when looking on Jim saw the Commandant leave his dinner and make a gesture to one of the prisoners to go and eat it. Jim was getting used to his job now, and the Commandant was never afraid of complaints from the higher authorities whenever they came to inspect the camp. It was after one of these inspections when the Commandant approached Jim and looked rather pleased. He first congratulated Jim on his efforts and then told him to go to the guards kitchen for his dinner each day. After a few days of this Jim could see no difference in the food, so he did not bother to go there, and there were lots of meatless days. The only difference was in the way the dinner was served up. The guards got two vegetables and gravy, and the P.O.W. got the same vegetables in soup.

During the summer months everyone enjoyed a sports Gala Day

out in the open air, and it was such a success that it was repeated at a later date. All events were well contested and prizes for the winners. The band played at intervals, and sideshows were an added attraction, and here could be seen the results of the physical fitness classes. The day finished with the distribution of prizes and a concert in the evening. The surprise item of the evening was the news that the leading man of the concert party would soon be back again, as he was not successful in his attempt to escape.

Jim's interest and hobby now was to go round the barrack rooms for exchanges and this was soon more than he could cope with, and he had to think of something better. The new system developed into an "exchange and mart" and was carried out in the open air, and was looked upon as an important facility in the camp. A small charge was made to everyone using the service. Ten PGs equal to 2½d for every exchange completed. After a few weeks of this, Jim was able to give a donation of five pounds to the concert funds. In a very short time the exchange was in full swing and items for exchange were displayed in attractive style for all to see. Many parties made use of the facility when visiting this camp hospital or the stores. Many guards came up to Jim and asked if they could have such things as cigarettes etc. Jim said it was for his comrades only, but if they wished to bring along certain things which were needed mostly in a camp like this, he would consider it. In this way Jim managed to get some useful items which were necessary for a P.O.W. making an escape. While helpers looked after the business, Jim would be in some secluded part of the camp

completing another deal with one of the guards. Jim now became known by all the guards as Der Rawlance. Jim's room mates warned him many times of the risk he was taking, but this did not worry him and he carried on in spite of it all. About fifty lettercards reached Jim in this manner, and were quickly distributed amongst the P.O.Ws. for a few cigarettes to cover the cost of the deal. After a few days it was known that all the cards had got past the censor, and it was tried again when the opportunity presented itself.

During the summer, the band would play in the open air, and had a large selection of music to choose from, and occasionally request items would be the feature of a programme, and lots of civilians would crowd close to the barbed wire to enjoy it, and the sentry made no attempt to send them away until the programme was finished. Included in this particular programme was "Handel's Largo" and "In a Monastery Garden", and everyone came away very pleased.

The Sports Committee got busy again, and the result was a boxing tournament which was also a huge success. Football was out of the question as there was no space large enough in the camp, and the boys played handball and netball.

After trying for several weeks the band got permission to go to a nearby camp and entertain the P.O.Ws., and the boys there were pleased and welcomed it, and among them was Jim's pal Dick, and they had a lot to talk about including the noted beer cellar and beer garden as it was called, where an attempt had been made on Hitler's life. The band passed here on its way to and from the camp. After

the programme was finished, there was still time left, and Jim lunched with Dick before leaving the camp.

This brings us to October, 1942, and the Commandant asked Jim how long it was since he went out of the camp for exercise, as this was a privilege given to all those working in the camp and who never had the opportunity of seeing the outside world. Jim enjoyed his first walk with the guard who took him to a beer house for a drink of lager, and it certainly was better than was served in the camp. As the weeks passed it was difficult to get a guard, so the boys made up into small parties of six or more and went with one guard, making it worth his while by giving a few cigarettes.

As his work took Jim to all parts of the camp, he went in the direction of the main offices and here he met the charwoman whom he had not seen for many weeks, and he could hardly recognise her as she had been off from work and very ill, losing a lot of weight. As Jim went about his work in this vicinity he saw several well-dressed civilians and officials arrive, click their heels, and raise their arm in a Nazi salute, saying, "Hail Hitler" before shaking hands. He would spend a lot of time in this part of the camp, just watching traffic on the main roads which was always very busy. While cleaning the lavatories here, Jim found an officer's belt with revolver holster, and had an idea that it belonged to the Commandant, so he took it along to the Commandant's quarters. He knocked on the office door but got no reply, so he tried the door, peeped inside, and saw the Commandant lying on the bed fully dressed, and was just pulling the

door to when the Commandant shouted "What do you want?" Jim then showed him the belt. The Commandant began to shout loud, "Vor ist der pistol" (where is the pistol), and as there was no interpreter at hand Jim had to do his best to explain it all. "Ich gefunden das mitt nicks pistol" and as Jim was trying to explain it the Commandant was hurriedly searching the drawers of his desk, opening and slamming them closed, muttering aloud. He then searched the single bed and found the revolver under the mattress. Jim was all of a cold sweat when the Commandant patted him on the back and said, "Good, Rawlance" Fill Danks (many thanks). Another time Jim found a gent's wrist watch in these parts of the camp, and thought it may belong to one of the guards. Here he posted a notice "Eine Hour Gefunden" Comst Barrack 10. The watch was later claimed by one of the guards who gave a complete description of it in detail. The guard took Jim along to his quarters to collect a reward, a small bottle of lager and a few lumps of bread. A few days later he was able to take a valuable chronometer along to the British medical officer at the hospital, and had managed to get it through the exchange and mart. The officer was very pleased with it and wished Jim all the best in his exchange business, and told him not to overdo it or his health might suffer, meaning he may get caught and punished.

During wet weather the exchange and mart was held in the big hall where all the goods could be displayed with even better effects, and an advertising bureau came into being to deal with goods which, for

several reasons, could not be displayed. The nice weather was now fading out and with it went the outdoor games such as handball, quoits, rounders etc., and one day when all the parties had gone to work and the camp was looking rather empty, Jim saw a full grown chicken strutting around the camp, and he went to tell the boys working in the kitchen about it. They said the chicken could not have come to a more welcome place and they all set about searching for it. The chicken was caught and the next day he found the feathers and bones in the bin.

Day after day Jim would go to that part of the camp where could be seen the corn. He had seen the seeds sown, watched it grow and ripen, and now was seeing the fruits of their labour. It looked now like the P.O.Ws. would have to go through another cold winter, but with better boots and clothing. Thanks to the British Red Cross, and hoping the war would soon end.

One fellow Jim met while in this camp was known to all as Nick the Greek. He had seen service with the French foreign legion, and to show how tough he was he pinned a dicky bow to his Adam's apple which moved up and down every time he swallowed. It looked very comical and caused much laughter. Monty Carlo, the swine herd, was another tough character who once staged a rough and tumble with one of his pals in the barrack room with no holds barred, and luckily no one was hurt with all the bumping and banging.

At the exchange and mart one day, Jim was reminded of an accordion which passed through the hands. They said it was full of live beetles, and was dumped into a tub of water to stop them crawling all over the place. After this incident everything in future was thoroughly examined before being passed on. A civilian who brought food to the camp kitchen asked if Jim would like a few meat ribs in exchange for a few cigarettes. The next day he brought a great big German sausage under his arm, and was a real feed for about twenty P.O.s, and what a pity Dick was not here to share it.

To get from room to another after lights out, and the rooms locked, the boys removed a ceiling board, and as search parties usually came by surprise the lads took every precaution not to be caught napping.

Jim was a little careless one day when he dashed into his room with a compass and map which had just arrived in the camp for one of the boys, and to his surprise the guards were in there making a search. Here he had to think quickly, so he went over to his bed by the window which was open, and at the first opportunity slipped the articles through the bars and later went round to collect them and deliver them to the P.O.W. awaiting them. It may all sound so simple but Jim thought it very lucky for him to get away with it, and took a little more care in future. It was not possible to beat the guards to it every time.

The Commandant was walking around the camp one day, and it was noticeable to all that he was not quite himself, and when Jim asked

the interpreter what was wrong he said the Commandant had just had news of one of his sons being killed on the Russian front. A party of Russian P.O.Ws. arrived at this camp one morning. There were about one hundred, and they had come to be X-rayed, and looked a pitiful lot. Jim was busy cleaning the latrines with hosepipes and as these Russians P.O.Ws. came to use the latrines he gave each one a cigarette. They were so pleased and so grateful that Jim decided to dispose of one thousand cigarettes in this manner. The cigarettes were of a poor quality, foreign make, and were the weekly ration issued to the British P.O.W., and the boys did not care for them. The cigarettes were in packets of one hundred, and Jim commenced to hand out three or four cigarettes to each Russian P.O.W. as he approached the latrines, and before long a crowd gathered and started to bustle and jostle, and Jim had difficulty in freeing himself from the crowd. At this moment a Russian N.C.O. shouted out in a loud voice which made the crowd of P.O.Ws. take notice. Through an interpreter Jim explained that he had a few hundred cigarettes to give them, but not in this rough manner. The N.C.O. made them all line up and take the cigarettes properly as Jim passed them around, a few for each P.O.W. On receiving them some of the P.O.Ws. made a gesture and it sounded like "Dobra, dobra" as an appreciation.

It was getting near to Christmas 1942 now and the end of the war nowhere in sight. As the war was going badly for the Germans, it was getting more difficult to buy anything, and economy restrictions were imposed on such as water, fuel, electricity etc.

On visiting the civilian storeman, Jim noticed there was no smile or enthusiasm, and asked what was the trouble. He told Jim a very sad story of his son about to come on leave at Christmas and he wanted to make it a happy Christmas for all his family, and did not know where to start as nothing could be bought in the shops. Jim asked him just what he had in mind, and he said a packet of cigarettes for his son, a little chocolate for his little girl and a little tea or coffee for his wife and himself. It was two days to Christmas when next Jim paid him a visit and as a surprise and out of sympathy Jim gave him five cigarettes, a small bar of chocolate two spoonsfull of tea and two spoonsful of coffee. If anyone had told Jim during his first two or three days as a P.O.W. on Crete that he would be playing Santa Claus to the poverty stricken Germans, he would never have believed it.

The R.A.F. paid a surprise visit to Munich about this time, and hit many targets and installations in and round the city. Jim had never seen the guards move so fast as they did this time, when the air-raid sirens sounded. The air-raid shelters in the camp were at one corner, and in the form of a land trench, and accomodation for several hundred persons. The top was covered over with turf and soil for protection against the weather. Several incendiary bombs, intended for the timber yard, dropped in the camp setting fire to two of the wooden barracks, and the P.O.Ws. occupying these rooms lost most of their kit. This was the first of several raids which followed during the next few weeks, and the boys formed a fire fighting squad of their

own for purpose of rescuing hospital cases, and the Red Cross stores. During one of these raids, the guard came running into the shelter, shouting for Der Rawlance. He spoke of a chronometer belonging to his comrade which Jim had got, and Jim answered him that it was safe. This incident made Jim feel a bit worried in case the higher authorities got to know of it. Jim could almost see himself being marched off to answer some awkward questions. This kind of chronometer was a very valuable instrument when in the hands of an experienced person, and can be used for timing to a split second for speeds, and to calculate distances as well as compass bearings, and Jim was almost sure to get into serious trouble over it. During the next few days Jim thought many times about the warning of his pals, and room mates. During these air-raids one of the fellows made a key to fit the barrack room door, just in case it would be necessary some time.

The boys had the Christmas concert in spite of the air-raids which almost wrecked it through some of the concert material being lost in the fires. All the kit lost was soon replaced from Red Cross stocks kept in the camp in case of necessity. The P.O.W's from the burned-out barracks were crowded in other already crowded rooms, making it uncomfortable for all.

One day after the boys searched the debris to try and recover lost articles, and all the guards were kept on the alert as the raids were fairly frequent, and the lack of sleep was quite noticeable.

After a short while the people of Munich began to get hostile towards the working parties, and this resulted in no more working

parties and more guards on duty around the camp, and there was much speculation as to how it would all end. The camp now seemed to take on a different aspect, all rules were tightened and privileges restricted, and most of the P.O.Ws. packed their kit in anticipation of a quick move at short notice.

ANOTHER MOVE AND THE STRAFF COMPOUND

April, 1943 saw the P.O.Ws. on the move again to another Camp, Stalag VIIIB, and when moving out of West End Lager Jim had more kit than he could carry. He sat down by the roadside after about a quarter of a mile and watched the others go by, and as the Commandant came past he noticed Jim's plight and asked two of the guards to carry his kit. For this help Jim handed a small tin of tobacco to the guards who looked both ways before accepting it. After a few hours train travel the boys found themselves back in Stalag VIIA, with the now familiar tower, for a check-up to see that each P.O.W's number disc tallied with his photo and personal identification marks. In the next compound were some Russian P.O.Ws. and they looked like new arrivals and in a very poor state, similar to how the British P.O.Ws. were when they first arrived here. Jim and the boys gave food and clothing to them but the guards stopped it, so the lads piled all the stuff into a blanket and got permission to have it sent to them, and this gave Jim a chance to get rid of some of his junk and so make his kit lighter.

After three days here, the boys were on their way to another large Base Camp in Upper Silicia. They arrived after three days travel in the cattle trucks, and the train stopped at almost every siding to let the loaded trains of German troops and war material pass. On reaching Ramsdorf railway siding there was about one mile to march to the camp on the open common. The walk was what was needed after being cooped up in the railway trucks for three days, and the boys got a good view of the

size of this camp from a distance. As they came closer the Swastika could be seen flying in the breeze, and the sentries on duty outside the barbed wire. Here the party halted to be checked and searched before entering the camp in small parties of one hundred.

On entering the camp the first sight was the Dieppe boys, wearing chains on their wrists. The chains were put on each morning by the guards and removed in the evening. On entering the camp they marched for about half a mile, passing compounds on both sides of the road and P.O.s, walking around at leisure. The boys were led into a compound and into a long, single-storey brick building with gaping holes in the wall where windows and doors had been, and the place had been badly used. There was very poor lighting and little water, and when Jim saw he must sleep on the hard dirty concrete floor he consoled himself by thinking this to be a temporary measure.

The next day the German doctor came to grade them, and they were expected to go out to working camps shortly. Grade I men were expected to go to the coal mines, Grade II to the stone quarries, Grade III to the forestry and sawmills. Jim was Grade IV and was put into hospital for treatment.

The food ration went according to the grading when the parties went to working camps. As Jim had to go into hospital for treatment he did not have much chance to see what the camp was like in general, but if it was what he had already seen he did not care to see any more of it.

On entering the hospital the first thing to catch his eye was

a notice saying "Shut this door", and failure to do so meant straff punishment. Here in the camp hospital Jim received good treatment for malnutrition, and here he met a Palistinian named Chapero who was a keen chess player and who could only speak in broken English. When he got to know Jim, he thought him to be a most comical fellow and each night he would say, "Come, Jim, tell me some of your funny tales." He showed Jim a beautiful photograph of his wife who was waiting for him in Palestine. Jim wrote several letters for him as Chapero could not write in English, and all letters were supposed to be written in English for censoring. Jim prepared some of the meals for him while he was fast in bed with heart trouble, and they played chess.

Jim had not seen much of his pal Dick during the journey to this camp until he turned up one day at the hospital to see how Jim was doing and inquired if he wanted anything.

There was another hospital just outside the camp where serious cases were dealt with, and one which was well equipped for X-ray and surgery, with British and German Medical Officers in attendance. This hospital, which was a larger and more elaborate one, was situated in a forest of pine trees which skirted one side of the camp and surrounded by lots of barbed wire just to remind one that it was a prisoner of war hospital, complete with guards and sentries. Jim visited this hospital several times for outdoor treatment, and had to go through the pine trees to reach it, and P.O.Ws. could be seen at work sawing and stacking the timber, while guards patrolled among the trees.

The buildings were of a single-storey type, and large parts of it had been newly built with gardens and carriageways. The place was full of serious cases chiefly wounded and disabled, and it was here that Jim first heard the word repatriation mentioned. There were several British officers whose names were familiar to all at the hospital, and who did much good work in preparing cases to be presented when the Board of Commission arrived at the Camp. There was always a long list of cases needing special treatment which could only be obtained here where British medical supplies were the mainstay of the hospital, and many substitutes such as paper bandages and paper bedsheets could be seen in use for economic and hygienic purposes. Those needing special diet received invalid food parcels supplied by the British Red Cross, and which contained much nourishing food for invalids including powdered milk.

As new arrivals reached the camp, so more and more sick and wounded crowded the hospital. On being discharged from hospital, Jim began to find his way around this large camp which was about half a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide, with two main roads, one called the top road and the other the bottom road. The bottom road was the busiest, as it led to the main entrance of the camp. The camp was divided into compounds and each wired off separately with entrance gates on the main road. Most compounds contained four barracks all numbered and were mostly overcrowded. One compound separate from the rest was known as the Straff compound, where one took his punishment for an offence. During his travels round the camp, Jim could see

that the P.O.Ws. had got everything well organised with Sports Committee, concert hall and school. He was asked several times to get a market going, but refrained from taking any active part for his health's sake, but he gave advice freely to anyone interested and in a very short time several markets were operating in the camp.

