

Transcription

S Ash C.Q.M.S. No.1 Coy. 39 R.F. E.E.F. Palestine

Diary of Journey Home

Jan 4th Left Ludd for Kantara. Train departed at 1800hrs had to drive out some Gippos for a place, were pretty comfortable, 3 in a small compartment at EC BaR **meet L/C [?] i/c [in charge] of station** + we had a hot cup of tea it was Tres Bon. Arrived.

Jan 5th Arrived at Kantara 1130hrs got some Gippos to carry the kits + was one of the first to register that day. Went for a walk out down main road Kantara. Wrote a letter home and one to S.A.

Jan 6th Reveille 0600hrs. Breakfast 0630 which was very poor. Went for a shower Bath + had Blankets fumigated. Taffy clicked he was put i/c of the party. Medical inspection followed + we scrounged it. In the afternoon we had Kit + Rifle inspection which was a farce + then we moved from the reception lines into the Section B.

Jan 7th Reveille 0630hrs Ham for Breakfast. Parade 0730hrs detailed fatigues etc. 0900hrs parade to have papers stamped certified complete kit + exchange of clothing 0930hrs parade on which the Draft for the 10th was called out. Time drags very badly. Lunch 1130hrs mince meat + potatoes. Dinner at 1530hrs. Parade at 1700hrs to issue detail. After 1700hrs we are allowed out. Visit Y.M.C.As Canteen etc. Saw a boat lit up going through the Suez Canal it looked very nice. Retire about 1830hrs.

Jan 8th Usual Routine. Meet Kelly who clicked straight away for Camp Sgt. Major (cushy job). Usual meal hours etc. On the 1700hrs parade Cantor was detailed as Orderly Sgt. Major Freeman clicked for C.O.S I thought my time had come too but nothing happened. After cleaning up, went to y.m.c.a for a Bath where we had to wait very nearly all night. Had supper at the ymca + retired.

Jan 9th Cantor and Freeman were up long before Reveille on the 0800hrs parade my name was called + I thought I was for it but they only wanted mess subs. Strolled about the place went to see Kelly. Usual meals etc. On the 1700hrs parade I was detail for Sgts mess Duty went in the ymca and had tea came back to camp went to a concert in camp rather crowded.

Jan 10th Got up at 0630hrs went to the mess at 0700hrs. Just watch the Sgts. file in + close the door when full after the second sitting had Breakfast the same thing happened at Lunch + Dinner. After Dinner went down to the ymca for Tea Went down to the Bazaar came back + went on duty to the mess stayed in there until about 2100hrs + **as there was nothing much doing I [?] Retired for the night.**

Jan 11th Stayed in bed rather late finished Breakfast + went straight on Parade. G. Cohen came down to Kantara with a letter. Local Demobs expect to be down here in a day or so. Cantor clicked again for Camp Sgt. Major. No duty knocking around

went out with G. Cohen for tea. Returned after + after took him part way to the station had supper at the ym + retired. Draft of 250 from B Section left at 1900hrs.

Jan 12th After 0800hrs parade another was ordered at 0920 hours + about 730 names were called out for Draft, Hard cheese was not amongst them but must be quids in for the next. after 1700hrs parade went down to ym for tea + then went on to the photographer to see about snaps. Returned to the ym + went in the Lounge + there meet Ruby who told us the story of his had being sent off the Boat just before she was about to Sail. Came back to Camp + retired for the night

Jan 13th Usual Routine Supposed to have been COS inspection of the camp however [?] and [?] + a good many more were passing the time by reading. Left camp in the afternoon + tried to get a Bath at the ym but unfortunately there was nothing doing. Went out as usual to the Bazaar + meet a Yiddisher Boy who lives in [?]. Had quite a long conversation with Taffy clicked for Camp Guard

Jan 14th Things went as usual at 0200hrs a special Parade was called + I was unfortunate enough to be detail for Guard. It was a new guard + I took over from 47th Sikhs. It was a ELC compound with 43 Deserters in. The Guard Room was in a filthy condition so I got permission to sleep in the office. Orderly Officer came round at 2315. Things went AI

Jan 15th Still on Guard after at 0600hrs we took the count + everything was correct. I managed [click? Nick?] a belt from one of the [CMPS?] An Indian Guard near by brought us some Tea before Breakfast it was Tres Bon. After Breakfast got clean up etc + sat reading until 1040hrs when the Orderly Officer came everything correct. Dismounted 1600hrs. Had Dinner + learned that [Lt Bright + Lane?] had come down went out for Tea + the Bazaar. Returned to camp + Retired for the night, a little tired after the Duty.

