

3rd CARABINEERS

P.O.W. DRAGOON GUARDS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1945

I have been asked to write some account of the work done by the Regiment since it joined the South East Asia Command—I am afraid I can do little more than give a list of the actions of which I have received reports. To go into details would take up far too much space and would require a series of maps which could not be reproduced.

The fighting was centred about Imphal, the capital of Manipur State, on the borders of Assam and Burma. It lies in a small plain with the Nagar Hills to the east, and the Chin Hills to the south; it is on the main road between Tiddim in the south and Kohima and Dinapur in the north, whence runs the road to China. Another road runs down the Kaban Valley east of the Chin Hills southward towards the coast, and yet another almost due east over the Naga Hills to the Chindwin Valley.

Early in March, 1944, the Japanese invaded Assam in considerable force and succeeded in reaching the vicinity of the important towns of Kohima, Imphal and Tiddim. It was to eject them from this area that the operations mentioned below were carried out.

There were no very big actions, such as took place in North Africa or the Western Front, but a series of small and bloody fights mostly on rugged mountains covered with jungle, in which an infantry brigade or less, supported by a few tanks, sought to turn the Japanese out of strong points and road blocks which they had established in our territory.

- (a) On March 20th, "A" Squadron was attached to the 32nd Brigade, and helped to relieve a party of Borderers and Gurkhas who had been cut off by Japs near Namunta in the Kaban Valley.
- (b) On April 13th, "B" Squadron was in action at Nungchigum, 8 miles east of Imphal. An account of this battle, taken from the "Daily Telegraph," appears elsewhere in this letter.
- (c) Between April 27th and 30th "A" Squadron, working with the Gurkhas, cleared the Japs from positions covering the Bisenpur-Silchar track 15 to 20 miles south-west of Imphal.

- (d) Later on this Squadron was in action again at Yangangpopui, this time north-east of Imphal.
- (e) About April 26th, "B" Squadron (or a detachment thereof), working with the 3/1st Gurkhas, was largely responsible for clearing the Japs from Red Hill, on the Imphal-Bishenpur road south-west of Imphal.
- (f) About May 8th, Potsangbam, on the Imphal-Silchar track, again south-west of Imphal, was attacked by our Infantry, supported by tanks, first "A" Squadron and later "B" Squadron. After several days' stiff fighting the village was finally cleared.
- (g) About May 20th, "the enemy, who had secured a footing in the Bishenpur box (south-west of Imphal), was destroyed almost to a man, largely by tanks of "B" Squadron, 3rd D.G.," as quoted in the official account.
- (h) Towards the end of May, the 33rd Corps advanced from Kohima to clear the Imphal-Kohima road, and the 5th Division captured Modbung, "largely due to a fine climb by tanks of "C" Squadron, 3rd D.G."

On June 5th, the following message was received by "C" Squadron from the Divisional Commander: "I congratulate you on the splendid part you played in the capture of Modbung to-day—your determination and bravery was outstanding."

The article from the S.E.A.C. of October 11th, 1944, quoted in this Newsletter seems to refer to the actions (a), (b), (c) and (h) noted above.

On June 24th, Lt.-Col. Younger, then commanding the Regiment, received the following letter from the Divisional Commander:—

"I should like you, now that the Imphal-Kohima road is open, to pass on to your Regiment the appreciation of this Division for the grand support given to us by it. Without its help we should have incurred many

more casualties, and found difficulty in capturing some key positions.

We are full of respect for the determined spirit of your officers and men and we shall immediately call for your support in our next venture."

After he had been promoted and left the Regiment, Col. Younger wrote to me:—

"It is very good to hear the high opinion that other formations have of them, and their Brigadier says their reputation is on a par with that of the 11th Hussars in the Desert."

This is as far as the official reports, that I have received up-to-date, carry the story of the Regiment's activities. I hope to be able to give you more news later on, but all I can say at present is that they are still hard at work.

"We have another day's rest after one of the most successful battles we have ever fought. Everyone is in great form, and morale could not be higher." This is the latest from the front, dated Feb. 6th.

If the censors will permit a guess, I think we may assume that they are "on the road to Mandalay."

I end my notes by wishing the best of luck to the Regiment and all their next of kin.

(Signed) GEORGE A. WEIR.

From General Sir George Weir, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Colonel of the Regiment.

ROLL OF HONOUR.