Part of one barrack was used as a school where a large range of subjects could be studied and the material for this was supplied by the British Red Cross. Jim found the Germans always ready to encourage art and culture, but they could not supply the material necessary. Part of another barrack was used as a place of worship, where the service was held every Sunday, and at times suitable to an occasion staffed by British and an Australian army padre. All the barracks were divided into two halves by an ablution, and marked A and B. These ablutions were practically useless as there was very little water or proper facilities, and no effort was made to put them into working order.

Later on Jim found that staff punishment meant any kind of punishment the Germans cared to inflict either individually or collectively. It was usual for a number of the P.O.Ws. to be punished for the wrongdoings of one. On one occasion the guard came into the room and someone made a rude remark against him. The guard asked for the one who made the remark to come forward, and as no-one came forward the result was the compound gates were kept locked for several days. This meant that the boys could not stroll around the camp or take part in sports or concerts as these facilities were in another compound.

On another occasion when someone had escaped, the whole lot of compounds were kept locked for several days, and during this time the camp took on a gloomy aspect, looking desolate and uninteresting with only the sentries and the guards walking on the roads, and outside the compounds, and Jim got a glimpse of a small party carrying a sick comrade to the hospital on an improvised stretcher.

Almost everybody had a hobby of some kind as in all the previous camps, and one chap was digging a patch for a garden with a wooden, home-made pick. They were a mixed lot here in this camp with Indians, Greeks, Spaniards, Palestinians, British and Colonials. The Indians were held in high esteem by all in the camp, and were a source of interest with their headdress and turbans, and very true to their respective religion. One corner of their barrack was screened off to act as a place of worship, and when Jim chanced to take a peep one day he saw some of them standing barefoot on a mat and deep in meditation, so Jim tiptoed gently away leaving him undisturbed. The Maories were also a fine lot and very keen on sports. These dark skinned good natured fellows from the land of the long white cloud put on a concert of Hawaiian music and everyone enjoyed it. There was a lot of talk on the camp about the Maories on Crete making a bayonet charge with their favourite war cry, and driving the enemy back, and now some of them could be seen here hopping about on wooden legs and others suffering from their wounds of two years ago.

Each compound had its own advantages, may be the concert hall or the school, or the football ground etc. As the weather improved

most of the day was spent in going round the compounds visiting pals or the markets. "Max Swap Shop" was always worth a visit and he always advertised aeroplane values at submarine prices, and many bargains could be picked up here.

The full length of this camp was bordered by tall pine trees, while the other side was a vast stretch of open common with a range of mountains in the distance, and a Russian P.O.W. camp on the skyline.

During the stay here in this camp, a scare of typhoid cropped up and the medical officer explained how easy it was for a whole camp to be wiped out in a very short time, and cleanliness was the order of the day.

Two large square holes, thirty feet across by eight feet deep were being dug in the camp near to the top road, and at the time the boys imagined they were going to be bathing pools. Jim was thinking of mass graves, but they turned out to be water reservoirs in case of fire in the camp. A few of the boys did have a swim in them when completed, but this practice was soon stopped by the Germans. Jim's pal Dick had now gone to a working camp as an interpreter, as he was always keen to learn the language and Jim did not know when he would see him again, and as Jim was Grade IV he was not expected to go out to the working camps.

It was now rumoured that there was an informer somewhere in the camp, and suspicion was cast on many P.O.Ws., and it all was a mystery and nothing came of it. Jim was out for a stroll one day when a German officer pulled him up for not saluting and he shouted

in angry tone, and as it produced no results he began to shout louder and make gestures with his hands for Jim to follow him and pick up rubbish as he pointed to it. Just when the officer was taking it for granted that Jim was following behind, some P.O.Ws. came past pulling a rubbish cart. Jim at once dumped his rubbish and started to push the cart, and dare not look back until well out of sight of the officer. Jim then continued his stroll taking care not to get caught like that again. During his stroll he took a good look at the lookout towers situated at intervals on the boundary of the camp, and saw they were fully equipped with machine guns, telephones and powerful spot lights for use in the dark. The guards had to climb ladders to get inside the towers, after first treading their way through a mass of barbed wire which lay at the foot of the tower.

There was no canteen here, and such things as razor blades, pencils etc. were divided up to be sold in each individual barracks. Although the compounds were numbered they were referred to by the P.O.Ws. as the Repatriation Compound, Straff Compound, Football Compound, R.A.F. Compound and so on, until it comes to the compound where working parties are completed in readiness for their departure to the working camps.

As these working parties went out of camp, so others came in, only to receive sick treatment and be regraded and sent out to work again. One unusual working party which Jim saw was a party of German soldiers busy fastening tin cans to a stretch of wire which separated their quarters from the prisoners' compound.

On going to different barracks Jim saw many P.O.Ws. busy with

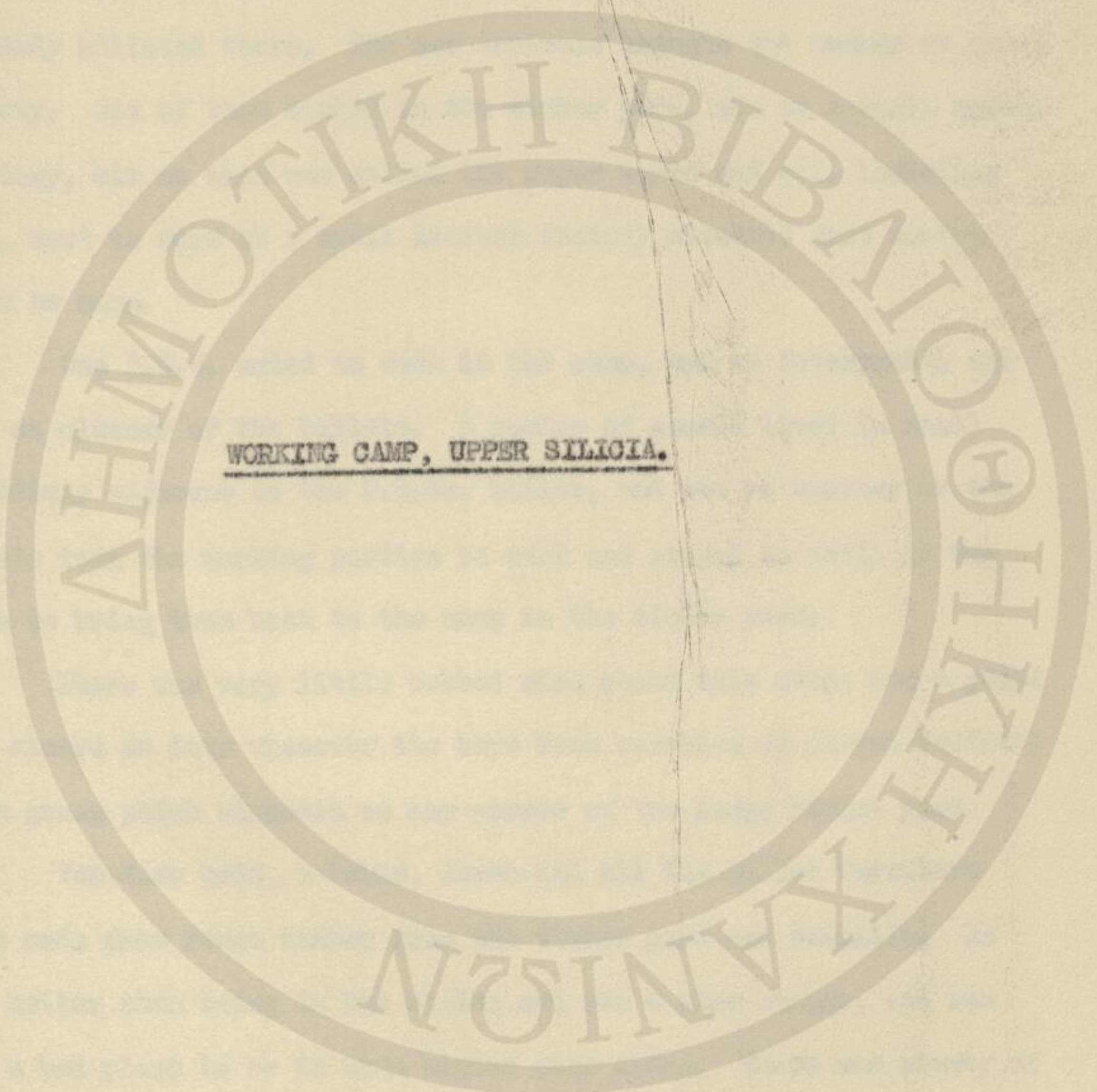
a hobby of some kind and this time a P.O.W. was cutting a small round bit of leather with scissors and keeping to the edge while turning it round and round, and the result was a leather boot lace. Another P.O.W. was modelling an aeroplane out of a tablet of soap. It was surprising to see how many different ways a razor blade could be sharpened, and the many uses for it when it was of no use for shaving. All these things had a sale value on the camp market.

Out on the common, small parties of German troops could be seen doing their training, during fine weather, and the sound of bagpipes could be heard from where the Scots were practising in a nearby compound.

As Jim walked round leisurely others could be seen in a hurry, and seemed to be going nowhere. This camp was too big for anyone to see what was going on all the time, so Jim contented himself by seeing it a bit at a time. To try and piece it all together was like a jigsaw puzzle. There were times when everyone was on the move, some going to hospital, others going for treatment or coming out of hospital, some moving into another compound, others going to bath parade, and when Jim saw this happening he would make his way back to his own barrack room and see what his lot was to be.

Most moves were at short notice and the move which all were waiting for never seemed to get any nearer. The grading and regrading was going on all the time and the list of cases recommended for repatriation was getting bigger. Another compound was switched over to house the P.O.Ws. who had passed the Repatriation Board and were

waiting to go home. Jim got tired of waiting to go and pass the Repatriation Board, and was getting fed up with the conditions of the camp. He was now thinking it would be better for him to get on to a working party to try his luck. It may be that he could drop into a steady job like the one he had at West End Lager, and so settle down instead of hoping and waiting. During one of his moods of despondency Jim spotted a list of working parties to be completed, and told the N.C.O. in charge of one which would suit him. He told the N.C.O. he was grade III and got away with it, and in a day or two was on the train to a small working camp in Upper Silicia.



WORKING CAMP, UPPER SILICIA.

On arrival this small party, including Jim, found a long, one-storey building in the centre of a large timber yard with P.O.Ws. already billeted there. The new arrivals brought the number to about thirty. Six of them worked in the timber yard, six at a small cement factory, six at what was called the paper works and six, including Jim, went to work at a small leather factory situated just across from the camp.

One P.O.W. acted as cook in the camp, one as interpreter and one as cleaner of the billets. A number of guards lived in small buildings adjacent to the P.O.Ws. billet, and one or another of the guards took the working parties to work and stayed on until it was time to bring them back to the camp in the timber yard.

There was very little barbed wire round this camp, and a guard was always on duty whenever the boys took exercise or played football on a grass patch situated at one corner of the large timber yard.

Two-tier beds, a table, forms and all the billet furniture were made from rough timber from the timber yard and sawmills. It was better than being in the stalag and was a nice change, and was not a bad place to be in when winter came along. There was plenty of fuel to burn and Jim thought it a lovely target for the R.A.F. The nearest town was about four miles from camp, and at times some of the boys had to go here to get stores.

All the beds were filled with wood shavings or straw and were very comfortable for a while until the fleas and mice got to know

about it, and then it was just too bad for the P.O.W.

A British N.C.O. was in charge of the billet and looked after the few library books, the first aid kit and the administration in general. The P.O.Ws. rose at six a.m. and were in bed at 10 p.m. and the lights put out by the main switch in the guards quarters. The new arrivals saw all there was to see of the camp during the first day here, and were now eager to see what the job was like at the leather factory across the road.

There was no formal introduction - the P.O.Ws. were taken to the foreman who set them to work on different jobs. Jim's first job was whitewashing, and most of the workers here were women with a very few men to do all the heavy work, and the P.O.Ws. were not supposed to talk with them. The way in which the boys were looked at by these people seemed like this was the first time British P.O.Ws. had been employed at this factory.

During working hours the guard walked round the factory paying a visit to each P.O.W. in turn. During the first day, Jim was taken off the whitewashing to do many jobs and finished the day carrying heavy pieces of machinery up steps to the top floor. The next day Jim was put to work on the wash tubs where animal skins were washed and bleached and the smell almost made him vomit.

During the few weeks he worked there, he tried to follow the process which did not look like leather making, but more like a quick processing of animal skins as a wartime economy. The skins were first put into a lime pit which helped to remove the hair, and a good

scraping completed this part of the process, after which the skins were washed, bleached and put through rollers. The next stage was to fasten them on to boards, using small tacks, and then put into a drying room until perfectly dry and hard and stiff. The skins were next cut, trimmed and polished by machines, and specialised process of the factories products was carried out in other parts of the factory.

After a week or two, the women, chiefly Polish, got to know the boys by their Christian names and began to greet them each morning with "Hail Hitler" and the boys would reply with "Hail Churchill". Although they were not supposed to converse with the P.O.Ws. they did so at every convenient opportunity.

Now it was all work and bed for the boys and no time for recreation such as outdoor games as the nights were creeping in early. Going to work one day Jim saw people gathering fruit, and oh! how he wished that some kind fairy would bring a basket full his way. He was a hardened prisoner of war by now and fruit was only one of the many things he had to do without now.

If ever a policeman, who was always armed to the teeth, saw any of the P.O.Ws. smoking on the factory, there was trouble, and should the boys steer clear of trouble for a few days, they had the idea that they had it coming to them. One day while working at the factory, Jim had just lit a cigarette when the Big Boss came up from behind and caught hold of him by the ear and shouted "Nicks rauking" (no smoking) and pointed to a large notice on the wall. Jim went

on working when the boss let go of his ear, after first throwing the cigarette down and putting his foot on it, purposely to get as far away as possible, and out of sight as quickly as possible. The Big Boss was dressed in the uniform of the Brownskirts, wearing high-heeled jack-boots and breeches, brown shirt and polished beck cap. As arm band displaying the swastika, and a leather belt completed with revolver and hester. This was the first time that Jim had ever seen the real Boss as he did not visit the factory very often.

When the machines were quiet one day at the factory, the boys heard shots being fired at the cement works a little way up the road, and guessed that the P.O.Ws. working there were having trouble. This turned out to be correct, and when they all returned to the billet in the evening, it was told of the foreman firing his revolver into the air and putting on a show something like a western film in his efforts to get more work out of the boys. None of the boys liked the work at the cement works, and several had tired of it and Jim was now getting fed up with his job at the leather factory and he always seemed to be getting into trouble with one thing or another going wrong. On one occasion Jim was told to take a small hand truck and fetch a large cask of oil from the storehouse. The road was so bad that the cask of oil just collapsed, and the oil was lost making a real mess all over the road. Jim went to tell the storeman about it, and how it happened, but the storeman got furious and called it sabotage. Jim found that it was the P.O.W. who had to do all the dirty jobs, and if not a dirty job it was a heavy job. It was always the P.O.W.

who was looked upon with suspicion when things went wrong and was continually being searched and the only kind words he received were from his comrades or his letters from home.

Out to work in the early morning and back to the billet when evening came, to be locked in and his boots and trousers taken away by the guards as a precaution against escape. What a life, and how long was it to last? The billet was a very busy place during the teatime, and the hour after when everyone was washing and shaving all at the same time, until one by one they would settle down to a passtime of some kind. The Red Cross food parcels, when available, arrived from the stalag, also the mail, and the British medical officer paid a visit once a week to enquire of the health and wellbeing of the P.O.Ws. The boys all welcomed him with a cup of tea whenever possible, and he always enjoyed the boys' company, staying for about one hour discussing the latest news of the war. All the P.O.Ws. appreciated the efforts of the medical officer in trying to get the conditions improved.

There were no concerts and the boys had to make their own entertainment as best they could, and the few library books were not sufficient to go round. But there was always some topic of interest being discussed. While the boys of the cement factory told of how they disliked their job, others working at the paper factory were all in praise of their job. One of the P.O.Ws. explained the kind of work he was employed on, and it turned out to be large rolls of heavy brown paper which were first opened out on the floor and then tarred with hot molten tar. Fine sand was next applied after which the surplus was brushed off when dried. These sheets of paper were now looking like

roofing felt, fairly strong and much heavier.

The woman who owned the factory had to manage it all by herself as the foreman had gone into the forces, and now she relied more or less on the P.O.Ws. She gained the boys' affections by doing small favours for them such as sewing buttons on or doing a little first aid when necessary. She told them her husband had been killed in the war, and how she managed the factory all by herself. Never a day passed without one or another of the boys saying what small favours she had done them during that day at work.

The boys walked to and from work, and hot soup was sent from the billet at midday, and a meal was ready for when they returned in the evening. The weekly rations were got from different food centres in the town a distance of about four miles from camp, and a party of four and the guard would go and collect the lot. Jim went on this ration party one week and enjoyed the walk and the sights in town, but coming back heavily laden was a different story.

