

no mention or concern about her ordeal.

On my discharge from hospital I was transferred to a rehabilitation centre in Constantine. The subsequent time ahead were spent moving from transit camp to transit camp. It was difficult to make any lasting friendships as the inhabitants of these camps were in the same situation as I was; their main object was to get back to their units as quickly as possible.

I was eventually moved to Tunis transit camp. This was a melancholy occasion; I saw the hospital where I used to work it was occupied by strangers; all my old pals had gone. I was walking disconsolately along the main street in Tunis when I was singularly attracted to a very smart turn out of a troop of Arab Legion on horse back. They reminded me of the Desert Song picture that I had seen some time ago. They were led by what I presumed to be an officer of the French army. I was startled out of my reverie by his shouts of Chapeau! Chapeau! it did not occur to me until he had passed that he had wanted me to salute him. I think that I must have forgotten that I was in the army: So much for Anglo French relations.

Tunis was now a Garrison town; gone was the bonhomie and lasser faire of the time we surjourned in the city. I did not stay in Tunis very long until I was transferred to Phillip ville, a town situated on the Mediteranian coast line. This was a cosmopolitan camp, troops were coming and going every day. Besides British and American displaced soldiers there were quite a number of Italian prisoners of war in make-shift cages. They were like animals in the zoo. Their condition was worse than ours, at least we were under canvas. Although I made several enquiries as to where my unit was situated and how soon I could be sent there, but these enquiries recieved nothing but negative responses from those in charge of the camp.

sight. The same procedure as at Beja took place, alternative receptions of one hundred patients each. It was a particularly busy station and a very desolate one. The casualties we received at this station were the last big battle of the North African campaign - and the final onslaught on Tunis.

Biserta and Tunis had fallen on the 7th and 9th of May respectively. It was while we were at Oued Zarga that Major Ruscoe Clarke got the name of Five table Clarke, a name that was known the whole length of Algiers and Tunisia. How he earned this unusual name was because of his unusual method of operating. Our operating theatre was a huge marquee, housing five operating tables. Major Clark and Capt' faux would be operating on two patients on two of the tables with two teams of assistants while two dressers would be attending to two patients who had already been operated on. These were being dressed before going to the wards. The fifth table held a patient who was being cleaned up and prepared for operation. This system may seem complicated but I can assure you that it worked very well. It was something like a conveyor system. It was a good system for dealing with a rush of casualties such as we often got.

Now that Biserta and Tunis had fallen we packed up our tents and set off for Tunis by road convoy. Few of our many journeys were as thrilling as this one was. On our way we passed hundreds of crashed and bombed vehicles on the road leading to the capital. Crashed aircraft and knocked out enemy tanks littered the sides of the road. Thousands of German and Italian prisoners of war passed us enroute for the prison cages. There were hundreds of Arab refugees on the road which impeded our progress somewhat. We passed Mejez El Bab and Long stop Hill where the guards brigade fought so magnificently. A feeling of euphoria was experienced by all, as we were seeing the end of the African campaign and things were going our way for a change.

As we entered Tunis the streets were lined with cheering crowds who threw flowers at us as we passed lorries. Children scrambled up the tail boards of the

Every one was in an exuberant mood. No wonder for it was a big step towards final victory. The most amazing thing that stood out in my mind was that when we disembarked from our lorries at the assembly point there were Salvation Army personnel dishing out hot mugs of tea and buns. I was amazed.

We opened up at the Italian Colonial Hospital under the command of Tunis district. We shared the hospital with the White nuns and their mother superior. I shall always remember the kindness shown to us by these dedicated people.