It is with most sincere sympathy to their wives and families that we give this list of officers and other ranks who were killed or died on active service in S.E.A.C.:—

Major E. R. PETTIT	
Major E. A. SANFORD	
Captain M. HUNTLEY-WRIGHT	
Lieutenant J. D. J. MEIN AUSTIN	
Lieutenant R. G. B. BARROW	
Lieutenant J. A. COLE	
Lieutenant C. T. V. FITZHERBERT	
Lieutenant H. N. NEALE	
Tpr. P. BACON	Tpr. R. J. CARNELL
Tpr. E. BAYES	(died)
Tpr. A. BROWN	Tpr. A. COURAGE (died
Tpr. O. BROWNING	of wounds)
Tpr. E. H. BIRD	Sgt. D. DOE
Tpr. G. BURGESS	Tpr. J. GALLAGHER
Tpr. C. BOOT	Tpr. S. GREEN
W.O.11 (S.S.M.) BUR-	L/Cpl. T. GEARY
RELL	Tpr. W. HENDERSON
Sq.M.S. R. BRANS-	Tpr. W. T. HOLLISTER
TONE	(died)

Tpr. E. HOPKINS	Cpl. C. POLLARD
Cpl. A. HUBBARD	Tpr. F. RIMMER
Tpr. R. L. KERR	Tpr. L. STERLING (ac-
Cpl. A. LITCHFIELD	identally killed)
Tpr. C. LUBBOCK	Tpr. D. THWAITES
Sgt. M. LADAS	Tpr. A. THOMPSON
L/c A. MANNING	Tpr. E. J. TOVEY
Tpr. L. MARSHALL	Sgt. H. TREVOR (died
(died of wounds)	of wounds)
Tpr. J. MARTIN	L/Cpl. J. VASTY
Tpr. H. MASON (died)	Tpr. A. VAUGHAN
Tpr. H. MOUNTNEY	Tpr. E. WARR
Tpr. J. MULVEY	Tpr. L. WAND
Tpr. L. PAGE	Tpr. W. WHITING

MISSING.

Tpr. W. ALMOND	Tpr. C. HARRIS
Cpl. W. DOUGAN	Tpr. L. THOMAS

We wish a very quick recovery and the best of continued good health to all who have been wounded or sick. One mother writes that her son assures her that he is getting on very well, he also speaks of the wonderful medical care he has received and how well they are treated. Others, too, have spoken of the excellent medical treatment.

Lt. F. A. Shepherd has been flown to a base hospital for skin graft after his motor-cycle crash. He is going on well, and hopes to be back with the Regiment before long.

The following are two accounts of a very gallant action in the jungle. From "S.E.A.C." :—

"Tanks in battle on a jungle mountain? The most knowledgeable tank soldier might well reply, as the farmer did on seeing his first giraffe, 'impossible.' Yet it was done by British and Indian Royal Armoured Corps Regiments on the Assam-Burma front, and with devastating effect.

Hazardous and difficult as the nature of the terrain made every movement or operation, tanks have been often a decisive factor in the fighting up and down these 8,000ft. mountain ranges.

A Squadron by Squadron war diary of an armoured Brigade that fought in Manipur would read like an account of the whole campaign, for the tanks were in the thick of every major engagement.

Two Regiments of the Brigade were brought in to operate on the 4th Corps' front. First, was the 3rd Dragoon Guards (Carabineers), a crack Regiment of the Royal Armoured Corps, which came out to India as Cavalry . . . in the

true 'horsed' sense . . . in 1937. When they went into action their mounts had become General Lee tanks.

Only one 'tank versus tank' battle occurred during the campaign. 'A' Squadron of the Carabineers marched back with 20th Division from the Kabaw Valley at the end of March. The Japanese ambushed one of the armoured columns, and a stand-up fight between tanks resulted. Five of the enemy's were put out of action. For once he learned his lesson. At no other time was the Jap willing to fight an armoured battle. The noise of our tanks was enough to make them withdraw.

'A' Squadron had a brief rest, and then fought the first battle of the Ukhrul 'saddle.' Later, they moved to the Bishenpur front and took part in all the main battles in this area before they returned to the Palel sector with 23rd Division to continue the steady advance southward.