The hospital where the P.O.Ws., as well as civilians, received treatment when necessary was in this area, and when any of the boys went sick they were almost sure to get a few days off from work by the British medical officer, but when this facility was abused the German doctor would intervene and become more difficult to get a day off from work.

All the P.O.Ws. from other working camps in the area used this hospital, and here Jim met a P.O.W. who said he worked at a sugar refinery and Jim told him that he worked at a leather factory. He

then asked Jim to meet him again next Monday and bring sufficient leather to make a belt and he would bring some sugar in exchange. One day Jim saw hundreds of vehicles, all laden with sugar beet, heading for the sugar refinery. There were vehicles of every description from dog-cart to tractor, and it was common to see a horse and bullock working in harness together. Passing the sugar factory one day Jim saw several British P.O.Ws. working alongside people of all nationalities.

One fellow remarked that this country was just one big "Booby Trap" and this place was the international corner. This reminded Jim of the women in the leather factory who had told him of their plight since the Germans had taken over their country. Everywhere one could see the most primitive methods combined with the latest, and most up-to-date principles of modern production, in an effort to push the wartime production to extremes. Almost everyone working here lived in a P.O.W. camp, a conscript labour camp or community camp and all wore an identification badge in a conspicuous place on their clothing. The French prisoners of war were a sorry sight and poorly clothed, and would rather stick it out to the end in preference to going back to France under the Nazi Regime.

After seeing all this Jim at once realised that the British prisoner of war, under the rules of the Geneva Convention, was in the better position. Work at the leather factory was getting very boring and Jim wondered if he would not be better off in the Stalag, but getting back was not so easy as it sounds. The only time anyone was

returned to the Stalag was to get sick treatment or to be punished for some offence, or when the job was finished. At times Jim was boiling over to tell these people just what he thought of them and their reasoning, and it was at times like this that he could see himself giving back to the Stalag to be punished.

The civilian, with whom Jim worked at the wash tub, tried his best to make it as comfortable as possible, and at lunchtime Jim saw him eating bread and turnip and felt really sorry for him, and the civilian would try to explain how bad the food situation was in his family. It was very difficult to explain, and Jim tried to tell him that it was usual for the P.O.Ws. to get up in the morning and have a hot drink of coffee and what the mice had left of the bread ration, then off to work keeping their chin up as all the letters say, for "It won't be long now."

When in Solonika it was the lice, in West End Lager it was the rats, in the Stalag the threat of typhoid, and now it had to be the fleas and mice. This was another losing battle being fought by the P.O.W. with no proper weapons and equipment to fight back.

During teatime some of the boys would try their hand at cooking a good meal from the Red Cross food parcels, while others looked on and argued about how it should be done, and used the funniest phrasing possible. Fish cakes were Jim's favourite recipe, and he often made these as they were so simple to make and were very tasty, especially when served hot. Jim mixed a tin of pilchards with a basin full of mashed potatoes, rolled into balls and covered with meal or oats or

bread crumbs, and then placed on a hot plate until brown and crisp on the outside. Should the soup by chance be good the lads would queue up with can and spoon in hand, but when the soup was not so good everyone would dig into his Red Cross food parcel and a silent prayer would go out to all those good people at home who helped to make this possible.

One of the boys had a small pamphlet giving lots of recipes on how to use potatoes, but as it was in German there was difficulty in following it. Jim kept his diary going and several of the lads enjoyed reading it, and others warned him of the risk he was taking. All the boys handles the furniture with caution because of the rough splinters with which it bristled.

The guards would take the opportunity to search the billet when the boys were all at work. This was alright it only they would put the kit back tidy, instead of leaving it strewn all over the floor.

Work at the timber yard was a rather heavy job, as huge bulks of timber had to be loaded on to a truck on rails and taken to the saw mill, where it was manhandled through all its stages. The boys said the supply could not keep pace with the demand. The large circular saw was steam driven, and to make it modern was out of the question in wartime.

As Jim was now visiting the hospital regularly, it was decided to send him back to the Stalag for sick treatment, and within a few days time he was on his way.

АННОТИКХ БИБЛИОТКХ
УНИВЕРСИТЕТА
КАНАДА

WINTER IN THE STALAG

At the railway station Jim and the guard saw three Russian prisoners of war, accompanied by two guards with fixed bayonets, and they were all going on the same train. The Russians were being taken to the Russian P.O.W. camp to be punished for trying to escape. As they all travelled in the same carriage together, one of the Guards acted as interpreter. One of the Russians had his hand heavily bandaged, and the other had his bare leg showing through a large hole in his trousers. The third carried a dirty sack which held all the kit and all three were tied together with cord at the wrists. The guard told Jim they had been at large for three days, and the home guard had shot one of them through the hand and their clothing was burned while sleeping round a fire to keep warm. With the guard's permission, Jim gave them all he had in his Red Cross food parcel, and they did not know how to thank him. They said Jim was the best comrade they had met for a long time. As the interpreter explained it all, Jim offered him a cigarette which he readily accepted in the same spirit as the train reached its destination.

It was now November, 1943, and Jim was going to winter in the Stalag - a thing which he had tried so hard to avoid. The working camps were nothing to run after and Jim's health was too bad to think of trying to escape, so he had to settle down in the Stalag and make the best of it. What a different place it was now that the weather had broken. It was cold and wet and the whole camp was taking on a gloomy aspect. Mud lay inches deep everywhere, from the main entrance to the compounds, and this was typical of all the camp when off the

two main roads, when it had been raining. Getting through this mud was quite a performance at times, as in the case of one fellow who left his Dutch clogs behind, stuck in the mud, and finished the performance by walking in his socks. To keep his boots clean and always tidy, Jim exchanged a pair of sandals for a pair of these clogs and wore them with foot wrappings to fill up, and it helped to keep his feet warm and dry during the bad weather. Socks were not issued to P.O.s, but foot wrappings were issued as a substitute. Later it was learned that this kind of foot wrapping was issued to the German soldiers as part of their kit, and it could be used to good advantage when on the march, by wrapping and rewrapping at intervals to ease foot fatigue. These wrappings had their advantages, and never needed darning and mending, and could be washed and dried in quick time. Jim used this piece of greyish material, measuring about fourteen inches square, as a handkerchief when it was necessary, or perhaps a towel. Many times Jim used old woollen socks which were past repair to help fill up the clogs which were always on the large size. Other fellows collected old socks to retrieve wool for repair purposes, and woollen bed covers had been knitted from wool collected in this way. Jim came to possess one of these, and when not in use on the bed he wore it wrapped around himself like a skirt under his overcoat, which was one way of making sure that nobody took a fancy to it.

Winter was drawing near, and Jim was making a few preparations as his experience of the previous winters had taught him a lesson. The fuel ration was nothing like what was necessary every four days, and

this accounted for the doors, window frames and beds being burned.

Christmas was almost here again, and much time was spent in making a few decorations, which helped to make the billet a little more cheerful. Jim got the labels and coloured paper from the food tins and packages, while other P.O.s cut and stuck them together, using condensed milk. The tall pines outside the camp were the Christmas trees, but when one arrived in the billet it served better use as fuel. As the weather was now really cold, a small party of twelve were allowed to go and collect wood from the forest, and this was then shared between the four barracks of that particular compound. This continued each day until the cold weather ended and solved many problems. The P.O.s tried to keep a little in stock just in case the compound was locked for some reason. The camp authorities, as the lads knew, would give a small privilege one day and cancel it the next, and it was not wise to take anything for granted. N.C.O. prisoners, the rank of sergeant and over, were given such jobs as being in charge of a barrack, and had to see to the fair sharing of the food etc., and a party of four P.O.s would help in the smooth running of the affairs of the barrack. They were called cleaners, and their job was more or less a permanent one. Each barrack followed the same daily routine, except that some barrack chefs were a little more strict in their efforts to maintain discipline, and so help make it as comfortable as conditions would allow for everyone using the barrack. In most cases the barrack chef and his staff of four cleaners made for themselves a small cabin or bunk in one corner of the barrack,

using wood from Red Cross food cases, and patched up with pieces of tin or anything available. This bunk made their corner a little more comfortable and more private, and housed the table and utensils necessary for the distribution of food. The word utensils means a stick to measure the thickness of a slice of bread, and a tin can fastened to a stick to use as a ladel when soup was served. Each P.O.W. got one slice of bread about one inch thick, and was supposed to weigh so many grammes, hence the measuring stick. One inch on the stick equalled one ration. The cleaners carried the soup from the compound gates to the barrack and served it up. One day it was pea soup, another cabbage soup, turnip soup, barley soup and so on. Should the soup be good, the bins would be scraped clean, and if not so good the bins or tubs would stay untouched with nobody interested. Then came the sharing of potatoes, served hot with skins on. The soup bins were delivered to the gates of each compound by a flat waggon and two horses, and the bins when empty were collected in the same way. This was another permanent job without pay, and employed six.

Many P.O.W. were employed in the camp, such as cookhouse, bath house, road sweeping, night dust collecting etc. Many P.O.W. preferred this kind of job in preference to going out to working camp because of the small advantages which went with the job, as in the case of those working in the bath-house who would have the chance to keep themselves clean, and take a hot bath occasionally.

There were times when one barrack had some facility which could be used to some advantage if all were willing to help, and this particular barrack had a copper or washing boiler, and all the P.O.Ws. in

this barrack set about using it to make a community brew of tea, by giving up the tea from the Red Cross food parcel. Some would fetch the water while others would get the wood for the fire, and many times this boiler was shared by other barracks for the same purpose. A large brick-built heating stove stood in the centre of each barrack, but was only used when absolutely necessary because of the fuel situation. This was always a very sore point, and was the real cause of much trouble and discomfort, as most of the doors and window frames had vanished at different times. Almost anything that would burn was pilfered or earmarked, and eventually vanished. This was a punishable offence, but the P.O.s. still took a chance. It was alright for a horse to eat his bed, but Jim could not understand a P.O.W. burning his bed to make a drink of tea or to cook a meal of some kind.

The walls of the barrack room, inside and outside, were covered with dirty black marks where small fires had been made at different times. Should the smoky atmosphere be too bad, the alternative was to go outside and brave the biting cold wind. When a few pals decided to make a small fire, one of them would go to the nearest palliase and take a handful of the contents, and before many days time someone was sleeping on the bare floor until such times as he could get the palliase filled again. The palliases were usually filled with straw and were changed periodically, and when Jim took his to be filled one day the supply had run out, and he was lucky enough to get it filled with shredded paper which came as packing material in the Red Cross supplies.

During the cold winter it was common to see several P.O.Ws. huddled round a tin can which had a few holes knocked in it, and burning a few bits of cardboard. It was surprising how clever some of the boys were at making economical stoves, and without any knowledge of thermal, calorific or specific heat values. Two fellows made one of these stoves one day, when another P.O.W. came and asked about the percentage efficiency of it, and a third person came on the scene and began to give advice on how the stove could be improved to consume its own smoke. Whenever Jim tried to make a drink of tea on one of these stoves it always tasted of smoke. The three tier wooden beds had been pilfered so much at different times as to make them unsafe for sleeping in, and several minor accidents happened this way. Sometimes a whole lot of bed would collapse.

The bed space was a real problem at times, as it had to accommodate all one's kit, and the result was that Jim had many uncomfortable nights in a small space, as he always had a fair amount of junk with which he was reluctant to part. Anyone lucky enough to get a top bed could lie and admire the drawings on the ceiling which were sometimes the work of a good artist. When Jim got one of these beds the drawings were rather vulgar and not to his liking, and he quickly removed them. One picture which everyone admired was done in colours on a whitewashed wall in the barrack room, and was that of a home fireside complete with cat on the hearth, and a glowing fire.

The news had spread around the camp like wildfire of the arrival of the Christmas parcels from the British Red Cross. They had been

delayed and it looked like being a very dull Christmas this time, but the arrival in time changed all this. The holes in the walls of the barracks, where there once had been windows, were sealed with strips of tin which the boys had hammered together to keep out the cold wind. This kept the wind and rain out, but made the place very dark, and when the small fires got going the smoke made one's eyes and throat smart. The boys tried to make chimney pipes from tin cans to carry the smoke through the window holes, but there were too many leaky joints to call it a success.

There was always the bully of the barrack to contend with, who liked all his own way, making it uncomfortable for everyone in the vicinity. Several times he picked on Jim, not that Jim was afraid but that he would keep quiet for quietness' sake. When it came to the worst he could always take care of himself and could rough it if necessary, but never went looking for trouble.

Sometime during the afternoon the barrack chef and cleaners would be busy with the bread measuring stick to serve up the daily bread ration, plus whatever there was to go with it. One day it would be a spoonful of jam or a small portion of margarine, another day perhaps a little German sausage meat or cheese. These portions were so small at times that each section of P.O.Ws. would take the lot one day, and another section of P.O.Ws. would take it all the next day. It was laughable to see someone pull a fork out with one side of the handle sharpened like a knife, to use to spread butter or jam on the bread, while others were waiting to borrow it. Knives were one thing

the guards were always on the lookout for, and they were regarded as weapons. Many times the rations were held up because there was no knife available.

One advantage of going out to working camps was to have the chance to pick up a few tools, and the chances of an escape were considered more favourable. Tools of any kind were always in great demand by the P.O.Ws. if only to use in connection with a hobby of some kind. A P.O.W. doing haircutting as a pastime would give anything for a good pair of scissors. Two cigarettes a time was charged and he was always kept busy. A few coloured crayons and a drawing book cost Jim 20 cigarettes, but it was worth it just to be able to pass the time with an interesting hobby. Many P.O.Ws. were not so lucky and had to improvise or do without many things. One fellow was stuck for a small table vice, so he set to work making small holes in the table at intervals of a quarter inch and wedge shaped pegs to fit. Jim was asked to make a table for use in the barrack room, and the only material available was a couple of Red Cross packing cases and the only tools were a broken knife and a wooden clog, and the nails which he got when dismantling the wooden cases. When finished it satisfied the barrack chef who took good care to see that it was not pilfered for fuel. To make things with tin was a favourite pastime with most of the P.O.Ws. and a large powdered Milk Tin was favourite to use as a soup bowl. Tin cans were plentiful in the camp, and some of the boys would put handles on them and keep them highly polished, making them look like a well finished job. There was so

much handywork of nice quality to be seen that Jim decided to start and collect a few tools to try his hand, and after several weeks of searching and bargaining Jim found himself in possession of a pair of scissors, a heavy nut and bolt to use as a hammer, and a broken hacksaw blade and nobody was more surprised than Jim when fellows came and offered two cigarettes a time just to borrow them. The Germans had now found a use for the tin cans, which were stacked in a large heap at one corner of the camp, and a motor lorry would take a load now and again. The boys searched this dump many times to find tins of different kinds suitable for various purposes. A flat, oval herring tin made a good frying pan, a powdered milk tin made a good pint mug or a soup bowl, a large corned beef tin made a water bucket, a coffee tin made a good shaving cup, and so Jim kept searching the dump. He had gone on this usual errand so many times and on one occasion he found a working party digging a large hole to bury the tins, and he could understand why when he looked back on the days when typhoid was the scare of the camp. The smell of this dump was bad enough although it was winter, and who knew what would happen when summer came! This slowed up the progress of the tinsmiths, and only tins fresh from the Red Cross food parcels were available. When these parcels were shared one between two P.O.s, the tins began to get scarce, and it was wise to save the tins from the previous week's food parcels, otherwise it meant that the tins in the parcels had to be cut into two parts as well as the contents, and everybody was looking around for empty tins. Red Cross food sometimes came in

bulk instead of small parcels, and with it came many problems in the distribution. The large wooden cases must be used for barrack room furniture as suggested by the camp comforts committee, whose efforts were to improve the existing conditions at the camp.

In the camp Jim met a P.O.W. from his home town and they were pals for quite a long time during his stay in the stalag, and when food parcels were issued one between two the parcel was taken to his pal's barrack which was in another compound, and Jim went over at mealtimes because the facilities were better. This arrangement worked nicely for a number of weeks, then for some reason the compounds were locked for several days and they could not make contact with each other. Jim had to manage on the German P.O.W. ration of bread and soup. After this experience Jim decided to share his food parcel with someone in the same compound.

It was during this month of December, 1943, that the Germans found the entrance to an escape tunnel in one of the compounds on the top road. The German camp officials and guards were on the spot in quick time, clearing P.O.Ws. out of the compound and making thorough investigations. Would they find and punish those who had toiled many nights? Would all the P.O.Ws. of the compound be punished? and what kind of punishment would be meted out? One of the P.O.Ws. made headlines of this and circulated it in the camp. It read as follows:-

TIMELY DISCOVERY IN P.O.W. CAMP

A tunnel was discovered today in Stalag 8B. The tunnel was attacked at both ends by the guards who were successful in capturing

much war material including maps, compasses and bedboards. The prisoners' gallant effort of returning the bedboards met with no success"

None of the P.O.Ws. seemed to know how many had gone through this tunnel with its entrance in the floor of one of the barracks and leading into the pine forest. All that the P.O.Ws. in the camp would do was to wish them luck, wherever they were. They were probably starving and trying to brave the bitter cold weather. All the P.O.Ws. in this compound were marched out of camp and on to the common where they were all searched. When ready to be marched back into camp, Jim unearthed a chronometer from a hole in the ground which he had dug with the heel of his boot while waiting to be searched. When they got back to the barrack all their kit and beds had already been searched during their absence, and left very untidy.

