

Some extracts from the diary of Victor 'Dusty' Miller of No.2 Commando

January/February/March 1945

### **January 1945**

- Fri. 5<sup>th</sup> Moved to training area advance party, Gravina near Altamura
- Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Rest of lads arrive
- Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Training new chaps on M.G....coal expedition with Jimmy B.....
- Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Out on scheme for Brigadier Davy...fired 2,000 rounds
- Sat 13<sup>th</sup> Moved to different billet Bari... TOCH full ???
- Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> Fed up with this mud but would sooner be here than in Bitteto
- Sat 27<sup>th</sup> "Scheme "

### **February 1945**

- Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Scheme at Minervino, mortar bombs near
- Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Marched from 23:00 until 07:30...feet are killing me
- Tues 6<sup>th</sup> Found skeletons in locked room ,on guard, Andy sees a ghost
- Mon 12<sup>th</sup> Court of inquiry over L.Smiths rifle
- Tues 13<sup>th</sup> Rumours of move to the front
- Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> Move to the front in cattle trucks
- Fri 16<sup>th</sup> Passed Cassino and Monastery
- Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Met Johnny Prendergast at Rimini arrived at Ravenna
- Tues 20<sup>th</sup> Still cold, briefed for ops
- Wed 21<sup>st</sup> Well , here in the line , He (Jerry ) has shelled us and I am frozen, what a fine start
- Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> It is creepy being on guard with this mist, Capt. Turner trod on a mine , He is lucky he is killed ??????
- Sat 24<sup>th</sup> Still misty,you can't see more than 30 yards ,there is a K.O. A/T gun outside , I will get the armour plating for my gun position
- Sun 25<sup>th</sup> 5 troop are shelled L/Cpl King R.I.P.
- Mon 26<sup>th</sup> Thing are pretty sticky, my mates in 3 troop are catching it,Bob Brampton,Bill, Campbell, Jocko, Timber ...all dead
- Wed. 28<sup>th</sup> 4 minutes past 4 a.m. Jerry stonked us terrific , I am well shaken,Ginger . R.I.P. .. I am glad we moved from that house

## March 1945

- Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> I think that Binks is shaken too, we move back to Eddys house , I feel safer
- Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> Rumours that we are going to be relieved, Yes the Ities are here to relieve us
- Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Quite a relief to be back in Ravenna , hot showers its great to feel clean again
- Sun 4<sup>th</sup> The lads go in the line again. I ask for a rest and get it. Lucky me I hope the lads get it easy
- Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Put in charge of rations at R.H.Q....I must look innocent
- Sun 11<sup>th</sup> Some of the lads come back R.I.P. Nellie Smallbone
- Tues 13<sup>th</sup> Went to Springbok Cinema with Fred
- Wed. 14<sup>th</sup> Half the troop go up the line , half come down... I am storeman
- Fri.16<sup>th</sup> Fred and Harry and the rest of the section come back from the line
- Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Met Syd Miles , he is with the Gurkhas now
- Mon. 19<sup>th</sup> Lads go in the line again
- Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> Fred is wounded in the nose, he has taken it well
- Sat 24<sup>th</sup> On guard as guard commander
- Sun 25<sup>th</sup> Went to pictures with Joe Dalby
- Mon 26<sup>th</sup> On burial detail for Porter ,He is just out from Blighty poor chap.... On guard
- Tues 27<sup>th</sup> Went to N.A.A.F.I. for dinner had a pint of Real Beer
- Wed. 28<sup>th</sup> Got the Royal Box at Ensa Show Ranvenna saw " Sundowners S.A. show

## April 1945

- Sun 1<sup>st</sup> The lads raid the spit in Lake Commachio, I hope it is successful
- Tues 3<sup>rd</sup> N.A.A.F.I Vic Ralph brings down a bottle of whiskey and some beer Boy Were We Drunk....
- Thurs 5<sup>th</sup> The lads come back Approx 1600 prisoners
- Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Watched football match between our lads and Todds Glamour Boys.... Draw
- Tues 10<sup>th</sup> Our troop goes in the line again
- Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Our troop comes out of the line but there are signs of another Raid. The Eighth started their big push tonight Terrific Air and Artillery Barrage. Who says Jerry hasn't any planes, he was strafing tonight the B.....
- Thurs 12<sup>th</sup> We are on 4 hrs notice to move Went into a bombed laboratory and saw bottled babies
- Sat 14<sup>th</sup> Told that we are going to move at six in the morning , reveille at 4 , it is now 2 , what a night.....
- Sun 15<sup>th</sup> Capt. McCallum Leaves his radio with me as the unit is moving
- Mon 16<sup>th</sup> The lads are still in the line
- Tues 17<sup>th</sup> The lads are battling it out at Argenta
- Wed 18<sup>th</sup> They have busted the Argenta Gap
- Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> The fifth are in the Po Valley
- Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> The lads come out of the line but have suffered casualties
- Tues. 24<sup>th</sup> By Eddies bet we should be home tomorrow
- Wed. 25<sup>th</sup> Bet with Eddie for bottle of Scotch, Eddie thinks we will be home
- Thurs 26<sup>th</sup> Plenty of jerry P.O.W.s coming back , Eighth is making good progress
- Fri. 27<sup>th</sup> The Commando gets reorganised , Brigadiers Lecture .. the Old B.....
- Sun 29<sup>th</sup> This war will surely finish soon Jerry can't stand this much longer
- Mon 30<sup>th</sup> R.A.S.C. Inspector came around, everybody hiding kit, Jab in the arm U.D.F.I. show at Garrison