Meanwhile 'B' Squadron had been attached to 5th Division for the vital actions in the hills near Imphal. The fiercest was probably the struggle for the retaking of the Nungchigum feature, which had been lost to the Japs. The Lees climbed 1,000 feet, and in the murderous fire that greeted them on the summit the attack was twice held up. All tank commanders, three of them officers were killed. All British officers of the Dogra infantry whom the tanks supported had also become casualties. Sgt.-Maj. Craddock took charge of the tanks and won a D.C.M. for his fine work that day. Two M.M.'s also went to tank men who took part in the action which ended five days' fighting.

'B' Squadron then moved to the Bishenpur sector, and took part in the heavy fighting around 17th Division headquarters. Here, Lt. A. Weir won an M.C. He drove his tank clean over a dominating hill feature called Red Hill, and enabled a small but very gallant party of a Baluch Battalion to hold the hill all night against enemy attacks. Later, the Squadron helped in the big push south from Ningthoukhong, which rolled the Japs back down the Tiddim road towards the Burma border.

Engaged in clearing the Manipur road from early April to late June, 'C' Squadron climbed and blasted their way up the steep mountains fringing the northern tip of the Imphal plain. They helped the 8th Gurkhas and the Suffolks take neighbouring objectives. At a critical stage in the battles near the Sengmai feature two tanks won the day with an almost unbeliev-

able climb over the North Bastion, after infantry assaults had failed."

"S.E.A.C." is the 14th Army's daily paper. The souvenir number can be ordered from any stationers.

And from the "Daily Telegraph" :—

TANK BATTLE IN THE CLOUDS.

By an Officer of the 3rd Carabineers.

Here is a tale of queer fighting. It is the tale of a tank and infantry battle on the Burma Front.

The Japanese were firmly dug in on the top of a steep hill, rising some 600ft. from the valley. Two troops of the 3rd Carabineers and two companies of the 17th Dogra Regiment were given the job of capturing the hill.

At 10.30 one morning the tanks and infantry started to climb, while the artillery plastered the enemy position above. The tanks roared and clattered, slipping and skidding sideways or backwards as they laboriously made their way upwards. Indian engineers accompanied them to help them over the worst places.

So steep was the slope that one tank somersaulted backwards, and, although the crew escaped with a shaking, six Sepoys sitting on top were trapped underneath.

The Carabineers and Dogras reached the top without opposition, and stopped to get their breath before the main assault. There, 100 yards away, was the Japanese position on three bumps on top of the ridge. The ridge was only wide enough for one tank at a time, with the hill dropping away precipitously on either side, and clouds pouring across like fast-blowing smoke.

Starting forward in line ahead, with the Dogras close behind them, the tanks travelled at only a mile an hour—the fastest they could do. Then heavy fighting started. The Japanese were all around, on the slopes of the hill below and on the bump above, ten yards from the tanks, but only dimly seen through the drifting clouds. The Indians were engaged in furious hand-to-hand fighting below and behind.

The tank commanders, their heads out of their turrets, were throwing grenades and firing their pistols at the enemy, for the guns could not be depressed to bear on them. First one, then another, then the squadron commander was killed, shot through the head, and one of the British company commanders of the Dogras was wounded, also.

A slight pause, and then the tanks lumbered forward again up the bump. Two more tank commanders were killed, and a corporal and a

trooper who took their place were also killed as soon as they put their heads out of the turrets. The other Dogra company commander was wounded, too. No officers remained.

In one tank the gunner's periscope had been smashed, and as the commander had been killed there was no one to direct its fire. So the driver, Trooper F. S. Smith, opened his visor and directed it thus, keeping the visor open, though the enemy was firing from only 15 yards away.

Squadron Sgt.-Maj. W. J. Craddock took charge of the tanks, and Subadar Ranbir Singh of the two infantry companies. They held a conference and decided their plan. The tanks, only two now, moved to within ten yards of the Japanese positions and gave covering fire. The Dogras got within only five yards of the first enemy bunker. But the fire was so intense that they could not close. They pulled back, and the two leaders made another plan.

One tank, under Sgt. S. A. C. Hannam, went to the very top of the bump—a move of only ten yards, but up a slope which seemed practically perpendicular. Craddock took his tank round just below the crest. This let the Dogras in, and they killed every Japanese in those bunkers in a matter of moments.

Three and a half hours it had taken to get that hill. Craddock and Ranbir Singh at once got down to consolidation. Barbed wire, piquets and ammunition had been brought up in and on the tanks, and soon the Dogras were dug in and secure. The counter-attacks which followed were all repulsed. Forty-seven dead Japanese were found in the bunkers, and, in all, the bodies of 277 enemy were counted on the hill.