The scare of disease in the camp had the whole lot worried again, and all were inoculated as several cases were in hospital under strict observation. Jim fully realised the seriousness of all this, and the situation they were all in, and up to now had tried to console himself by looking upon this kind of life as just another adventure, but the enthusiasm was now wearing off and it was becoming difficult to raise a smile. He had always tried to look on the humorous side of everything, and wondered why very few P.O.Ws. could not see things as he saw them, but now it was different and he was seeing things and events in a different light and with tears dimming his sight.

The latrines were overflowing, only to be trampled into the barracks where many had to sleep on the floor, and only a broom made from twigs like the old witch's broomstick. Lime was issued at different times and the P.O.s. did whitewashing with brushes made from string and wrappings of the food parcels. This was not small job as all the kit and junk which covered the walls had to be moved. The only ones interested were those who were likely to be staying for a long period in that particular barrack, and there were others who were thinking the war might be over tomorrow and the whitewashing would not be necessary. Moral at times was very low and would sometimes blot out any sense of reasoning or respect for others, and to counteract this state of affairs, the N.C.O. or chef as he was called would do his best to put on some kind of entertainment every evening. This was where Jim took on the job of entertainments maestro for their barracks with a small concert one evening, and a grammophone recital the next. During this period Jim would look back on the different jobs he had undertaken such as entertainments organiser, secretary to the literary society, and the exchange and mart, in a world all its own where success or failure did not mean a thing.

A guard with dog usually patrolled the compound at night after lights out, and this time he came a little earlier than usual when Jim and two more were entertaining in the dark as a musical trio. The dog came leaping through the window hole and the three scrambled to hide quickly among the rows of three tier beds. Jim scrambled into the first bed he came to and whispered to the fellow to keep quiet

until the guard had gone, and then made his way quietly and in the dark back to his own bed. Cigarettes were now firmly established as currency in the camp, and almost anything could be exchanged for cigarettes. Some of the cigarettes in circulation had been handled so many times that they were almost unfit for bartering, as they were very dry and losing shape. Among these were brands of cigarettes unheard of, and others homemade. The markets up to now had served a very good purpose but were slowly being turned into a racket, and everyone who had access to anything which could be used for profit was looked upon as being in the racket.

Jim was playing a game of cards one evening when his partner asked him for a cigarette and Jim said he had none with him, but would get some when this game was over. His partner then asked another P.O.W. for a cigarette and he also had none. Just then a looker-on banged a tin of tobacco on the table saying, "Here you are, make yourself a cigarette. I don't know why you play cards with chaps like these who would see you without a smoke." Jim found out later that this P.O.W. was one like himself who would do anything to foil the rackets. Some views on the rackets were very strong in the camp, but there was very little anyone could do about it. Some would exchange food for a concert ticket or cigarettes, or a tablet of soap.

Each concert would run for several weeks and so give everyone chance to see it, as the concert hall was very small, and tickets were issued to each compound in turn, and this accounts for so many small concerts each evening in the barrack rooms. Singers, instrumentalists and entertainers were in great demand to tour the whole camp,

and each barrack chef would do his best to encourage this and would try to provide a cup of tea in appreciation. Jim teamed up with one of these entertaining troupes to tour the camp and made lots of friends which otherwise he would never have met. Concerts, no matter what kind, were all appreciated by the P.O.Ws. and lasted during the cold winter months. If ever there happened to be one fine day during the dark and cold period everybody would try to take the fullest advantage of it, and there was sure to be some outdoor sports or entertainment of some kind. The bagpipes and drums gave a splend display on the roads outside the compounds several times, and everyone turned out to see it. It just went to show how quickly the whole camp suddenly springs into life.

Much time and organising had to be put into making it possible to carry out these entertainments and pastimes, and it was up to every P.O.W. in camp to help in some way, instead of just taking it for granted, as many did.

It was felt very badly when compounds were locked and it was not possible to get around the camp to see what was going on. Some of the P.O.Ws. had lots of time on hand while others seemed to be very busy and had no time to waste, and it all added up to one thing, how best to keep body and mind active during these wasted years. Jim had learned that pencil and paper was better than the finest memory, and it was now keeping him interested to record events as they happened, for what they were worth. Sometimes a drawing could explain more than words, and he would try his hand with the coloured crayons.

Sometimes an important event would be advertised in the way of posters, giving the date and place and depicting an interesting item of this particular event, and this Jim would try to copy with the coloured crayons, and when not equal to the task, Jim would get an artist to do it for him.

There were so many Committees operating in the camp that no-one knew just what was going on all the time, as for instance only a very few out of the many thousands in the camp, knew of the escape tunnel, and nobody was more surprised than Jim when it came to be known. There was a Sports Committee, Camp Welfare Committee, Entertainments Committee, Escape Committee and Educational Committee, and they were all making a good job of the work. While these committees were doing their best, other small committees of voluntary workers at home were organised and working in close contact with the British Red Cross Society for the benefit of prisoners of war, and also attending to the needs of their families. Letters from home told Jim that a small group of volunteers had formed a committee of this kind in his home town and very soon P.O.s. from the Potteries were receiving parcels of clothing, cigarettes, books and many more items. A few weeks later Jim received a parcel of books on Pottery, and was now reading, talking and dreaming of pottery, and it was always an interesting topic in a place like this where tin cans were so much in evidence. Jim was referred to many times as "that fellow who talks pottery" and he often thought of the plight they would be in if it were not for the tin cans being a good substitute.

Although Jim's health was very bad and was receiving treatment at the hospital, he still went ahead with his plans to tour the camp lecturing on "Pottery and the Potters Art". Very soon a large consignment of enamel ware arrived, but not sufficient to supply the whole camp, but they were hoping more would come later. Jim found out that this enamel ware was sent by a group of voluntary workers in England interested in the welfare of Canadian P.O.Ws. and which accounted for most of it going to the Canadian compound.

A fellow from Jim's home town died while in this camp, and all P.O.Ws. from his hometown and district gathered to pay tribute. It was a dry sunny day, but cold, and the band and drums draped in black led the procession to a small cemetery among the tall pine trees half a mile from camp. The tiny church stood at the foot of a cluster of tall pines which made it look all the more tiny, with accommodation for about twelve persons, and the remainder lined up outside. The guards formed the firing squad and trumpeters from the P.O.W. band sounded the Last Post. The German officers laid wreaths and saluted in the German military tradition. The weather kept fine but cold, and on the return to camp the band played the British Grenadiers march with the German officers and guards marching smartly to attention. All this reminded Jim of the time at West End Lager when the Commandant and guards stood to attention when God Save the King was played at the close of a concert. Now we find the allied troops and the German troops marching to the same tune of Lili Marlene.

As time went on, small groups of P.O.Ws. became known in the camp as the B.E.F. and Dunkirk boys, the Dieppe boys, the Heroes of Crete etc. and a small group of this mixed lot sat round a table which up to now had survived the pilfering. They talked of the latest events of the war and of the possibilities of it finishing quickly, and of all the rumours in the camp, until they almost began to talk themselves into believing it all. They talked of imagining themselves marching through the streets with the band on parade, leading up to a warm welcome home. So many rumours and unusual things happened in the camp, making it hard to believe anything. It was so in the case of a millionaire's son known as the "play boy" who had just exchanged a race horse for a loaf of bread, and signed a paper to this effect. Everyone in the camp walked about with that very sameness about them which made it so very difficult for any kind of distinction.

One day Jim found himself in conversation with a Doctor of Music. Another time he found out he was talking to a Professor of Languages, and neither of them looked as one would expect of such high qualities and learning. There were several mental cases in the camp and some in the hospital - poor chaps, they could not just stand the strain of this kind of life. One of these cases was very amusing with his antics when watching a football match and getting excited.

Time was now beginning to tell, and the effects of it could plainly be seen in many cases. Jim prayed many times that nothing of this kind of living would be seen in him when this lot was over

and done with, and he was back to civilisation again. It seemed to Jim that everyone here carried that "hall mark" of the prison camps, and at times it was very plain to see. To Jim's way of thinking, the noted French Foreign Legion had nothing to show these fellows, and if anyone deserves the cup of kindness when this was over, surely it must be the prisoner of war. Rough, tough and ready for anything was the best way to explain them, spurred on with hatred for all that war stood for. Nothing different to the Prisoner of War Camp could ever be so demoralising, and yet there still were some P.O.Ws. trying to keep up the moral and self-respect.

The food parcels were not so plentiful now, and everyone was back on bread and soup, and the bread was showing signs of being stale and mouldy. When Jim had his soup in his tin he had now to find a place to sit and eat it, and this nearly always was on the floor. There was no hot water available to do the washing up in, but there was always plenty of soil and sand to do the job with, and woe betide anyone who dared to serve soup to Jim when he got back to knife and fork days.

Jim chanced to meet a fellow one day and asked him how he was getting along with his diary. He said, "Oh! I packed it up, I can never find anything to put in it; every day seems to be the same in this hole," and here was Jim collecting material for his own diary which was priority No. 1. From one P.O.W. Jim managed to get some paintings in water colour which were fit for any Academy.

Paper was very scarce, especially toilet paper, and this was where old letters came in useful, and also accounts for so many of the pages missing from the library books. As the camp library was very inadequate, reading books of any kind and any condition had a value on the camp market. Jim bought a reading book one day and enjoyed reading it, and then exchanged it for another in not a very good condition. After a few more exchanges Jim found himself with a few dirty pages which someone called a book. He had much difficulty in trying to read its dirty pages, and more difficulty when it came to trying to exchange it. Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf* "Mien Camph" (my struggle) was on sale in the camp at two Reich Marks for a volume and they were being sold from the library from a large stock. Jim was wondering why so many of the boys were buying them. When he found out, he went and bought two volumes, and had not had them in his possession very long when a few pals came to take a few pages for toilet use.

The latrines were in the form of a long, brick outhouse in each compound with an entrance at each end and a deep sump at the rear from where the night soil was collected. There was one long wooden seat running the full length of the building with round holes at intervals and no partitions separating them. At the foot of the opposite wall was a channel in the floor, long and narrow, which was the urinal. Here again there was no privacy whatsoever, and one just had to get used to it. When the guards came to search the compound they searched this place just as thoroughly.

The guards often came to the barrack rooms to collect a few P.O.Ws. to do small jobs of work such as trimming the undergrowth from the drainage and roadside, or patching up holes in the road, and while he spoke to the barrack chef the boys would just vanish from the room through the window holes and try to hide among the clothing and junk which hung from the beds. One guard expressed his disgust by saying he could not understand how some of these chaps ever came to be prisoners of war. Jim was caught several times to go and do these jobs with the guard, until he learned the vanishing trick, and this goes to show that while this kind of life sharpens the wit of some, it dulls the wit of others and tends to undermine one's health.

One fellow commenting on the Swastika flag fluttering at the main entrance to the camp said he would get it for a souvenir, should he be in the camp when the war finished, just to remind him that he was once a guest of Hitler.

Rolling a homemade cigarette was always a problem to Jim until he watched some of these fellows who were quite clever and could roll one in a matter of seconds. To prove how clever some of them were, they would do it with one hand. Every kind of tobacco and substitute known was smoked in this camp and one chap tried smoking dried coffee grains.

Jim came across a fellow one day from his home district who said he was one of the Escape Committee which was well organised, and where one could get help and advice necessary for making a break. He himself had made several attempts to escape, but each time was unlucky,

and the last time Jim saw him he was in the straff compound for his last attempt to escape. This fellow was one of the P.O.Ws. who had to wear the chains which ceased about this time after almost twelve months. The chaps knew this was not out of sympathy for the P.O.W., but because of the British Government's views on it. All the P.O.Ws. looked upon this as another defeat for the Germans.

It was a few days to Christmas when Jim chanced to meet Chaperio who seemed very pleased. He said, "Hello, Jim, you come from like out of the sky? Where have you been all the time?" Chaperio said he had passed the Repatriation Medical Board and was now waiting to be sent home. Jim wished him good luck and a merry Christmas, and he replied "Same to you, Jim." Jim told Chaperio it was his birthday next week, and to this he replied "Then I must wish you some more, so I wish same again."

The small straff compound situated at the far end of the bottom road contained one barrack, and was the smallest of all the compounds. A special guard was always on duty both day and night, and the main entrance to it was padlocked, and more guards continually patrolled the barbed wire. Nobody was ever allowed to go near enough to speak to the Prisoners, so the P.O.Ws. shouted from a safe distance. When a P.O.W. wanted to get something to a pal inside, he would wait until such a time as an opportunity came to sling a small packet high into the air, hoping it would land in the compound, while hiding behind a barrack in the next compound. With the packet went a note to say whom it was intended for, and it would be delivered by any of the P.O.Ws.

finding it. Most of the P.O.Ws. were in for attempted escape, refusing to work or failing to observe the camp rules and discipline. Being kept in this compound was a mild form of punishment which kept one from taking part in sports, entertainments or any activities of the camp for a definite period. By the way, the place was guarded with machine guns and powerful spot lights, and anyone would get the impression that the place was for hardened criminals.

A very large six-engined plane passed over the camp about twice a week during one period, and was the cause of much comment by the P.O.Ws. watching it. It was flying very low as if heavily laden. Many of the boys guessed it to be a German war transport plane to and from the Russian front, and another time a squadron of allied planes flew over the camp at a great height and were only just visible. The sirens sounded and guards alerted and doubled in some cases, while some of the P.O.Ws. yelled with delight. One of the P.O.Ws. remarked "They are on a good mission - good luck to them."

One unfortunate incident which happened one day in the camp was a fight between two P.O.Ws., both foreigners, and it all started over waiting their turn for a haircut. When Jim came to know of it one was chasing the other round the camp brandishing a thick, heavy piece of wood. They ran from near the straff compound, down the full length of the bottom road, up passed the cookhouse and on to the top road, finishing up in the compound where they had started from. Here pals started to take sides with them and it looked like developing into a nasty situation, when the guards came on the scene and stopped

it. The next day the Commandant had the whole of the camp on parade and told them, "You can fight and kill each other as much as you like in your own country, but not here in this camp. Any more incidents of this kind and the machine guns will be turned on the whole lot of you."

The next day a football match was in progress in the same compound and all the P.O.s, turned up to see it. The compound was crowded to full capacity and the guard in the nearest look-out tower fired a burst of machine gun shots as a warning that the P.O.s were too close to the boundary wire and must move away. The football ground was in use every day, weather permitting, as each compound had its own teams, and many inter-compound competitions were held. This was the largest compound and had the most open space where all kinds of sport were held at different times. A Gala Sports Day was held on one occasion and this was where the Indians proved they could run, jump, and carry off the prizes for many other events. The Canadians played their favourite baseball sport and would always attract a large crowd and many a baseball and football was damaged by hitting the barbed wire so many times. Whenever the ball went over the wire nobody knew how long it would take to retrieve it as nobody could just walk out and get it. Sometimes a guard or sentry on duty outside the wire could throw it back into the camp, while another guard would ignore it until he received order from the guard in the nearest lookout tower who had telephoned to the headquarters for permission.

As the bad weather continued, the sports were rather limited to such sports as ice hockey or skating. The Canadians were busy

preparing an ice rink by levelling the snow hoping it might freeze hard, as some of the boys had already got the kit.

Christmas came and passed almost unnoticed, except for the Church service and Christmas food parcels, and no elaborate decorations were to be seen in any of the barracks. One thing Jim did see was a Christmas parcel which the German troops received. It contained a few biscuits, a little fruit and a photograph of Hitler, accompanied by a card which read, "With the compliments of the Fuhrer."

The frost on the pine trees was a gentle reminder of Christmas, and Jim was wondering how many more Christmases he would be spending away from home, this being his fifth. 1939 Christmas he was in Egypt; 1940 on the Isle of Crete, 1941 and 1942 in West End Lager, and 1943 here in the Stalag. Several of the boys decorated their lettercards using coloured crayons and water colours, to make them look like Christmas cards, before posting to relatives at home. There was nothing special on the menu, but there were a lot of thanks for the British Red Cross Christmas parcels. Check parade was held out in the open air every morning at 7-30 a.m. and in the afternoon at 5-30 p.m., and should there be a hitch or a miscount during this check up, it would probably take more than an hour to complete the job. Waiting about in the cold weather during winter to be counted over and over again until the Germans were satisfied that the count was correct, was anything but a picnic, and whenever Jim turned out for this check parade, he went prepared for a long wait. There were

still P.O. Ws. who had not learned the lesson, and would be seen seeking shelter behind each other or behind the walls of the barrack. Only in very exceptionally wet weather was the check parade held in the barrack room and hot coffee served up when the check was complete and reported to headquarters as correct. Jim's dress for this parade was large wooden clogs with plenty of foot wrappings, a woollen blanket wrapped round his waist and reaching down to his knees under his greatcoat, a woollen balaclava and scarf and woollen gloves, and the usual battledress.