On the 22nd of June 43 Lt. Col. R.L. Turner assumed command of the unit and on the 29th June we were joined by the Q. A. I. M. N. S. (Queen Alexander's Imperial Military Nursing Service. The unit admitted sick and accident cases with a fair quota of burns from the R.A.F. Life was not so hectic now the fighting was over. We had the opportunity to join bathing parties at Carthage and St Germain. It was at Carthage that some of my pals and I visited the Cathedral; a magnificent building. I was particularly interested in the huge crucifix in the transept. The image of Christ was so death like that one could be excused for thinking it was a real corpse that had been nailed to the cross. I well remember the siroccos, The stifling heat, The cosmopolitan crowds, the noisy market place, the wild gesticulations of the people and urchins shouting for 'backsheesh'. While we were in Tunis we were visited by General (now Field Marshal) Alexander. I had a close up view of him and he appeared much smaller than I had imagined. Every thing had to be 'speck and span' for the visit.

While we were there we had to treat a lot of soldiers and airmen suffering from severe sunburn. Many had blisters as big as saucers, and that is no exaggeration. These injuries were considered 'self inflicted wounds' and were punished accordingly. All troops had been warned of the dangers of sun-bathing in the tropical heat. Most of the miscreants were soldiers and airmen too who had just come out from England and were a little bit embarrassed at pale skin, especially when they mixed with some of the veterans. We also had to treat the severe burns of

who had come down in flames. These were horrible sights to behold. It was during our surjurn in Tunis that we pioneered the 'maggot treatment for burns.' The patient was exposed to flies, covered with nothing more than a layer of gauze. The flies lay their eggs in the suppurating burns and the resulting maggots feed on the pus. sounds revolting but very effective. The results were quite spectacular. The maggots eating away all the putrifaction left the burns quite clean. This form of treatment avoided sepsis which was the curse of all third degree burms. When we entered the ward in the morning, we would see maggots crawling along the ward floor.

As I have already stated, the nuns were very kind to us, they helped us in every way they could. I was amazed how adept they were in theatre work. We were invited to watch their technique. How they manipulated the huge steam sterilizers, in fact they did most of instruments and dressings for us. We also found that they had a marvelous sense of humour and they were a delight to work with.

During one of our trips to the coast on a swimming party I fell from the back of a lorry, I did not hurt myself very much except that I scraped my knees rather badly. Unfortunately, owing to the virility of the microbes in the soil I developed a Pre Patella abscess. This condition soon became a great nuisance to me. My leg swelled to an enormous size. As our participation in the invasion of Sicily was imminent my main concern was to hide my condition from the officers. I knew that this was stupid and wrong, My reason for wanting to hide my condition was because I knew that the time was fast approaching for us to prepare to take part in the Salerno landings. I also knew that if I went into hospital, then I would lose touch with my unit for some time.

However my condition worsened; I was running a temperature and common sense prevailed so I reported sick

Actually one of my pals threatened to report me to the commanding officer if I did not report sick. "It's for your own good" he said. I knew it made sense of course, I was being just plain silly.

It was during this time that I recieved an air-mail letter from home informing me that I had become a father: my wife Molly had given birth to a baby girl. We had decided to call her Mary. It transpired that this was to be the last letter that I was to receive from home for a very long time.

I was flown from Tunis to the 97th General Hospital Algiers by a decota which had been converted into an ambulance plane. By this time my leg had swollen from below the knee to my groin and hung like a huge bag. I was febrile and in a semi comatose condition. When I arrived at the hospital I was taken straight to the theatre. I was given an injection in my arm which I presume was Pentothol Sodium, the result was complete oblivian. I think that it was the nicest way to be put to sleep. When I came out of the anaesthetic, and was able to take notice I got a good ticking off from the surgeon who operated on me. A ticking off I well deserved. He told me that I was lucky not to have lost my leg through my delay in reporting sick. My explanation, that I wanted to stay with my unit, did little to mollify him.

My unit was, by this time, participating in the landing at Sicily. The next three months after my discharge from hospital were the most miserable of my whole life. I was cut off from my friends in my unit and consequently deprived of any correspondance from home, as all my mail was sent to the No. 1 C.C.S. It was rather a coincidence or you might call it a quirk of fate, but during this distressing time my wife had been taken into the Newcastle General Hospital with a breast abscess. The sad thing about it was that I did not know anything about it until I rejoined my unit which was not to be for three months. My wife must have gone through a very trying time getting letters from