Jan 16th Usual Routine George Cohen came down [first?] going to Cairo. All Local Demobs came down + Sgt. Levy came down but I have not see[n] him yet. [moved?] out of Camp to the ym + had a Bath, quite good after knocking about for about half hour had lunch down there + returned to Camp. Went out to the ym. Kelly came down just before we went to bed. Whist Drive was held in Staff Cantor brought an invitation to go to the Staff mess tomorrow as they were having a concert.

Jan 17th Usual Routine All new Draft left at 0730hrs about 750 men. Very few men left in camp about 400 in B Section 0000hrs parade all men were detailed for fatigues there were no more men left so the L/C + Cpl had to clean up the parade ground Sgts were dismissed. Went to E Section + came across Levy. Saw Hart + Cohen Levy in the mess at Lunch. Went down to ym meet Sgt. Morris down there, had tea + returned to Camp meet Kelly had a conversation with him + retired for the night. Cantor detailed for conducting duty Freeman for C.O.S.

Jan 18th Usual routine. Hardly enough men to do fatigues. Church parade etc. about 1600 men in the Camp after parade went down to y.m. + had after strolled down to Greek Café + meet Morris had a chat + and Egyptian coffee then returned to Camp. The night was very sharp something like English weather I had some Bread and Cheese before retiring.

Jan 19th Usual Routine. **RAMC [?] keeps [writing?] us wind up.** Went to ym for Breakfast with Taffy + Sgt. Morris returned about 1015hrs. Draft to be called out **tomorrow [sweating?] on the top line.** Saw Levy asked us to come round after parade missed Levy meet him at the ym **had Tea and went to the [?] meet all the fellows there** pretty good pictures Got back about 2200hrs.

Jan 20th On the morning parade told everybody is confined to Camp. Expecting a Draft to be called, all sorts of rumours going around, waiting patiently to see what is going to happen. Went down to ym for Tea spent a quiet time + went to Greek Cafi + had a Egyptian coffee was warned on 1700hrs parade for Canteen Duty the following day had some Bread and Cheese before retiring.

Jan 21st Usual Routine. Got up rather late about 6.40 but still managed all I had to do. **Went to the [HACB?] Canteen** about 1000hrs + had a bite. Strong rumours about a Draft being called living in Hope again. Went down to the y.m. about 1630hrs as I was on Duty had Tea + returned at 1730hrs. Brushed myself up + reported to N.C.O. i/c Canteen I was posted on Duty at the Bar Bar stayed there until they closed at 2000hrs then was supposed to report on Staff Parade but as Freeman was COS I did not bother.

Jan 22nd Usual Routine on the 0800hrs parade we were told to parade again at 0900hrs. That means a Draft is to be called. At 0900hrs after standing for a few seconds I heard 2702 CQMS Ash shouted my heart jumped. I was amongst the first half dozen to be warned. Was detailed to help to make our Acquittance Rolls, was on that until Lunch Time. After Lunch had to move in III Area fines Taffy came into our Tent. Cantor took charge of the parade. Went down to ym tried to get a Bath but was unlucky. Meet Kelly down there went to the Pictures.

Jan 23rd Usual Routine. Nothing doing on parade for Draft Pay parade at 1000hrs. I got signatures Officer by name of Griffiths i/c III Area, some had medical inspection at 1330 (quite a farce) went to ym early I did not go on everything. Managed to get a Bath (Tres Bon) had Tea and made an early night in.

Jan 24th Usual Routine. Area III to proceed by 1st Train I had lunch at 1030 + was detailed to look after men's kits + Rations. Had a party of 6 then to load the kits etc. The other poor chaps had to stand on parade for about 2 hrs M.O. (some joke) I rode down on a Lorry cushy. Left Kantara Station at 3 o'clock after a lot of messing about. Travelling all night about 1900 hrs.

I was sick. Troops were going all over the place sick about 2000hrs was sick again after that I got to bed on the DeeR I did not feel like chancing a Hammock sleep A.I. + felt a treat after being sick.

Jan 25th Still on the train, issued the Troops with Bully + Biscuits did not arrive on the Docks until 1000hrs the lot that left after us were already aboard. Taffy was waiting for me showed me the quarters. Embarked on HMT Czaritza. Rather narrow for the size. Had dinner + Tea on board. Set sail at 1030hrs. I was sick at 1900hrs. Troops were lying sick all over the place. I was sick again at 2000hrs after that I felt A.I. so I got down to sleep but I sleep on the lower Deck + not in a Hammock. Sleep a treat.