Clothing arrived in this camp from the British Red Cross and issued mainly to P.O. Ws. when going out to working camp. Several sledges of unconventional design could be seen in use in the camp while the winter weather lasted, and each barrack seemed to be more crowded than ever, making it difficult to move about. The concrete floor was wet most of the time, and wet clothing hung up to dry on the wooden frames of the beds. If ever a pal dropped in to see someone, it was just too bad as the only place one could get to be out of the way was on the bed, and small bedspace. It was on an occasion like this, when Jim could quite understand just why the barrack chef and cleaners made a small private bunk for themselves in one corner of the barrack room, to have their own little stove and bits of furniture.

The Canadians were not very successful with their attempt at making an ice-rink as the snow was too soft except for an occasional day, but everything was kept in readiness for some good sport should

"Jack Frost" favour them.

One sad incident during the winter was when a P.O.W. was missing and all efforts and extra check parades failed to find him. His pals helped the guards to search every barrack and compound and assured the camp authorities that it was impossible for him to escape as he was a sick man and they had missed him during the last few days. This was a real mystery, both the guards and his pals kept up the search for several days. A light frost caused ice to form on the two water reservoirs and the boys skated on these when the ice was safe, but the reservoirs were not large enough to play hockey. Here one of the skaters met with an accident and taken to the hospital with concussion and later died. A few days later the ice began to melt and dragging operations commenced and resulted in a body being recovered.

Now came the day when the Spaniards were going to entertain. There were only a few of these in the camp and they were known as the Blue Division and were captured while fighting alongside the French. They were going to entertain on the football field and a large crowd turned up as the weather was favourable. It was a dry frosty day and just the kind of day for a brisk walk, and many took this opportunity to walk on the top and bottom roads. The entertainment turned out to be a bull fight. The arena was marked out with white powder and lime and the bull's stable was hessian or sacking spread lightly round four posts. The senorita took up her position on a pedestal overlooking the arena, and done up in all her finery, acknowledging all the cat-calls and wolf-calls from the crowd

of onlookers. They provided their own music with combs and tissue paper and were all gaily dressed in coloured home-made costumes, causing much laughter by their clever antics. When all was ready the bull came galloping and snorting into the arena giving the matadors and toreadors the time of their lives. As they tried hard to corner the bull he would fight back and get the better of them, and this went on for quite a while. One of the matadors was having a very rough time and decided to run into the bull's stable for safety, but the bull followed him. Here the matador was tossed high into the air. This of course was his pals tossing him up in a blanket, but it looked so real and was good fun while it lasted.

As the weather was now showing signs of improving, the athletics in training could be seen more often, which helped to relieve the overcrowding in the barracks, and everybody was able to move about more freely. As the weather improved, so did the war news, which was received through the well-organised undercover news bureau every evening between the hours of check parade and 9 p.m. when all the compounds were locked. Those responsible for the news worked hard and in secret, and taking the risk of collecting news in English which would be relied upon as being correct. When the news was collected it had to be copied and duplicated to facilitate distribution, taking great care that it did not drop into the hands of the Germans. This news was read out in each barrack room each evening and while this was taking place one or two of the boys would act as

lookouts and give warning of any guards approaching the compound or the barrack. All the P.O.Ws. looked forward to the news every evening with much interest, and while the news was being read out, everyone would be very quiet until it almost was impossible to hear a pin drop. The news would be a topic for conversation until the same time tomorrow, and if the news was of special interest some of the boys would go into the barrack and hear it read out again. At 9 p.m. a guard would be posted at each compound gates, and during the hours of darkness the whole camp looked different to Jim as he took a breath of air outside the barrack just before time for lights out. The boundary wire was lit up with electric shaded lights, fixed at intervals all round the camp, with extra lighting at the main gate, and entrance to the camp. During the night small parties of guards could be seen going to be posted or relieved of their post, and they looked somewhat different when silhouetted against their lights. The German helmet and jackboots were unmistakable even in the dark. Guards, accompanied by trained dogs, would patrol the compound and anyone leaving the barrack room to visit the toilet was bound to bump into one of these, and a powerful spot light would appear from the nearest lookout tower. Visiting the toilet during the darkness was then forbidden, and other arrangements were made, and anyone seen out of the barrack room after 10 p.m. was likely to be fired on. During the night two guards visited each barrack room, and with the aid of a storm lamp would look around just to see what was going on, and there were times when these guards' attention was drawn to a P.O.W. taken ill during the

night. During the silence of the night, the sound of railway trains in the distance could be heard, also the whistling of the trees in the pine forest, and the footsteps of the guards marching on the roads. Now and again there would be the rattle of machine guns from one or another of the lookout towers, but was nothing like what one would hear should they be any real trouble in the camp, and then it was possible for all the spot lights and machine guns to cover every part of the camp. The P.O.Ws. found the Germans were very quick to sense trouble and never took chances, and the camp authorities always tried to make this point quite clear to all the prisoners, but who knows, only the P.O.Ws. themselves, what schemes were afoot and ready to be put into operation when the right opportunity presented itself. The whole camp would spring into life before daylight next morning, only to find that the question of water was still a very sore point, as one small well had to supply the whole camp. This well was boxed in one corner of the camp, with a large capacity storage tank fixed high in the air. This large storage tank was to supply water to all the taps in the camp by pressure. As most of the taps were missing or broken, the water had to be carried and was only available during fixed times. The guard was always on duty at the water place to see that all P.O.Ws. took their turn in the waiting queue. Sometimes this would be half a days job, just to sit about and wait in the queue to get water, and here anything which would hold water was seen in use. This water carrying was part of the daily routine for all who would

go to the trouble. It was a common sight to see a fellow carrying a number of small tins tied together or slung on a long pole and carried chinese fashion. Because of this, water had to be used to the best advantage and economically. It was better to have half a wash than none at all. Some P.O.Ws. took water for washing purposes from the reservoirs until it was stopped, and others caught rainwater and stored it for washing with, and only went to the well when drinking water was needed.

To be able to take a hot bath was a real luxury indeed and bath parade had to be taken in turns, one barrack room at a time, and this came round about every two weeks or perhaps ten days. A register was kept in each barrack room for this purpose. The bath house was in compound by itself, complete with fumigating plant for clothing and blankets, and would accommodate about twenty persons for a hot shower. on this bath parade everyone was expected to take his own soap and towel, and any clothing and bedding, blankets in particular, and while having a hot shower the clothing would be going through the fumigating process. This bath parade was one looked forward to by all the P.O.Ws. and as one party of twenty left the bath house, another party would enter the building, and this procedure went on all day and everyday. To keep clean and tidy was a full time job and to keep healthy and fit was another job. It became known in the camp that someone had been successful in a water divining attempt, and the camp authorities gave permission for a well to be sunk. Work on this project was commenced at once at the extreme corner of the camp from where the present well

was situated. As the days and weeks passed the work on sinking the well slowed up until it looked like the war would be over by the time it would be ready for use.

A very large upturned root of a tree lay in this compound and was used as a stand whenever there was a football match played, and it must have lain there for years. Many P.O.Ws. had managed to break pieces off it to use as fuel, and looked like everyone in the camp had tried to burst it open by bashing pieces of stones and large pebbles into it.

Finally one of the chaps working on the well sinking job came along with a heavy pick and put paid to it. It was becoming difficult to get a volunteer to go to the forest to fetch fuel, and arrangements were made whereby if six P.O.Ws. went to get wood or fuel the wood which one of them carried would be shared up between the six of them as an incentive. The outcome of this was that small bundles of fire wood could now be seen on the market in exchange for cigarettes.

A small, economical and efficient stove now came into being, and was the work of a mechanical minded P.O.W., and now all the P.O.Ws. were trying to make one like it. It was very small and worked on the same principle as the blacksmiths hearth and the air was driven in by rotary fan instead of bellows, and would burn any kind of fuel. Jim stripped the bark from many of the posts in the compound to feed the blower as it was called. The camp authorities soon caught up with it and issued orders forbidding it to be used, and the guards confiscated all they saw in use in the camp. When one of the guards caught a P.O.W.

using one of these stoves, he would kick it as far as he could, and then pick it up and carry it away. When he had gone he replaced it with another one. Jim asked a guard to tell him what happened to the ones confiscated, and he said they were sent to the German troops on the Russian warfront. Jim's part in the making of the blower was to make the firebox more efficient by lining with fireclay, using crushed brick as grog mixed with clay.

Somewhere in the camp was a laundry, and each P.O.W. was expected to send his washing to it, but this was never very popular as it needed a lot of sorting out when returned, and many articles were lost, and there were many P.O.Ws. in the camp who had only what they were wearing. The Camp Comforts Committee was continually making appeals for spare clothing for distribution among the needy cases. Should a parcel of clothing arrive from home it would be examined by the Germans and any clothing of civilian character was confiscated. Any blankets arriving in a parcel from home were sent for use at the hospital, and this was one reason why Jim carried his blanket around with him.

Many P.O.Ws. coming in from the working camps would smuggle an occasional article to be valued in cigarettes on the market. Any P.O.W. fortunate to be in possession of a white shirt or a coloured pullover took great care to keep it out of sight.

The war news was good, particularly from the Russian front, and the boys started to laugh and joke more freely and talk of the prospects of the war finishing some time this year. Many referred

to the Russians as "Uncle Joe". "What does Uncle Joe say this time?" was one wisecrack, and that they would wake up one morning and find the German guards missing.

On taking a walk round the camp one day, Jim chanced to meet a Greek friend, who shouted, "Hi, Jim" and pointed to the sky. "Look", he said, "see those two storks or wild ducks up there flying round in a circle, well that means it's mating time. They have been flying round like that all day and are looking for a place on the ground suitable for making a nest, and these birds never leave their sheltered winter quarters until winter is finished." One of the boys had a jackdaw as a pet. He had brought it from a working camp and this caused much laughter during check parade when it would fly from his shoulder and perch on the barbed wire and then back again on to his shoulder. The Germans looked at it with suspicion, but did nothing about it. Another P.O.W. had a small snake as a pet. It was of a harmless variety which he picked up somewhere in the camp. When the warm sun came out this small reptile would come out of the glass jar and crawl all over its owner, who would stroke and tickle it until it almost tied itself up into a knot.

It was refreshing to be able to take a stroll around the camp again at one's leisure, and no-one was more pleased than Jim was to see the end of winter.

German fighting units would sometimes pass this way, and the P.O.Ws. would watch them taking cover in the pine forest while resting after their exercises. One unit which interested Jim was a Mountain

Artillery Unit, with packhorses and tiny field guns on wheels which were manned by hand. It always happened that when the P.O.Ws. were getting really interested in anything taking place outside the barbed wire the sentry would tell them to move away, and should they ignore him he would shout aloud bringing his rifle to the ready and at the same time looking up at the guard in the lookout tower.

Now that spring was here, Jim could use his boots and socks instead of the clogs and footwrappings. The army greatcoat could go back on the bed and the clogs under the pillow where his boots had been all the winter.

The camp in general was now beginning to look cleaner after the ravages of the winter weather. There were no mud packs or large puddles to tramp through and there was more daylight, and less smoke in the barrack rooms.

One familiar sight in the camp was the horse drawn, flat, four-wheeled waggon loaded with soup bins. At one time two horses were used to pull this waggon, but now there was only one with six P.O.Ws. and a guard as the driver.

The soup distribution was a big job. While six P.O.W.s would bring the soup in bins to the compound gates, the cleaners and barrack chef would carry it into the barracks and distribute it. Another batch of P.O.Ws. would collect the empty bins, wash and clean them in readiness for next time. The same procedure was used for coffee issue, and the bins were never out of sight for long during the daytime, and it was a seven day week job.

As the season of Spring unfolded, so did the camp take on a new look with most P.O.Ws. living more or less an open air life, and lots of posters told of the coming open air events.

New arrivals began to reach this camp, chiefly those taken prisoner of war in Italy and North Africa, and all would gather at the main entrance to try and recognise any of them. Jim recognised several from his home town, and got busy helping them to settle in, and trying to supply their needs as best that he could. From his letters received from home, and by reading between the lines, Jim had an idea that his eldest son, Jimmy, was in action on this part of the warfront, and it was at the back of his mind that it was quite possible for him to arrive in this camp.

There were three brother in the camp and Jim found out about this when they appeared as a singing trio at a camp concert, and later these three brothers went out to a working camp together.

Among the events advertised in camp by poster were social gatherings where all P.O.Ws. from the same home town and district could meet and so have an opportunity to discuss any topic of local interest. As the months passed, these gatherings became very popular in all parts of the camp. Among the open air events advertised was a boxing tournament, carried out in the true forces style with strict rules and prizes to be won. To watch any entertainment and sport of this kind made one forget his P.O.W. surrounding for the time being, and gave scope for discussion for days afterwards.

All the sports gear in use was supplied by the British and

International Red Cross, and the weak link being the Germans failing to supply the necessary or adequate transport. A consignment of British Red Cross food parcels would arrive in camp one week, and maybe supplies in bulk food the following week, but at no time was there to be more than two weeks supply stocked in the camp. Should the Germans have difficulty in being able to supply the necessary transport the P.O.W. just had to go without until the situation improved. Many P.O.W. tried to provide for just such an occasion by saving a few tins of food from the last issue, but here again the Germans caught up with them and prohibited the practise, and every tin was punctured when issued. When the P.O.Ws. complained, the authorities said it was necessary as many of the escaped P.O.Ws. were caught with tinned food in their possession. As most of the food parcels contained a tin of herrings and sardines, the day of issue was always "Fish Day" and was always a welcome change from soup.

One of the Dieppe boys explained how he used to unlock the chains from his wrists with a sardine tin key. He would take his place with the rest of the Dieppe boys and let the guard put on the chains, and would then go to some secluded spot and take the chains off by using the homemade key, and would replace them before time for the guard to come and take them off. These boys had to wear their chains as reprisals for an incident which happened at Dieppe during a raid in the early stages of the war, and the Germans found some of their troops with hands tied with cord. When these came to be done

away with some of these boys tried to keep them for souvenirs, but the authorities insisted that every pair of handcuffs and chains must be accounted for. Each set of chains were about twenty four inches in length with hand cuffs to fit the wrist at each end, and all the chains were polished by continual use. When wearing the chains the P.O.Ws. could always find time to joke about them as in the case of one from Jim's home town. As Jim walked towards him he said, "I like your watch chain!" and he laughed it off although his wrists were sore, and then went on to tell Jim of the time when it was a real showdown when the Germans tried to get them to work while wearing the chains.

A real breath of home came as a surprise one day when a football team turned out in Stoke City colours, and was recognised by many of the boys, especially those from Stoke-on-Trent who cheered all the time. This wave of excitement repeated itself whenever a popular or easily recognised football strip appeared on the football ground for the first time. A surprise of this kind was a real tonic indeed, and cropped up several times. At times when there was no outdoor sport taking place and nothing of interest to see in the pine forest, Jim would take a walk to the opposite side of the camp and look across the vast stretch of common. In the far distance could be seen tiny puffs of smoke coming from the railway, and a little nearer camp a farmer's horse and cart and the camp dust or rubbish cart taking a load to bury it on the common. A range of hills stretching for miles formed the skyline and the Russian P.O.W. camp with lookout towers was

a little nearer. To the left and a little closer to the main entrance to the Stalag stood a partly built house which had been specially constructed for the purpose of training German troops in the art of scaling obstacles and in taking cover.

News from the warfront got better and better, and all the boys were more cheerful, and when they talked to the Germans about the war they would say the Russians were the real enemy, and the ones most feared. The tone of the talk almost made the P.O.W. feel sorry for the Germans, and the little chat would finish with both the German guards and the P.O.W. agreeing that it would be better for both if the war finished quickly.

All the P.O.Ws. were being regraded and the whole camp combed to make up working parties for the working camps. Not only was the P.O.W. regraded, but also the guards to be sent to the warfront. This meant now that nearly all the guards left in the camp were disabled personnel, but would not forget to visit each barrack room in turn to inspect the floor and sound it by tapping with a hammer. If there was any doubt in their minds of the soundness of the concrete floor, or if they had any idea of the possibility of a tunnel, all the P.O.Ws. had to move all the three tier wooden beds for a thorough inspection.

This camp, like any other camp, had its characters, and by their characteristics or abilities they were very popular, as in the case of the P.O.W. who always caused much laughter by his antics on the football field, also the six foot four Professor of Languages and the artist whose drawings and paintings could be seen in many

parts of the camp, not forgetting the leading characters in the concert party, and the old horse which pulled the soup waggon round the camp.