## May 1945

- Tues 1<sup>st</sup> The Itie radio says the war is over , I wonder
- Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> The German radio says Hitler is dead I certainly hope so . He caused all this bloodshed
- Thurs 3<sup>rd</sup> War in Italy finished . How good it is to feel that we have no more fighting to do in this B.... country
- Fri 4<sup>th</sup> The Germans in NW Germany , Holland and Denmark surrender
- Sat 5<sup>th</sup> Well I don't think I will do any more fighting in this war
- Sun 6<sup>th</sup> Visited Argenta , this place has been smashed
- Tues 8<sup>th</sup> Victory Day I can't believe it,02:41 hrs. unconditional surrender on the 7th CEASE FIRE should be at 1 minute past twelve
- Thurs 10<sup>th</sup> Troop dinner We are going on leave so the rumours go
- Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Big C.O.s inspection .. Bulls ....
- Tue 15<sup>th</sup> There is a rumour going round that we are going to guard P.O.W.s at Rimini
- Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> We are at Bellaria 50 yards from the sea , I've been in twice
- Fri 18<sup>th</sup> Guard starts today, 19th was on guard last night two watches, 20th to 22<sup>nd</sup> relieved off guard, back to billets , I am very tired , plenty of VINO, 21st On P.O.W. guard again, we are on bad guard here , the lavatories
- Thurs 24<sup>th</sup> On guard at the P.O.W. carpark
- Mon 28<sup>th</sup> Eddie pays his bet with bottle of Jerry Cognac , Cognac is good
- Tues 29<sup>th</sup> Arrived in Rome after 16 hrs on Itie train, 51 rest camp, very nice place swimming pool is lovely
- Wed 30<sup>th</sup> Rome , the Alexander club is really the best N.A.A,F.I. I have ever seen or likely to see

## June 1945

- Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Some very strong rumours about going home
- Mon 4<sup>th</sup> Last night in Rome, we go back tomorrow Everybody thinks we are going home
- Wed 6<sup>th</sup> Back at Bellaria the lads seem to think that we will be home soon , bet Pete 5 that we won't be home in 6 weeks
- Thurs 7<sup>th</sup> Capt. McCallum tells us we can write and say we are coming home
- Fri 8<sup>th</sup> Scrub our kit. Paint our kit bags . Big parade tomorrow but I can take it being as we are going home
- Sat 9<sup>th</sup> Came through the parade alright . Packed some of my kit
- Sun 10<sup>th</sup> On advance party we move tomorrow to Rimini to guard the kit  
Packed the rest of my kit
- Mon 11<sup>th</sup> Arrived at Rimini , stocked Commando stores Rumours say we are to go straight on board ships . I hope so
- Thur 14<sup>th</sup> Arrived in Naples this morning, move into transit camp to await going on ship the rest of the Brigade arrives
- Fri 15<sup>th</sup> This transit camp is under Vesuvius and this volcanic dust is all over the place
- Mon 18<sup>th</sup> We are told that we go on board the trooper tomorrow Mac ( Capt. McCallum ) certainly has us browned off by saying that we are only getting 14 days when we get home
- Tues 19<sup>th</sup> On board the trooper at 11:30 , reveille was at 4 a.m. It's a GREAT day for me
- Mon 25<sup>th</sup> Sighted dear old Blighty this morning at 8 Docked at Southampton at 4:30 IT'S A GREAT DAY

### **From July 1945 onwards**

**Many of the entries are personal and as such are omitted. Some notable entries are as follows :**

- Sun 15<sup>th</sup> July This is the day i go back I feel properly downhearted I have had the best leave of my life
- Tues. 17th July Back to the Army routine
- Mon 23rd Colonels speech , tells us that we are getting split up I lose most of my old chums tomorrow
- Tues 24th Harry leaves , Fred is up to see Winnie I am on my own. I am going into "C" troop tomorrow

### **The rest of July and Aug are spent in England**

nb. Here he refers to Johnny Tarrant, one of his best mates

- Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> Two years ago Johnny got killed ..... It was Black Monday ( Hell )
- Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> Stayed in camp got ready to go B.A.O.R.

### **From here he goes to Belgium , Ostend transit camp, Antwerp , Wessell to Munster and Recklinghausen. On guard 4 internment camp**

- Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> On " Walcheren " anniversary parade 4 Commando Party

### **The remainder of the entries are spent in Germany basically on guard duty, etc**