

'THROUGH'

'The Story of 8 Signals 8 Australian Division and Signals A.I.F. Malaya' - April 1949.

The following are excerpts from the book and mentions three mates of 8th Division Signals, who all marched into Liverpool Camp from R.R.D. Moore Park Showgrounds on Wednesday, 24th July 1940.

NX28240 David Fairley 'Dave' Galbraith, Westmead NSW

NX32234 John Theodore 'Bob' Ingleton, Blakehurst NSW

NX34159 Michael James 'Jim' Stinson, Cowra NSW

Chapter 1 Once Upon a Time: Page 5.

The Unit now began to acquire a modest quota of motor transport. To drive and maintain these vehicles, the Adjutant personally selected a small party, comprising what one might call 'savage' drivers! These men achieved a certain amount of notoriety by virtue of their employment they escaped a good deal of the less glamorous fatigues and avoided most of the parades on which their comrades learned, very painfully, to stand to attention, to handle small arms and to "tame" respirators, anti-gas. Do you remember them? The names of Bob Ingleton, Hal Levinsohn, Alf Speight, Ernie Hume, Jimmy Stinson, Ray Mitchell, Stan Hone and Dave Galbraith, come to mind. One feels that these were the first of the other ranks to become generally known in the Unit. Later, on Signalmen Hart and Warne achieved even wider recognition as regimental buglers.

Chapter 1V The Unit in Action: Page 120.

There were no casualties among vehicles and equipment. The utility truck normally used by the second in command was riddled with bomb fragments to the great anger of Signalman Fred Cann and even greater anger of Sgt. Bob Ingleton who at one time had driven it on the Seremban mail run from Kuala Lumpur, an event in which he was said to have held the record!

Chapter V the Bamboo Curtain: Page 174.

The officers all lived together in one area of the camp outside the goal. They were attended still by some of the faithful batmen whose conduct has raised to the status of an honourable profession what may be considered a humble calling. The cheerful faces of 'Snowy' Duesbery, John Beilby, Archie Clapham and the versatile Perce Fenwick, who used to make palatable dishes out of next to nothing, could regularly be seen in the officers' lines. Then there were frequent visitors, such as Alby Weir, whose efforts, day in day out, kept a great many of our A.I.F. colleagues elegantly barbered; also, Alf Speight and Jim Stinson who used to come along of an evening and talk over old times and about what was going on in Singapore.

Aerodromes and Railroads in Burma: Page 193.

From Tanyin, Signals and the rest of the camp moved back to the 26-kilo peg at Kunknitkway, where we became known as No.1 Mobile Camp. Our task was to lay the rails which now began to arrive. The cuttings and embankments had been pushed ahead to the 60-kilo mark, and in April 1943 we began the rail laying. From then until the line was joined up at the end of the year, the "heat was on". We certainly earned our

name of Mobile Camp, for in the next six months the group moved from camp to camp as the line was pushed further and further towards Thailand. Eventually we met up with the men from "F" and "H" Forces, who were building the line from Bampong northwards towards Burma. We crossed the Burma-Siam border in September 1943 and made contact with Sigs of "F" Force under Lt-Col. Kappe. Although the Japs forbade communication between two groups. Sigs were able to swap stories and news with pals from Changi whom they had not seen for sixteen months. First news of "F" Force had previously been brought to us by Dave Galbraith and Johnny Felstead, who had been driving rations and supplies across the border for weeks before the two groups met.

The Burma-Thailand Railway: Page 220.

As Capt. Stahl and Capt. Hardacre had been included in Colonel Kappe's Headquarters staff, the command of the Signals detachment devolved upon Capt. Ben Barnett, wicketkeeper of three Australian Elevens upon tours of England and South Africa. On 17 April 1943 orders were received that the Signals personnel detailed for the first trainload - five officers and 215 O.R.s - would march out at midnight, assemble on the barrack square, Selarang, there to be picked up by the Jap guards in trucks, and entrain at Singapore railway station in the early hours of the following morning. At this stage, there was much speculation to our destination, but the most favoured conjecture was the Cameron Highlands which, pre-war, had been famed as a civilian hill station. On the night of our departure the lines were a scene of feverish activity. Instructions had been received for the Japs that each man had to carry twenty four hours' cooked rations, and each party approximately twenty seven had to have certain cooking utensils. The work done by Sgt. Bob Ingleton and Cpl. Noel Chitty in getting this side organised was really magnificent. As the cooking gear had to be taken, it necessitated pulling out the ovens and kwalis that had been used to prepare the twenty four hours' rations, cooling them down, and then rushing them across the barrack square, the assembling point for the departing troops. The first batch of Australian troops numbered 650, leaving every other night.

Page 240-41.

A few members of Signals had already arrived in Kanburi with earlier parties, which had been, as already stated evacuated during the nine months, and as the main force began to concentrate in the Kanburi Hospital Camp, they did a great job in sorting out and assisting the men less fortunate than themselves. The name Jimmy Stinson will always be remembered in this regard. As each trainload arrive, probably in the middle of the night, above the din of the guards, screaming and shouting to get the men out of the trucks, would be heard the voice of James who was rushing up and down shouting "Any Signals here? Any Signals here? If he got an affirmative reply, he would go to endless trouble to see that they were helped and finally billeted in some reasonably dry spot.

At the Kanburi Hospital Camp, the members of Signals organised a small fund to provide eggs and other amenities, which were now available as we were down on the plains, and again Jimmy Stinson did a grand job in distributing these small comforts.