The deterioration of the smartness of the German guards could now be seen more plainly, and many were wearing patched clothing and uniform, and as the moral of the Germans got lower, so that of the P.O.W. got higher, and higher. Jim now began to look forward instead of back, and everyone including the Germans knew that anything to finish the war could happen any day now, with Italy on the verge of surrender, the French sabotaging everywhere, their underground movement, the threat of an invasion and the Russians going strong. Jim talked with a Polish airman one day, and was surprised when the airman said his home was just on the other side of those hills. Jim then asked why not get on to a working party and work his way near to home, and the airman told Jim that his people were already having trouble with the Germans, and he preferred to wait until the war finished, then he would take his family to England.

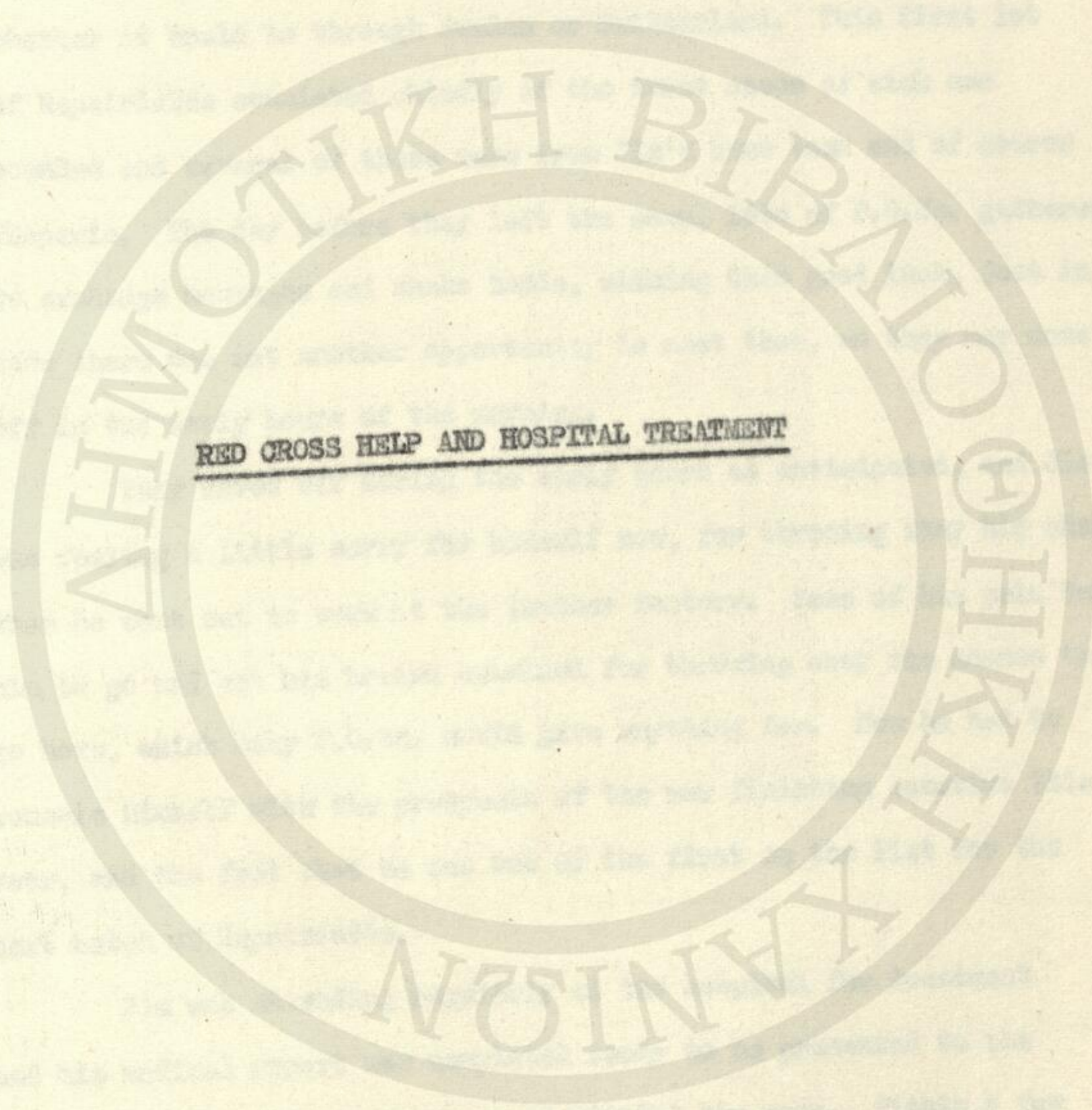
For some reason or other, the Air Force personnel P.O.Ws. were not allowed to go to working camps, and were all kept together in one compound.

Lovely weather now favoured the P.O.Ws. and the Camp Comforts Committee organised a Whitsuntide Carnival to get funds. The Carnival opened with a grand parade and the band leading, followed by tableaux and collectors in fancy homemade costumes and coloured paper hats,

and the whole parade was a colourful spectacle. In this parade was the Moon Rocket, a very large one mounted on one of the flat four-wheeled waggons, which was built by the R.A.F. personnel. It must have taken weeks to make the Rocket as it was covered completely with bright tinfoil which shone brightly in the sun. Following this was a complete replica of a ship building yard also mounted on a flat waggon, all of which had been cleaned and made to look like new again. The colours, dancing girls and comics followed up behind this colourful parade. The procession made its way slowly along the top road, down past the cookhouse onto the bottom road and near to the camp main gate, along to the straff compound and into the football compound. Here there was more fun with lots of side shows, comice, strolling musicians and dancing girls. Music was provided by the bagpipes and drums, the military band and several musical trios. A number of stalls were fixed up to receive any article of clothing anyone cared to give. This went on all day in the sunshine and fresh air, which helped to make it such a success. The surprising thing about it all was the material used to such good effect, and the amount of work put into it all; the manner in which it was organised on such a grand scale and most of all the conditions such as exist in a prisoner of war camp and under which it was all carried out with such splendred results. This again was another splendred example of the ingenuity of hundreds of P.O.Ws. being put into operation and some measure of success obtained, and to complete a record of this event, Jim took his drawing book and coloured crayons along with him to try and copy a few of the posters depicting this event. Some

of the posters decorated the barrack rooms for weeks afterwards, and some finished up on the market as souvenirs.

A few weeks later, when the excitement of the Carnival had faded out, a new wave of enthusiasm struck the camp, and the latest news was that the first batch of several hundred P.O.Ws. from this camp was to be repatriated.



RED CROSS HELP AND HOSPITAL TREATMENT

The usual formalities had been completed at the hospital and arrangements made for their departure, but they did not know whether it would be through Sweden or Switzerland. This first lot of Repatriates consisted chiefly of the worst cases of sick and wounded and several of these were from Jim's home town and of course Chapario. The day before they left the camp, lots of P.O.Ws. gathered to exchange messages and shake hands, wishing them good luck, just in case there was not another opportunity to meet them, as they may move off in the early hours of the morning.

They moved off during the early hours as anticipated, and Jim was feeling a little sorry for himself now, for throwing away his chance when he went out to work at the leather factory. Some of his pals told him to go and get his brains examined for throwing away the chance to go home, which many P.O.Ws. would give anything for. Now he had to console himself with the prospects of the war finishing sometime this year, and the fact that he was one of the first on the list for the next batch of Repatriates.

Jim was attending regularly at the hospital for treatment and his medical report was completed ready to be presented to the Repatriation Committee when next it visited the camp. Within a few weeks time Jim was receiving letters from home saying that his pals had told them of his chances of coming home with the next batch, and they were very pleased with this good news.

While attending at the hospital for treatment Jim heard of a peculiar mental case who was always attempting to climb over the wire

at the hospital. Anyone else would have been fired on by the guards, but for the fact they all knew him as it happened so many times, and they just led him back to his ward at the hospital.

Special treatment at the hospital was preparing Jim for X-ray of his chest and each time he almost collapsed as his lungs were affected to such a degree that it was difficult to breathe and he had to refuse some part of the treatment. Eventually Jim was given a milder form of treatment which suited him better. He dared not tell his pals of the episode, so kept it to himself and hoped for the best.

Jim spent many sleepless nights wondering if he had done the wrong thing, and how many more silly things he would be doing during his stay in this rotten camp. Everyone had hopes of the war finishing this year and they would all have the opportunity to get the smell of this place out of their nostrils. The open air markets continued to flourish, and one in particular which was always referred to as the junk stores. Here one could see almost anything for sale or exchange, including balls of wool, packets of used razor blades, dilapidated periodicals and novels, small bundles of firewood, needles and buttons and many more items too numerous to mention.

It happened one day that Jim came across a Hawaiian guitar for sale, and with a few cigarettes and a few more exchanges he managed to get it, and a New Zealander taught him to play it. He practiced regularly, and gradually became more pleased with it and within a few weeks time was having sing-songs with it, and playing simple Hawaiian

tunes. Jim was never lonely when he had his guitar, his flute, his writing and drawing kit and few tools. There was something here to help him keep interested at all times. It now became known in the camp that correspondence courses on many subjects were available through the Red Cross Society, and part of a barrack room available to use as a school. Examinations were to be held and fully recognised through the society. It was noticed that Pottery was the first on the list of subjects which could be studied, and Jim was approached as a possible instructor, but he was more interested in the Repatriation and Medical Board, which was due any day now.

Every day Jim would scan the notice board at the hospital for the latest developments in repatriation. In the meantime the high-ups were combing the whole camp for any potential war material such as vehicles, horses, manpower etc. and this was where the soup waggons and rubbish cart had to be pulled around the camp by the P.O.Ws. and anything the Germans saw that could be of use for war purposes was earmarked.

Small working parties returning to the stalag told of the state of affairs in the district where they had been working. The new arrivals of P.O.Ws. told of the situation on the war front where they were taken prisoner, and R.A.F. men told of the success or bad luck of their missions over Germany. All this pieced together told a different story and made a different picture than the film shown in the camp for propoganda. This film showed Hitler inspecting his troops in N. Africa and caused much laughter when he looked up into

the sky when leaving an air-raid shelter.

The Camp Comforts Committee decided to do something about the rats in this camp, and organised a campaign, giving cigarettes for tails. Posters saying how best to carry it into effect, and in a weeks time the camp was all the better for it. This rat pest was one of the many things which all the camp seemed to have in common, and at times like this all the P.O.Ws. were glad of the food in tins. Any P.O.W. who had a tin of food in his possession and not punctured kept it hidden as an emergency ration, as anything was likely to happen at this stage of the war, and many were thinking that the last few weeks of this kind of life would be worse than when they were first taken prisoner, and the Germans would not be able to supply the bare necessities. The P.O.W. was always the last to be considered when supplies and transport were short, as in the case of Crete and Solonika where they were told, "There would be plenty of food if it were not for your submarines operating here."

Although several hundred P.O.Ws. had gone home, the camp still seemed to be overcrowded and it did seem rather odd when passing the Repatriation compound and nobody with a wooden leg was playing football, and the compound itself seemed different to when Jim used to visit his pals billeted there, to see some of the chaps carving away at a wooden leg to make it fit better. It seemed that the amnity of the whole camp was centred around the repatriation compound in some form or other, and disablement made little difference to this cheery disposition, and

now the compound was conspicuous by their absence.

The new repatriation compound was going to be the one where the tunnel was found. The R.A.M.C. orderlies, the bed sheets and covers were transferred to this compound which was to billet more cases coming out of hospital to wait for repatriation. The rooms were cleaned out and the walls whitewashed, the wooden beds repaired to make the place look as much of a convalescent place as circumstances would allow, and as more cases came out of hospital with their crutches and artificial limbs, so did this compound take on the same look as the previous one.

It was summer time now and the fashion was shorts and sandals for those who had them, and these P.O.Ws. from Crete remembered it was the month of June and three years had passed, but nobody cared to celebrate such an occasion, in fact nobody cared to be reminded of it. The most important thing was how soon would the end of the war come, and what was in store for them.

The time for the news reading was looked forward to with more eagerness to see what changes, if any, there were in the war situation, and to hear the real truth from home, instead of the propoganda telling of Coventry being obliterated, London being in ruins and the British Navy being sunk. The P.O.Ws. could always sleep better when hearing of the mighty German war machine cracking up, it was a real nightcap to go to bed on, and they would wake refreshed and would be in high spirits for the rest of the day.

"Keep Fit at the Stalag" was the Motto of the P.O.Ws., and

in each compound one could see outdoor recreation taking place just as long as daylight lasted. It was a long day and everyone tired by evening and would lounge about just outside the barracks until check parade.

A peep into the Red Cross food parcel told Jim the next meal would be bread and jam, and he would be scraping the tin until the next parcel issue.

A few P.O.Ws. tried cultivating a small patch of ground as a pastime, using improvised tools, and the seeds provided by the Red Cross. A few flowers tried to thrive on a piece of ground cultivated by a P.O.W., and it was nice to see them, although the results were not very encouraging. The only thing Jim saw thriving in the camp was rats, rumours, rubbish and filth.

During one period during the time here the Germans practiced low flying near to the camp. The Stukas would go screaming down almost to the ground on the common, and the P.O.Ws. would shout all kinds of abuse at them. "Crash, you blighters, crash!" One day a plane did crash and a few P.O.Ws. were taken to dig out wreckage and some brought back a small souvenir salvaged from the wrecked plane. Another time units of German artillery were having a little target practice out on the common. They practiced on moving targets, and the P.O.Ws. could see when they scored a hit, and some of the P.O.Ws. who knew their gunnery found it very interesting and could pick out mistakes or award points for good marksmanship.

Most of the boys liked a game of cards or chess, but one had

to be the owner of a pack of cards or a chess board to be sure of a game, while many were satisfied just to look on, and see the game through.

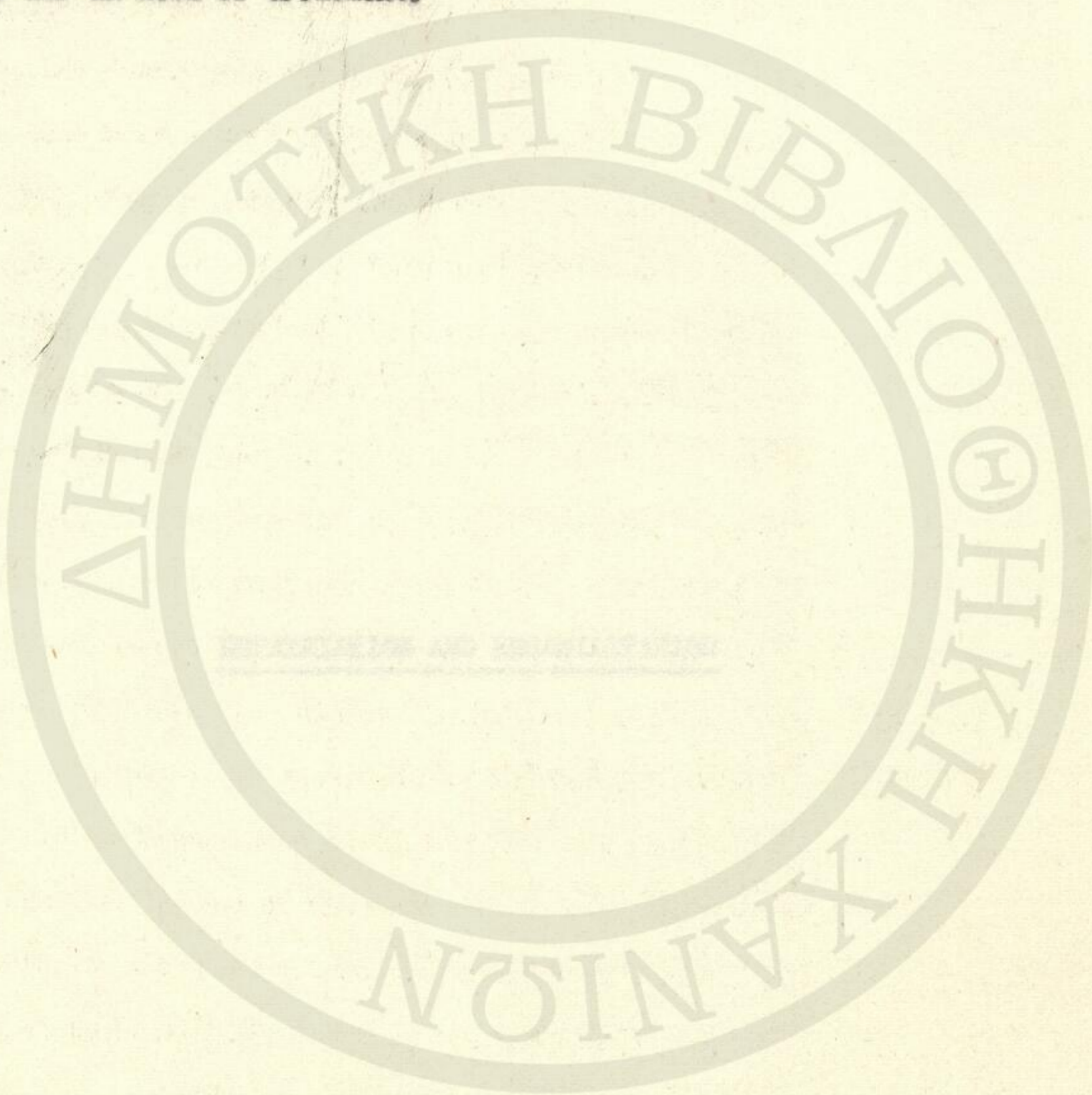
The monotony of one day was no indication of what the next day would bring, and it was difficult to plan very far ahead. See a crowd on the doorstep of a barrack one day, Jim went along to satisfy his curiosity, and it turned out to be a game of draughts as part of an eliminating contest, and was taking place on the doorstep, with plenty of spectators. This game of draughts was a good example of all contests having to be played where and when they could at the best opportunity without fear of being interrupted.