Jan 26th Troops all sick went for a wash + found Taffy lying under a staircase after running about all night. I was alright had a cup of Tea before Breakfast + was going strong. Eat all meals + was feeling A.I. Poor Taffy was in a state however I could not grumble. **After a lot of [coaxing?] I manage to get Taffy to sleep** before everything Tres Bon. Had a cup of Tea + Biscuits before retiring.

Jan 27th Usual Routine. Should have had Boat Parade but Everybody in confusion. Sea was calm + spent a day on deck. Meals A.I.

Jan 28th Had a cup of Tea + Biscuits before Breakfast. Went on Deck + about half an hour we sighted Land. We had Boat Parade + put in at Malta small merchant boats all over the place chaps dive in the sea after coins. We coaled off Malta + so we were not able to set sail the same day. Most officers allowed ashore. Knocked about on Deck all afternoon. Some of the West Yorks came aboard at Malta amongst was two Yiddisher boys. Had usual tea at night + retired for the night. Warned for Ship's Orderly Sgt for tomorrow.

Jan 29th Sailed from Malta first thing in the morning. Reported at the Orderly Room after Breakfast + took sick etc. Had a long conversation with the yiddisher chaps from the W.Y. One of them took a photo of us + Freeman promised to send one on to me.

Had to get a fatigue party up. RSM saw me at 1400hrs. I was detailed to detail 4760 to be i/c of mess Decks for cleanliness (some job) running about all afternoon. Just finished that job when I got another similar job but that I handed over to Area Orderly Sgts. Was on Deck until 2100 hrs (it was a beautiful night + we were with the chaps of the WY) After retiring about 2200hrs. Somebody woke me up + asked what about the mess guards. I think I whispered something in his ear. Three stowaways caught on Board.

Jan 30th After waking up had biscuits + Tea + went for a walk on the Deck. The Brat was tossing about + the sea was rough, already some of the chaps are being overcome by seasickness. On Deck things were quiet as most of Troops were down below sickening. Taffy was very bad. Had fish for Breakfast + they fought for their freedom they were trying to get back in the sea. I felt nasty rumblings in my stomach but nothing happened. Had a sleep in the afternoon. Taffy went to sleep early + Charleny + myself were on Deck until 2100hrs + then settled down for the night. Sea calmed down after Tea

Jan 31st Got up at 0600 hrs had usual cup of Tea + Biscuits + then had a wash and brush up. Went for a walk on Deck + found the sea very calm it was just like a sheet of Glass. Notice the sprays of Whales in the water also large fins of sharks. Had a conversation with West Yorks. During the day the alarm went for Brat Stations + Everybody was there like a shot. There is little sickness on board + Doctor has ordered everybody to gargle twice Daily. Had a conversation + retired after usual cup of Tea + Biscuits. Sighted Coast of Spain + France

Feb 1st After usual cup of tea + Biscuits went on deck + found we had already sighted Gibt. We stayed outside the Harbour for a short time + then went inside. There were lots of battleships + submarines in the Harbour among them were the

Queen Elizabeth and Warspite. Gib is a very big fortification. Left Gib at 1400 hrs. Went right past the Queen Elizabeth a very fine Boat. Weather pretty good. Usual cup of tea + Biscuits at 1900 hours

Feb 2nd Usual Routine. Still travelling along the Coast. Weather pretty good. Stayed on Deck all day. Was inoculated against flu. Nothing much doing.

Feb 3rd Nothing much doing. Quiet day

Feb 4th Weather getting pretty cold. Usual Routine. Arrived at Plymouth at 2100 hrs. Stayed outside Harbour overnight. Good to see light of old Blighty again.

Feb 5th Reveille at 0430 hrs. I messed about generally. Told to stand by in Boat station with kits, kept there until 1230 standing on Deck with cold wind blowing, getting fed up. Disembarked on Tugs on them till 1330. Troops getting impatient jeering and shouting. Got on Quay side issue with 2 tickets. Went to N.A.C.B with these + for one received Cup of Tea, chocolate and cake with the other, Got rations for Train ie 1 packet of Biscuits 1 meat pie + chocolate. Entrained. Things moved very quickly when we put foot on land. Entrained at about 1500 hours. **Arrived at [?] 2030hrs Detailed nco i/c [hut?] got down for the night.** Blankets etc all ready