The Dogras had captured a Japanese officer's sword, a coveted trophy. The Dogra C.O. decided that the man who most deserved it was Sgt.-Maj. Craddock. And who was better qualified to make the presentation than his comrade-in-arms, Subadar Ranbir Singh?"

AWARDS.

The King has approved the following awards for gallantry and distinguished service in Burma:—

Distinguished Service Order.

Col. R. YOUNGER, M.C.

Military Cross.

Major E. R. PETTIT

Captain L. O. PEARCE

Lieutenant W. N. M. MILLAR
Lieutenant A. WEIR

Distinguished Conduct Medal.

W.O.11 (S.S.M.) W. CRADDOCK

Military Medal.

Tpr. J. WALKER Sgt. S. HANNAN

Tpr. E. POWELL Tpr. F. SMITH

Cpl. C. COSTAIN

Certificate of Gallantry.

Cpl. F. DODWELL

Tpr. J. FOX

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Extract from ADMIRAL LORD LOUIS MOUNT-BATTEN'S ADDRESS TO THE PRESS, August, 1944:

"Please look upon Burma as one big Allied effort, British, American and Chinese, with the help of the Dutch and the other nations that are with us. It is going extraordinarily well as an Allied effort. We do not want a lot of limelight, in fact we do not want any, but I go round and talk to the men in the Command, and what worries them is that their wives, their mothers, their daughters, their sweethearts and their sisters don't seem to know that the war they are fighting is important and worth while, which it most assuredly is."

"I am proud of the gallant fighting which has taken place on all fronts, and I hope that my statement may make the people who read it proud of the achievements of their own countrymen and grateful to their Allies who helped them in these achievements."

In sending out this letter we are trying to bring a little more news to the wives and families of the Regiment—or, rather, to exchange news, as the interest entirely depends upon the points you send in from your letters.

Perhaps we have more than the usual difficulties in getting our news, and we long to know more of the great work the Regiment is doing; but one thing always come through, and that is the cheerfulness, good humour, and unflinching comradeship which exists between them.

I have not written to those of you who had already heard from Mrs. Younger. Your letters were sent on to me when Col. Younger was promoted and my husband, Lt.-Col. F. J. S. Whetstone, was given command of the Regiment. I am most grateful to those who have sent me news, and I do hope to hear from many more of you, both about your husbands, sons,

and brothers in S.E.A.C., and also about yourselves.

This Newsletter is a trial venture, and the success of the next issue depends on the help I am sure you will all give me.

PATRICIA WHETSTONE.

The Manor House,
Hungerton, Leicestershire.

(Please note change of address).

These extracts from letters help to give an idea of their life in Burma, though the scenes have shifted considerably since some of them were written. Now we hear they have left the jungle and are out in fine open country. Good luck and good hunting to them all.

“ Here I am, sitting in the jungle of Burma. Yes, we are in Burma proper now, not that it is very different from the other parts. But somehow I always imagined the jungle differently than what it is like here. Naturally, there are different grades of density, etc., and then there is the dry season. I suppose during the monsoon it will be much different. Yesterday we saw many monkeys climbing about in the trees, only small ones, though; I mean, no gorillas, etc. But they make exactly the same noise as they always do in the Zoo. Then there is quite a respectable river about 20 minutes' walk from our camp, and we can go every day for a real good swim—and wash. There are fish in the river, and yesterday I saw one of the officers who had been fishing, with his catch. One about 18 inches long, and the second one slightly smaller. I don't know what sort they are though, but they taste quite good. Only the other day our crew caught some and fried them. That's how I know. Of course, we only caught small ones, slightly smaller than herrings, by some unorthodox method which would dismay any real fishermen. On our way to the river we pass through a native village. They build their houses on posts, about 1½ to 2 yards from the ground. They have got their vegetable gardens—cucumber and melons, and also something that looks like a bean, only each one is about one foot long and two inches wide—but I have not discovered any tomatoes yet, what a pity. Then there are plenty of trees—bananas pity. Then there are plenty of trees—bananas, oranges and sweet limes—most of them. But we are not allowed to take any, of course. Well, there are ways and means! ”

“ As for myself, I'm very much enjoying an experience, which is worth all the horror and filth, which I can't deny does exist here. Dead Japs are a horrible sight if left in the heat over 24 hours, and they are absolutely suicidal. In fighting, they either get killed or die of starvation, and, as you say, Dad, they're certainly the Germans' equal in tactics. But what is beating him is the guts and *individual* fighters of the 14th Army. It is a grand experience to be 'mucking' in with a crew, each of you depending on the other, sharing the same tent and food and any parcels which they get.”