Jim went out one day with a blanket under his arm to find a place to do a little sunbathing, and here again he met hundreds more just looking for the same spot.

News spread like wildfire that the Repatriation Committee had arrived at the camp, and notices posted at the hospital to this effect. They would be staying for about ten days. At the hospital the British medical officers told the P.O.s. it was going to be a very busy ten days to get through as many cases as possible. Lists of names with the day and time for each P.O.s. to be at the hospital were posted, and each P.O.s. was notified by his barrack chef to make doubly sure that no time was wasted. The first two days was to go through the worst of the hospital cases. Jim's turn came on the fifth day, together with several more from the same barrack room, and was to be at the hospital between ten and eleven a.m. He arrived punctually

at 10 a.m. and found the waiting room full, so he hung around until there was more room. He managed to get a seat in the waiting room at eleven o'clock. As he waited and waited to hear his name called, he saw others go into another room and later leave by way of another door. The atmosphere was very tense, and when anyone spoke it was in a whisper. Everyone at different times looked at the large clock hanging on the wall and ticking off the minutes and everyone was showing signs of nervousness. Many were sitting there when the clock struck twelve, and the commission adjourned for lunch. Jim was told to come back at 2-0 p.m. and he returned to hear his name called at 4-0 p.m. He stripped to the waist and stood facing six doctors sitting at a table, all in uniform. Several clerks with typewriters sat at another small table. On his left in a dark corner was an X-ray photo illuminated, and Jim's name to it. While the medical officer who had treated Jim at the hospital read out his medical report, Jim heard "if this man does not go home now I am afraid he will not see home again as there is no suitable treatment available here." After being examined by one of the doctors Jim was handed a note. "Here you are, this is your passport home. Take great care of it as it will be difficult to replace." Jim took the slip of paper, stuffed it into his trousers pocket and left the room, and while dressing he heard his name being called again. Jim returned and the officer asked "How many papers have I given you?" As Jim pulled the crumpled paper from his pocket he found there were two. The doctor took one back saying with a smile, "One is quite sufficient." A few days later a list of

names appeared at the hospital saying that they would be sent home at a date yet to be fixed, as sick and wounded prisoners of war in need of treatment.



АННОТИКХ БИВАН ООХИХХ
ХАНИОН

REPATRIATION AND REHABILITATION

Here in the repatriation compound the conditions were a little better with increased fuel and water supply, and R.A.M.C. orderlies in attendance. Working in this compound was the artist who was so popular in the camp for his drawings and painting, and when Jim got to know him he told him of his work in civilian life as an interior decorator, and did the gold work in churches and theatres. He also mentioned that he had a sister working in the Potteries as an artist and decorator. He could talk on any subject including astronomy and he played the violin and was always an interesting person to talk with.

The worst cases of sick P.O.Ws. were given the choice of the three-tier beds with easy access, and the more active P.O.Ws. took the top beds, and at times one had to be an acrobat to be continually climbing onto the top bed.

Patience was a real virtue while waiting to be repatriated. To guard against rumours and to make light of disappointments was a test in itself, and those who had failed to pass the medical board were consoled by the news which was all inspiring, and which gave the impression that all the P.O.Ws. would be going home soon.

The good work at the hospital went on as it always did, and the Camp Committees carried out their programmes as usual. The sun continued to shine and favour the sporting events, and the open air life in the camp. As the air became filled with expectation it dawned upon them that when the repatriates were notified it would be at short notice, so most of them started to pack the things which they wanted to take

home, and such things as photographs, musical instruments, literature and souvenirs etc. were to be censored to be stamped. This again was a slow process, but Jim managed to get his flute, guitar, drawings and a few photographs censored, and took a chance with a few other things.

It was a number of weeks since the medical board was here and it became known that transport was the weak link and was holding up departure, and many times Jim took a look into his wallet to see if his passport home was safe. One day early in September, 1944 a working party of P.O.Ws. arrived in camp with the good news of a Red Cross railway train standing in a siding and waiting for the repatriates, and sure enough the sick and wounded were notified of when and where to assemble for the journey home. The next day all P.O.Ws. for repatriation were up a little earlier than usual, and all received a Red Cross food parcel to take on the journey. They were assembled on a piece of ground near to the main entrance of the camp where a large marquee had been erected.

Everyone passed through the marquee and was searched, papers examined and passed on to the common outside the stalag to wait until the remainder joined them. Here there was much counting and recounting and so it went on until it almost became a joke. It turned out that a check parade in the camp showed that two P.O.Ws. were missing, and so the counting went on until everyone was getting impatient and Jim kept taking his last look at the Swastika flag flying over the entrance of the stalag.

Everyone had a fair amount of kit which they were continually picking up and putting down just whenever it suited the officials. The very slow walk to the railway station was now on, but the Germans were still not satisfied with the count, and all this was to be done again at the station. All papers were again examined and scrutinised before boarding the train. Everyone was settled on the train eventually, and just as the train began to move off, a P.O.W. whom Jim knew, came rushing down the corridor and chose to scramble under the seat where he was sitting with several more P.O.Ws. Everyone guessed what was happening without speaking, and Jim's pulse quickened as a German officer came to sit down in this compartment and started to take particulars. A few more minutes saw two German guards come on the scene, and they would have searched this compartment had the officer not been so busy with these necessary particulars. When the guards and officer moved away, the escaped P.O.W. came out of hiding to go and find a better place, and it became known that his pal was also on the train with him, and Jim knew them both as two of the small detachment on Crete. They were all now on their way home, and the search still went on, and in a matter of hours the train arrived at Stettin, and this place was bristling with anti-aircraft guns of every calibre.

Here the train went on ferry across the Shagerack, and another train completed the journey to Gothenburg in Sweden. This train journey was much different to what it had been during the last three years, and how nice it was to see the last of the German guards and have the attention and care of nurses, waiting with motor coaches, and ambulances to take them

to different public buildings in the city.

Jim was in a party numbering about one hundred who were taken to the town hall where they received special attention until time to go aboard a hospital ship the next day. It was late in the day when they arrived here, and refreshments were served in quick time, and to see and taste white bread again was a treat indeed, and Jim ate plenty.

Here there were lots of nurses and women of the Women's Voluntary Service in attendance, and everyone could wander around the place but must not leave the building. Hospital beds with sheets were all ready in the basement, and in the large hall tables were being set out for late dinner, and a stage all set for an evening concert. This was to be a welcome to Gothenburg, and a real welcome it was.

During the stay Jim exchanged his cap badge for a W.V.S. badge and someone begged his mug which was a large size powdered milk tin with handle, and which Jim had always kept highly polished. Jim sat on his bed playing his Hawiian gultar in the basement when a nurse came and said it sounded lovely and asked if he would play at the concert in the evening. Jim tried hard to refuse but she would not take 'No' for an answer. At 6.30 p.m. and when everyone was cleaned up, they were all taken to the large room where long tables were set out and decorated with flowers, Union Jacks, and small Swedish flags of blue and gold. At each seat was an envelope and dated September, 1944, which read:-

"As His Majesty's representative in Sweden it is my proud privilege to extend to you personally on behalf of my wife and myself, the staff of the British Legation, our friendliest greetings."

On the menu was roast beef, potatoes, green peas, carrots, vanilla sauce, fruit and aerated waters. A grand concert followed by a Swedish orchestra, and everyone received a small Swedish flag of blue and gold to take home. The concert was finished with "God Save the King."

The next morning everyone was in high spirits and happy mood, as they were taken by motor coach to a port where two hospital ships, one British and the other Swedish were waiting to take them home. Everything went smoothly and without a hitch until a few minutes before sailing when a dramatic announcement was made over the ships' loud speakers. It said that two escaped P.O.Ws. were aboard the ship and the Germans knew it. It asked for the two escaped P.O.Ws. to come along and they would be handed over to Swedish authorities for internment. It said the ship would not sail with these escaped P.O.Ws. aboard, or it would be sunk. The two ships sailed on time and were guided out of port and into the North Sea by two small craft which later disappeared. The two ships steamed ahead without escort until late in the afternoon when a R.A.F. machine saw them and radioed messages of congratulations.

During the next two days aboard, everyone enjoyed the best of food and attention, and all the lights were full on during the night. Many times during this return journey Jim's mind would take him back to where it all started, and the little Isle of Crete. He would think of those wonderful people who welcomed him on that small island, and of the many friends he had made during his short stay. Would they remember him as he remembered them? Would he ever see them again?

Would their little island ever flourish again, and would they attend the graves of those who had fallen? Jim took a photograph out of his pocket and saw them as he knew them nearly four years ago. He remembered the olive groves, the villages, the Monastery and the monks, the mountains and the pastures and the water wells; the culture and way of life with contentment. Yes! this was Crete and the Cretians, whose wise philosophy goes down through the ages. This, and much more, was in his mind as the ships docked at Liverpool, and the band played to welcome them home. Among those waiting were the civic heads and voluntary organisations, lots of nurses and ambulances with motor vehicles and Red Cross trains. Everything had been pre-arranged for travel to different parts of the country according to the necessary treatment for each case.

Repatriation was now as good as complete, and those needing urgent treatment were quickly on their way with great care and efficiency typical of the organisation. A few days later Jim's wife came to take him home, to continue his treatment under the family doctor, and with her was their youngest son, Don, who had grown into a fine big boy and almost ready to leave school.

In three months time with the care and attention of his dear wife, and the treatment of his doctor, Jim's health had greatly improved and continued to improve until he was discharged from the forces.

As the end of war and victory was in sight Jim settled down to try and reclaim if he could all his prewar interests in social life, as recommended by all his advisers and friends, and to look on the

bright side of the future instead of the orgies of the past.

He was now a little older and much wiser man, with much admiration for such men as the medical officers who completed the enormous task of preparing and presenting hundreds of medical reports of sick and wounded P.O.s. for repatriation, and the German Commandant at West End Lager, who showed great interest in that human problem towards prisoners of war. With the generous help of the local rehabilitation and advisory committees, the task of settling down to suitable employment was now under review, and when the war finished his pal Dick came to see him. Jim's wife made him very welcome, as she had heard so much about him, and Dick stayed for several days and they had plenty to talk about.

As the men and women came out of the forces and streamed into industry, everyone talked of this as the modern age and mechanical age. New industries were developed on modern lines, with vast improvements and extensions to existing plants and factories, including the pottery industry, and Jim took this opportunity to go along to the factory. Everyone greeted him and were pleased to see him back, and he was told that his job would be to train the apprentices in the making shop. This was a wonderful opportunity and was something he was really interested in, which helped to make the job much easier, and Jim soon gained confidence of the young apprentices numbering fifteen.

The newly-built workshop was well spaced and ventilated, and furnished with the equipment, apparatus and mechanical tools of modern design, and devices to cope with the increased output and demand.

With every confidence in himself, and his ability as a potter, and with lots of patience and understanding the apprentices made much progress in the craft and skill upon which their future depended. One important item was how to dry clay ware successfully. Ware had to be placed in such a position as to be free from stress or strain, to dry uniform, in an atmosphere of high percentage humidity, and for this purpose humidity drying cabinets were installed which could be controlled in temperature, percentage humidity and rate of drying.

On arriving at the place of work each morning, Jim would get the temperature and humidity, the condition of the moulds, wet, dry or old, and the condition of the clay, which would give him a good idea of how to proceed with the days work. All this was necessary, especially where handles and spouts are to be stuck on successfully. All parts and pieces to be stuck must be in the same condition and have the same moisture content which means that all pieces of ware are at the same stage of shrinkage and will continue to shrink at the same rate after being stuck together, and for this purpose, there were conditioning cabinets.

As time went on, Jim made out a list of making faults, and how these could be best avoided or estimated. All the finished ware must retain all its original characteristics, and depict the skill of the potter which is so familiar in pottery, and which has been handed down from the early potters.

Each day brought some fresh problem, and Jim would pay a visit

to the works laboratory to ascertain the results of some test appertaining to his work, or to carry out a little research on his own, and this helped to fill his pages on "The Art of Potting" volume which he was still writing in his spare time when at home.

As the years passed, so was much of the once modern machinery passed as out-of-date, as this was now the atomic age, with nuclear power and guided missiles and space rockets. The whole of the country was crying out for skilled tradesmen and technical men, and Jim's future had never been so secure as it was now. The old scare of "too old at forty" never bothered him now, and he was in his fifties, but his health was not so good, and he kept on working for the great interest it held for him. Jim now had no further use or time for his flute and guitar as he was fully occupied in his work and his writing at home. He continued to write small articles for the Works Magazine and outside periodicals, and a pile of correspondence lay on his desk from people seeking his services, which Jim could never hope to complete.

Each evening after teatime Jim would be pacing the floor between his desk and bookcase, and thinking of the next subject to write about. This time he chose to write about the history of china clay as his contribution to the book which he wanted to see finished before starting on his autobiography and memoirs of "Stalag and Grete."

China clay is used widely in many industries, but Jim was concerned only in so far as it was used in the making of pottery, and went on to explain a few of its physical and chemical properties. Soft and powdery, greasy to the touch and able to retain impressions,

its resistance to heat, and to keep shape at high temperature, plasticity, tensile strength, colour after fire, translucency, shrinkage etc. all of which make it suitable for any kind of pottery, when used in suitable proportions to other materials used. Its main impurities being, mica, quartz and iron hydrate in very small degree. Its chemical compound being alumina and silica and water ($Al_2O_3 \cdot 6SiO_2 \cdot 2H_2O$). The chemically combined water is driven off at 500° centigrade leaving a silicate of alumina as a specimen of pottery, and cannot be brought back to clay by adding water.

Much research and many experiments have gone into the making of a fine china and high class earthenware, and to explain it all would fill volumes.

Standing on Jim's bureau is a very small vase which he made himself starting from the very beginning with the raw materials, and recording in a notebook every thing he did at every stage in the process to the finished product, right down to glazing and decorating, and this is only one thing in his home of which he is really proud to possess. At various times Jim went on to define many more raw materials used in the making of pottery, such as flint, stone, ball clays, Felspar and many more, all of which had their special purpose in helping to produce ware of the highest grade, and so completed his heavy volume "The Art of Potting".

This volume alone made many friends for Jim and his family, as well as financial help, and now he set about the "Stalag and Crete"

memoirs. Was he going to continue as a writer, or was he going to still stick to potting? This never worried his wife in the least, as she was already worried about his health, without it ever being noticed, and knew that Jim could not just go on like this. His health was her first concern, and again she consulted the doctor on the state of his health, and again Jim had to take to his sick bed.

He still, however, did manage to conserve sufficient energy to write, and so complete his Memoirs of Crete which meant that the orgies of the Prison Camps were lived over again and again, while his wife was trying her best to help him live it down. During his long spell of sickness he often reproached himself for being too selfish and too full of his own importance on the day he left home to go into the forces. It was during this spell of sickness that he suddenly realised he had two sons now growing up into young men. Although there was about nine years difference in their ages it could hardly be noticed, as they were both well matured and could now stand upon their own two feet. Their upbringing, education and training was the tireless effort of Mum and was showing itself now in no uncertain manner.

Both boys had musical talents. Don was an accomplished pianist and singer, while Jimmy was a dance-band drummer, and it was the headlines in the daily newspaper that acclaimed Don as being the winner of the talent competition, and a Golden Voice soprano. This alone was a real tonic indeed for a sick father like Jim, and he wondered whether or not his health would improve sufficiently to be able to accompany them with his flute and guitar.

If only his prayers could be answered, how wonderful life was going to be, and with great fortitude and courage Jim wrestled with the odds against him for several months which brought a change for the better. With the skill of the doctor and the loving care and attention of Mum, his prayers were answered and he was well on the way to convalescence.