“ We had a day out 'hunting' last week with our troop officer. Armed with rifles and tommy-guns, we made our way upstream for several miles, crossing the river each time one bank became too high on one side—about 5 or 6 times in all—wading on through breast-high water. Needless to say, we shot nothing, except a vulture which the Corporal shot on the way back—he is a first-class shot. We did, however, do some fishing in our own way—with grenades. You throw the grenade into a likely-looking pool, and then make a line across the river and catch the fish as they rise to the surface stunned. We caught 20 or 30 with our grenade. We changed into shorts before doing the most hazardous part of the trip, carrying the rest of our clothes in our packs. Those without shorts wore their birthday suits, and the most humorous sight of the day was 'Bubby,' the troop's fat man, wearing small pack, boots and sidehat—only. We finished the day with a swim in the river; an enjoyable time was had by all. We are hoping to go out again next week.”

“ You inquire about pin-up girls; I think we can justly claim to have more in our circle than any other troop, though admittedly the interiors of our tanks are not as well-decorated as some. We have an artist in the troop who keeps us well supplied. Apart from their intrinsic value they are useful in distracting the attention of inspecting officers! ”

“ We are fortunate in that the climate here, while leaving much to be desired, could be a lot worse. We haven't had as much rain as we expected during the monsoon season, and the sun, though hot, is never overpowering as it is in some parts of India. Just lately we have been in the water quite a lot; Sunday morning we played water-polo (rather sticky, because of the current), and this week we have spent

several afternoons constructing a diving-platform—all this at the instigation of our troop officer, who likes to get both us and himself out of the box (camp) whenever possible. It was through him that I went down the road the other week. Nevertheless, if there is a job to be done, he is the first to take off his coat to it—even a dirty job like cleaning the guns or digging a trench.”

“ By the way, we were filmed recently, so keep a look-out for us. You’ll recognise us by our side-hats—we don’t wear berets.”

Note.—This film is called *Jungle Victory*, and will probably be released early this summer.

“ The present battle is comfortable compared with last year, even though Jap orders at the moment are: ‘ Make your foxholes your graves. ’ ”

“ No, mother, you needn’t worry. This is a beautiful country; against insects like mosies we get a fairly good protection, and all the other insects (like large spiders, scorpions). I have no fear—on the contrary, I study them. They leave you alone unless you try to hurt them. Leeches, I agree, are taking a liking to me, and they find a way through the holes for bootlaces. By the time you undress you find a blood-soaked sock with a squashed leech, otherwise you burn them off with a match or salt. The wounds heal without treatment (touch wood) within 12 hours—no pain.”

“ We are in a lovely little spot at the moment. I can’t think what people mean when they write of the horrors of Burma. Of course, the jungle is not very exciting, and we are here at the coolest time of the year. The country is rather like English park land with villages of straw and thatch in clumps of trees, and coconut palms, and everywhere green grass and lots of prickly bushes. Roads, of course, are only mud tracks. If one were not in a hurry the whole time, and things were not quite so warlike, I don’t think it’s such a bad place. At last we have an abundance of water, in fact there is a river about 50 yards from where we are, so I can have a bath every day. In the past, when we were very limited for water, I could only have a bath once a week. I am simply longing for a real hot long bath again! At last we are able to buy chickens and eggs again. The natives will not take money but will barter for clothes, trinkets, bully beef and

cigarettes. But, as usual, British troops are spoiling the market by being too generous. Eggs were 20 for 10 Woodbines, but yesterday I was asked 20 Woodbines for one egg—needless to say, I did not buy! The people seem quite cheerful and pleased to see us, but the Oriental commercial mind soon comes to the fore.”

* * *

We are dreadfully sorry to hear that the Christmas dinner didn’t arrive in time; it was local chicken—and tough at that—or bully and biscuits. Anyway, the beer caught them up, and that must have helped quite a bit.

* * *

“ There is no cause for you to worry about us. We are having at present an almost good holiday. And we are very much looking forward to the coming festivities. Naturally, that will not be like Christmas at home, nevertheless it will be celebrated, and celebrated in a true soldierly fashion—that is, good food, many and not so good drinks. Probably we are having a sing-song round a large bonfire with noisy intervals and bad jokes.”