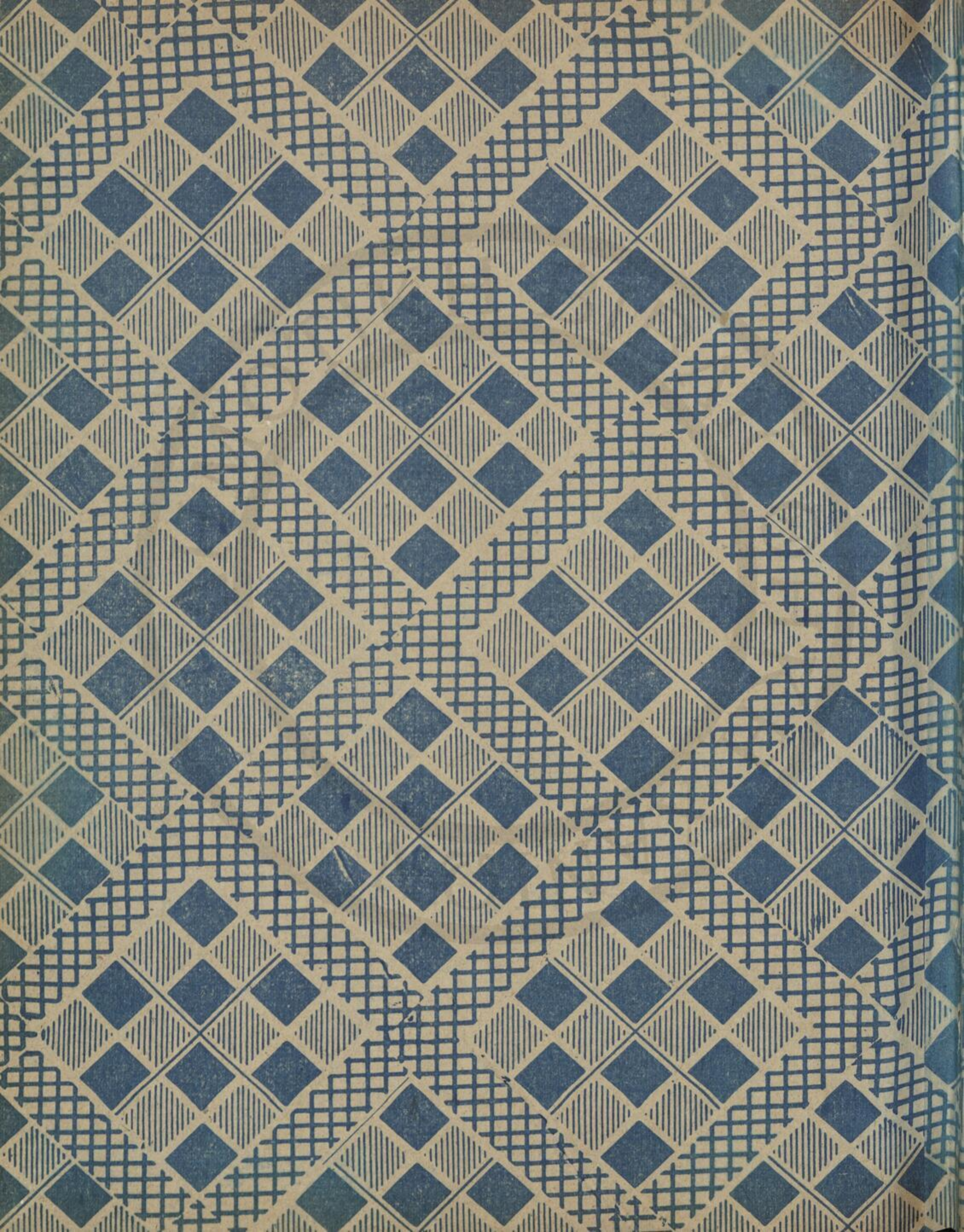
He began to count his blessings and think how very fortunate he had been, although life had dealt him some cruel blows, and for weeks he pondered over the many possible ways of how best he could help the boys to put into effect the things in which they were mostly interested. The result was the formation of a musical trio. Mum named it "THE RAWLANCE TRIO" for Hawaiian, Hill Billy and Popular Entertainments, and after a few weeks rehearsal the trio surpassed all expectations, and soon became a big favourite with the public. Bookings came by the dozen, and this was cash in trust savings for Jimmy and Don. The biggest surprise came when all the apprentices turned up at one of the concerts and occupied the whole front row of seats, clapping their hands and roaring their heads off, shouting for more. This did Jim's heart good to think that he had completely won their confidence of all the boys including his own two sons, and it was an occasion when he was taken out of himself and his illness for a few brief moments.

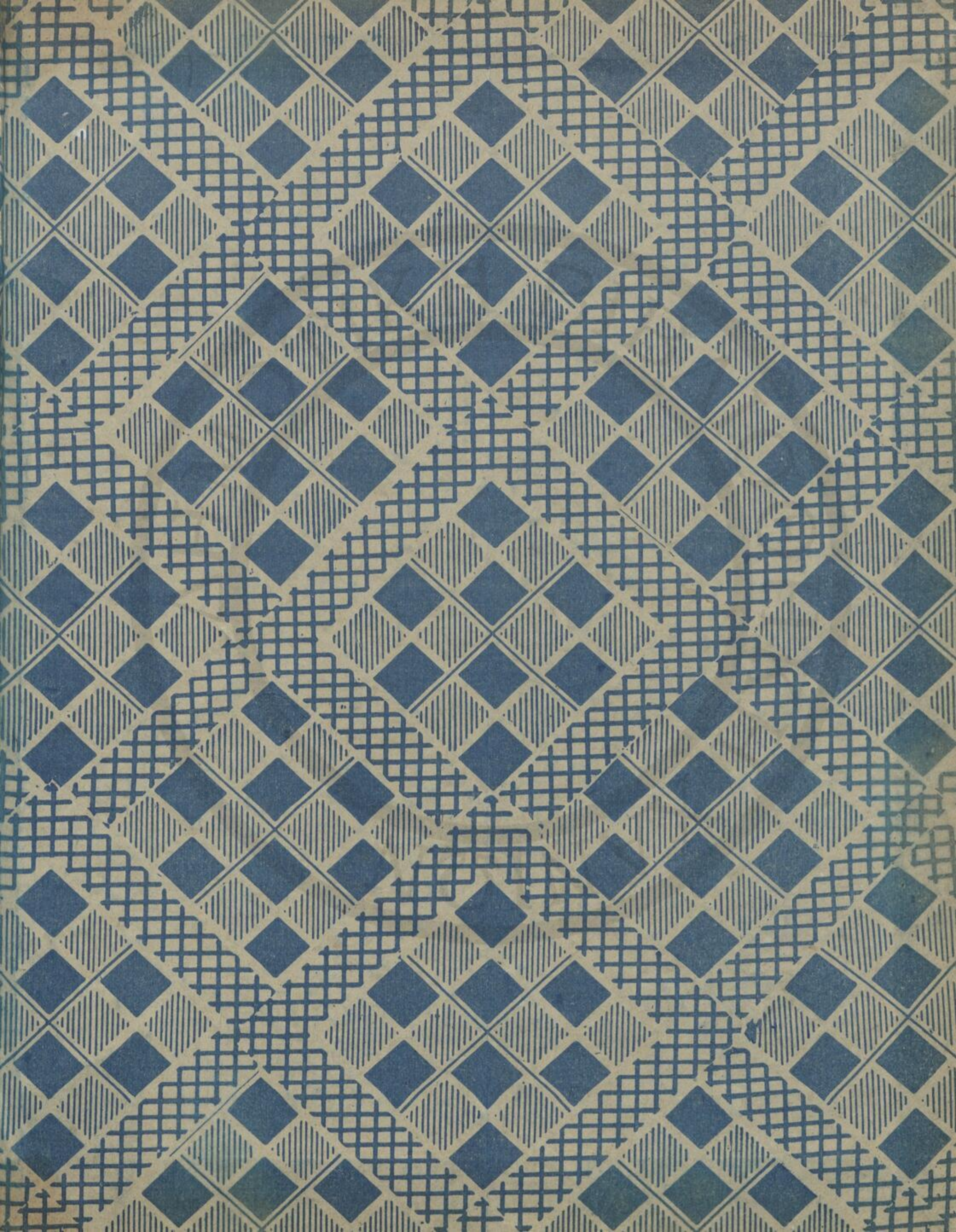
The trio continued with its success for nearly two years and did much good work for charity, including a solo by Don with the choir at various anniversaries, until it came round to his turn to go into

the forces. He chose to go into the Air Force, and like his brother and Dad he did his service in the Middle East and was away for about two years.

It was a very proud and happy family when Don returned as they had all served their country now, and Mum was nearing the day when she would be pensioned off at the factory where she had worked all her married life. Dad retired from the bench as a Potter, but continued with his writing which gave him much pleasure during his retirement, until he wrote his last few words explaining that TIME can be a very good teacher as well as being cruel, and with God's Grace may he be spared to continue writing for the endless pleasure that it gives.

THE END





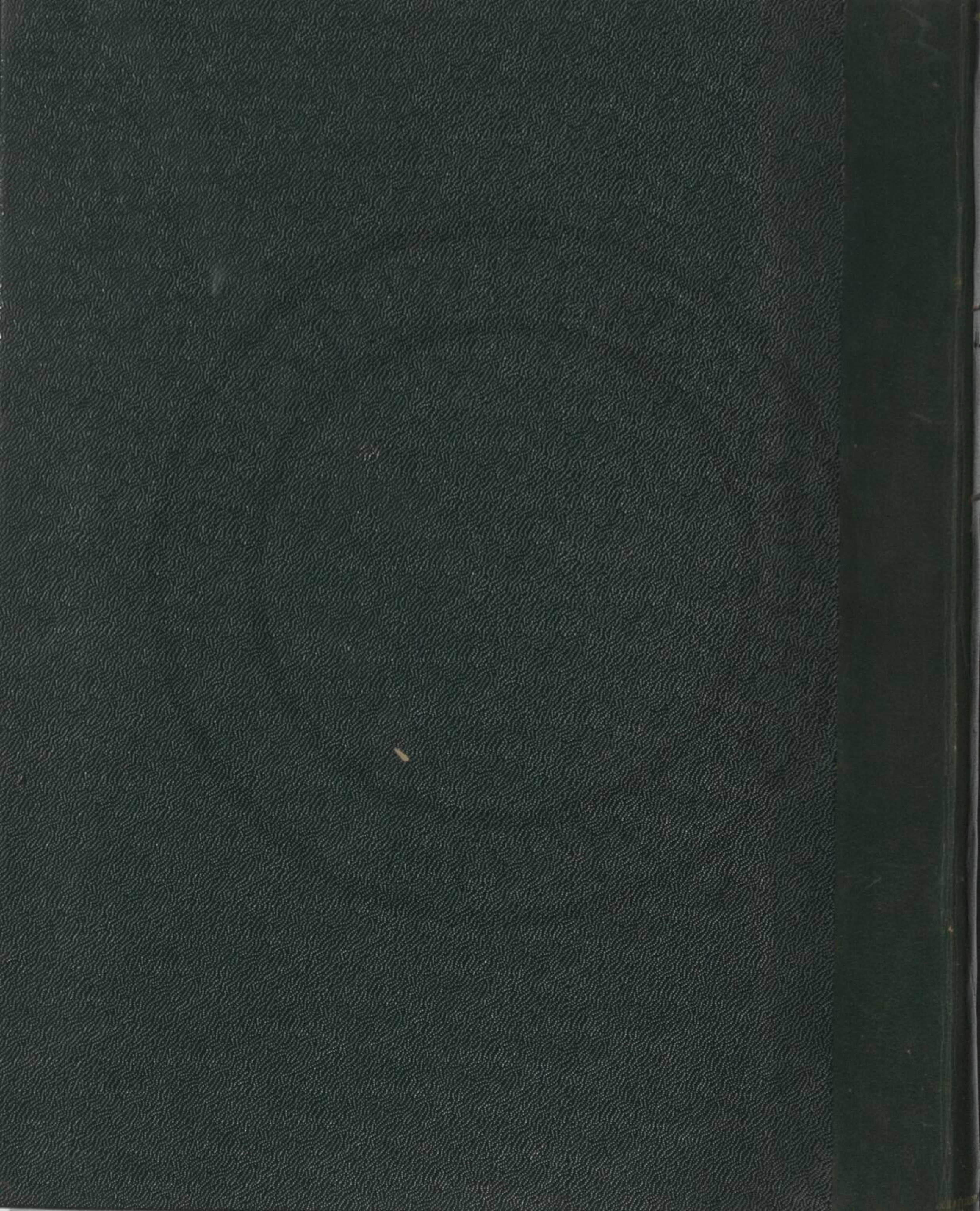
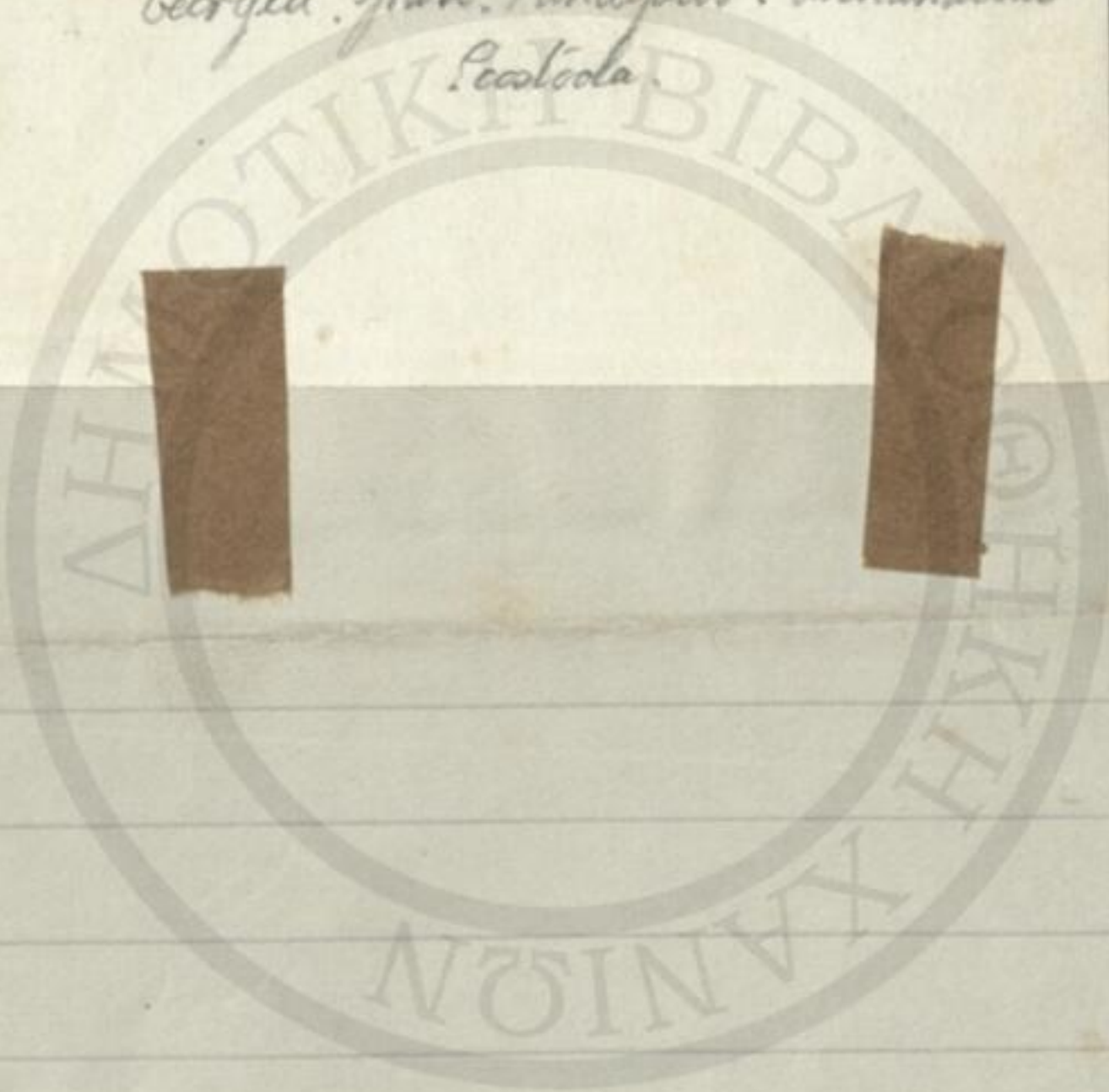




Photo of a family living near
our camp situated in a
village far behind the
Monastery. I think their
work is tailoring, or making
clothes.

Colina. Aulassia. Anglaci. An dany
Georgia. Jan. Panayotis. Arthanathis
Pestoda.





This cafe is on the
Suda Bay Road
near to the Monastery Road.
We knew him as Steven
The soldier is Lewis my pal.

STEVENS.

~~1975~~

FAMILY

and

CAFE

~~91142~~

CRETE

Εργαστήριο Πρωτογενούς και
επιπέδου - Εξ Αδρια, η ομοιογένεια
μαγνίου, χρωμίου



Family of a previous Mayor
of Canad
We knew him as George.

Family of a previous
Mayor of Canaan.
We knew him as
George.

2 reparatory [unclear]

Photo of me (Jim) and
Cecilia Micalis who's father
worked as Policeman or watch
man at the Ordnance Depot



ИМОТИКН ВІВАЛОГН

~~coula~~

MICALIS

CRETE

MAY 1941