“ Don’t worry about me getting enough to eat up here—the grub is about the best I’ve had since I came to this country. They are a grand lot of chaps in this outfit, and I am as happy as can be expected.”

“ By the way, we had an egg the other morning—we got some at a village we came through—it made quite a change. We also got a chicken, which now rides into action with us—so far, it has laid one egg.”

“ The Christmas dinner is still on the way, and it was bully and biscuits again. Anyway, things are going very well out here, and that is the main thing. All the same, I shall be glad when we get back again so that we can have a decent bed to go to, and are able to undress to get into it.”

“ Yesterday I was on the road, and I stopped for a brew up. And I mashed my tea in a cave just off the road. I was sitting on a tin watching the water boil, and I bent down to pick some wood up—and it was a *Jap’s skull*. It is funny, but you can sit and eat your food with comfort when there are dead Japs all around you.”

“ If I tell you the things in your parcel which were appreciated most, you mustn’t

think that the others were no good; but naturally some are more useful (or potentially useful) than others. It goes without saying that the ink and cigarettes were welcome; toilet paper is useful because it is no longer on issue. One can never have too many socks and bars of Blighty Lifebuoy. The diary was just what I need for working such things as incoming and outgoing mail—those on sale at our canteen were at very exorbitant prices, and I'm glad I decided against buying one. Of the other oddments, elastoplast is particularly useful for small cuts, etc. I'm afraid we're a bit surprised about anti-mosquito preparations; we are issued with mosquito cream and skit, but they don't seem to do much good. However, I'll give yours a trial! One thing I suggest you include if ever you send another parcel, and that is aspirin; I have a full bottle at present, but they are not always easy to obtain."

* * *

It is so good to hear that at last more is being done for Welfare and Entertainment. E.N.S.A. doesn't seem to get round that way much, but we do hear of mobile cinemas, concerts, a play, and a canteen.

* * *

"A Red-letter day yesterday. I spoke to a white woman for the first time in 5½ months when they brought a canteen here yesterday. We get quite a lot of fishing here, very much in the poaching line. We caught quite a few fish, which were very good eating—and I think the snipe shooting is good if one had time for it."

* * *

Better still, there does seem to be somewhere really worth going to for leave. We do hope this will lead to more of the good leave centres that are so well-earned. Lt.-Col. Whetstone writes:—

"One bit of news that will interest you—we have had a few chaps who have been to the Leave Camp run by the Viceroy on his estate at Simla. Being a first-class show, we naturally only get a few vacancies. All the men we have sent have thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I talked to one of the N.C.O.'s who had just come back from there, and he said it was the best leave he had had in India. The Viceroy has given one of the houses on the estate for it, and they have cinema shows in the main house. They can play billiards, and other games, there, and the food is really good. I hope there will be more places like that for them to go to."

This letter is written from a Leave Camp in Darjeeling. (100 miles from Mt. Everest):—

"I hardly know where to begin about this place, its so magnificent. The climate is cold, almost as cold as Barnard Castle—it's dry, and marvellous it is to breathe in clear, cold air. You can guess how much that means after spending some months in a clammy, damp, hot climate. I feel entirely new, and I've only been here 3 days! And to sleep in a bed, with real sheets, and in a brick building, and to wear clean clothes and wash as many times as you like. To us boys it's little less than a miracle. We're in a leave centre, and live in beautiful white buildings, with a room among two—cupboards and everything—and attached to each room a little Gurkha boy who acts as a batman. At 0700, the tea in bed! Oh, boy! Then get a hot shave, and off to breakfast. The food is wonderfully good. No soya licks, no biscuits, no *bully beef* and no dehydrated mutton, which is what we get every day without fail in camp! Really good English food cooked magnificently. You'll laugh when I tell you I've started horse-riding. There's hundreds of them here, and we hire one and trot to Darjeeling and back, or go up around the mountains. I enjoy it, but at first it's difficult to sit down after a ride! I've enclosed a photo taken just after I got back from a 15-mile ride to a hill where you get a magnificent view of Mt. Everest! which, as you know, is in the Himalayan Mountains and is the highest in the world and never yet climbed. You'd love to see the scenery here early in the morning. We're up in the clouds, and looking north you see through the mist the two twin mountains of Mt. Everest and Kanchen Junga. I'm also enclosing some views of this, so I think you'll see better how it is. The town itself clings to the slopes of a huge valley. It is almost entirely English, and is an exact imitation of a Blighty town. Imagine a mixture of Bournemouth and the French Riviera and put it in a valley in which Cheddar Gorge would fit a few hundred times, and you've got a very good idea of the place. Besides riding, I've been roller-skating, played football, tennis, billiards, badminton and baseball with the Yanks. I've made close friends with plenty of Navy and R.A.F. and Yanks. Those out here are damn fine chaps, and this is a place where the British and Americans play and eat together and really "muck in." I wish it was the same in Blighty. Whoever organised this place deserves mention, because to us boys of the 14th Army it's a real

"Home from Home," and they do a magnificent job. Here they let you forget the Army. Except after dark you can wear civvies or uniform, or half civvies and half uniform—hat or no hat—and you *can* put your hands in your pockets if you want to! It's very cold here at night, and I've dragged out the old Blighty pull-over from the bottom of the kit bag! The change of air and life is doing me the world of good, and I know I can go back into it at least 110 per cent. fit!"

FROM "THE TIMES."

When we finally left the jungle and entered the so-called dry zone of central Burma, it was hoped that at last there would be full scope for armoured warfare. This hope has been largely fulfilled, and I spent yesterday with a squadron of tanks which since December 24th, when it first contacted the Japanese east of the Chindwin, has killed 800 Japanese and captured 12 guns for the loss of two officers and one other rank killed and 17 others wounded.

The group consists of one squadron of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, commanded by Major E. S. P. Dorman and using General Lee tanks; a battery of self-propelled guns; a company of Bombay Grenadiers as escort infantry; and units of Royal Engineers, R.E.M.E., and R.A.S.C.—altogether a total of 500 British and 200 Indian troops.

41 Actions.

On November 13th the squadron left Imphal for a point roughly 30 miles west of Kalewa. It continued on tracks, crossing the Chindwin on rafts. Since then it has covered more than 350 miles and has fought 41 actions in support of nine different infantry battalions with whichever brigade was in the lead. In the early stages it functioned primarily as an independent armoured column to establish or maintain contact with the retreating enemy. Latterly it has been fighting in the closest conjunction with the infantry to clear the Japanese from the villages in the bend of the Irrawaddy river. Its most successful action was at the small village of Kyause—one of many villages of this name in Burma—where 120 Japanese were caught in the open and killed and the tanks returned all with Japanese flags flying from their aerials.

The officers say that the General Lee is well suited for this type of work. Its 75mm. forward gun can be used for blasting bunkers, while the 37mm. in the revolving turret and

the machine-guns can deal with snipers and with any enemy on the flanks or in the rear.

Maintenance has been the chief problem, chiefly owing to the speed of the advance. Although the Japanese have used mines, tank-traps, and anti-tank devices like bombs connected with tripwires, only one tank has been lost. Others have run over mines and have been penetrated by Japanese anti-tank shells, but all have been successfully repaired.

Keen Escort.

There is wonderful relationship between the British troops and the Bombay Grenadiers—referred to as "The Grinders"—whose rôle it is to ride into battle on the tanks and give them infantry protection.

The Grinders are all Punjabi Moslems from north-west India. Not only are they fine soldiers, but they quite obviously get the same thrill as would a child from riding atop an unfamiliar vehicle and it enhances their *izzat*—that untranslatable word of the Indian Army which connotes chiefly pride—to be associated with this modern weapon of war. However fierce the fighting, The Grinders have stuck by the tanks, taking their toll of the enemy, and there was nearly a riot recently when they were told to wait behind while the tanks went into a certain village with some British infantry.

REGIMENTAL COMFORTS FUND.

A Regimental Comforts Fund was formed last July, as it was realised that books and other similar items were so hard to obtain in Burma.

So far, a number of parcels containing games, playing cards and books have been sent to the Regiment.

We found it was not practicable to send woollen comforts, as these can be provided by the Indian Government, thus saving shipping space and ensuring more certain delivery.

The "Daily Sketch" Fund has very kindly sent the Regiment a large parcel, mainly books, as these seem to be in greatest demand.

We hope to continue to send parcels out at regular intervals, as we know they are appreciated by our men, who are so far from home. Any donation, however small, that you may be able to give to help this work will be most gratefully accepted. Donations should be addressed to:—

Mrs. RALPH YOUNGER,
Clifton Maubank,
Yeovil,
Somerset.