

# WWII Primary Source

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Butcher, Auckland, NZ

Gunner Thomas Kirby Pollock

Service Number: 24717

6th Field Regiment, NZ Artillery

Served: North Africa, First Battle of El Alamein

Killed in Action 4 July 1942

Buried in El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt

Died in NZ 1977



Look for further information:

Papers Past ([natlib.govt.nz](http://natlib.govt.nz)) | Online Cenotaph - Auckland War Memorial Museum ([aucklandmuseum.com](http://aucklandmuseum.com))  
Archives New Zealand ([archives.govt.nz](http://archives.govt.nz))

# HISTORY ET.

Reg. No. 24717

Regiment:	Rank:	Ch	Surname:
HQ 6th. Fld. Regt. <del>N.Z.A.</del>	GNE.	THOMAS KIRBY	POLLOCK

Outward.		Inward, ex s.s. "_____."		Service.				
	Date.		Date.	Place.	From	To	Years.	Days
<b>PAPAKURA</b> Entered camp ...	15/5/40	Embarked ...			N.Z. ...	15/5/40	24/8/40	
Attested ...	2/1/40	Arrived N.Z.						
Embarked ...	27 AUG 1940	Discharged ...			Overseas	27-8-40	-	
Disembarked ...	1-10-40	Reason for return and/or discharge: }						
At <u>Egypt</u> (Place)						Total ...		

Next-of-kin.	Relationship.	Address.
MRS. BERYL A. POLLOCK	WIFE	<del>46 Post Office, Campbell's Bay, Auckland</del> <del>MARATA, c/o P.O. Campbell's Bay, Auckland</del> 130 Hull Rd., Wanganui N.Z. BR 2/1/58 Male 7/4 <del>MARATA</del> SOCIAL SECURITY ACT, 1938. OR BR 3/1/58 c/o P.O. Manawatu, 1/7/58 Auckland BR 33/1/58. R.R. 9.9.12.40 also 41- Boy 2 Registration Fee Coupon-500! <del>83 Lake Rd., Pukekohe</del> (Letter 12.10.58) c/o P.O. ORAKI, AUCKLAND E.I. LR 11/58 12.10.58
MRS. B. A. SEDCOLE	WIFE REMARRIED	

(Extra spaces are for changes of address or changes of name owing to decease, marriage, &c.)

## CASUALTIES.

[illegible]

### ACTION AFTER RETURN TO NEW ZEALAND OR DISCHARGE ABROAD.

Nature of Document issued.	Date.	By	Address sent to	Pay Office advised.
M.I.D. EMBLEM				
✓ 1939 45 STAR				
ATLANTIC STAR				
✓ AFRICA STAR				
8th ARMY CLASP				
PACIFIC STAR				
Assessed by.....	Checked by.....			

WORLD WAR II DESERT WAR

NORTH AFRICA

(LYBIAN CAMPAIGN)

Copy of diary written in the field during the "Crusader"  
action in the Libyan Campaign.

(16 Sept 1941 to 29 Dec 1941)

GUNNER: (TOM) T.K. POLLOCK

(24717 - Joined at Whakatane)

R.H.Q. 6TH FIELD REGIMENT (48 BATTERY)

Original Diary Held By:

(Tom Pollock's nephew)



C/- 7 Fickling Avenue  
Hillsborough  
Auckland N.Z.

April 1987

(Note included in diary)

PLEASE DO NOT LOSE

Dear Beryl,

This is my diary of the Libyan Campaign just a brief summary of some of the events. I wrote it and have not re-read it since writing. I entered up mostly every evening missing sometimes and making up next day, it is just as I saw things, I'd rather you not read it, as some things may upset you, if you want to well O.K. The first half is O.K., as it is before action.

Diary sent home up to today  
13 September 1941.  
(No record of this diary  
to date)

Saturday 13 September 1941

Went to Helwan with Mills  
for Doc Hays washing.  
Bought Xmas cards and sent  
them away also Haydn's  
parcel, comics bucket  
animal book, diary odds  
and ends.

Tuesday 16 September

Loaded up with drinks at YMCA  
etc. left Molfazal 1.30pm got  
as far as the halfway house  
85 miles at 7.15pm everything  
moving up, passed big aero-  
drome, planes all sizes parked  
over area miles in extent,  
desert drome made tea, bully-  
gomins. etc. tucket in at  
9.30pm.

Wednesday 17 September

Rose at 4am made the boys a  
cup of tea, orders are rifles  
all loaded, tin hats worn, if  
raided no leaving trucks as in  
Greece, trucks to go like  
hell off the road and spread  
out, personnel to lay on floor  
if possible 130 miles to go.  
Past Ameryd and Alex R.A.F.  
Bomber gave us a fright flew  
along out convoy so low that  
we could have nearly jumped  
up and touched him, his wing  
only about thirty yards out  
from out trucks. Reached  
Alex 2.30 branched off to  
Baggush on Mersoh Matruh Rd.  
Spread out and halted for tea  
at 5.10 Streams of military  
traffic both ways Camped  
out areas both sides of road  
from turn off workshops  
hospitals etc. Can see sea.

Passed desert dromes,  
hundreds of planes are in-  
pieces, passed us going  
back on trucks.  
Did 102 miles today.

#### Thursday 18 September

I rose at 4am made boys cup  
tea. Mediterranean mile  
away no ship in sight.  
Moved off at 8am. Indians,  
Africans, NZ Corps for  
miles. Streams of  
traffic both ways O.I.  
tanks on trailers being  
brought back for repairs,  
big beauties. Shot down  
planes R.A.F. also being  
brought back quite a number  
also on ground. Travelled  
103 miles passing camped  
soldiers and gear all the  
way. Many aerodromes en  
route well stocked with  
planes. Plenty of  
escort all day too.

#### Friday 19 September

Arrived at Baggush. After  
passing Daber dug in straight  
away, we are third line of  
defence. Everyone lives  
underground in dugouts,  
trucks and guns all out of  
sight. Same positions as  
our troops had in January.  
Like a rabbit warren every-

thing under ground, each  
four or five chaps having  
quite a big room. 13  
bombers R.A.F. going over to  
give Jerry hell. Bombers  
and fighters flying over us  
R.A.F. all day. Another  
flight of 12 at midnight. I  
was on piquet.

#### Saturday 20 September

Mail in, big disappointment  
every man in R.H.Q. got one  
or two letters but me.  
Went for swim in Mediteranean,  
lovely and warm but sand is  
full of oil from sunken  
ships, got it all over our  
feet. Butcher shop in dug  
out quite a work of art.  
Cemetary along side us of  
boys killed in last push  
six months ago. One of  
them is an English Lord.  
Alex newspapers are being  
flown to us daily till we  
make out push. Cut down to  
two water bottles a day of  
water to wash shave etc. and  
drink. Doing a spot of C.B.  
today. Jack Rider and I  
got giggles at midnight when  
making cocoa in dugout  
before going on prowler,  
couldn't stop and got quite  
sore laughing so much.  
Killed a scorpion today, not  
so good. Hell of a job to

keep my rifle clean, sand  
is like flour, very fine.

Sunday 21 September

Church parade at 1.30pm at  
the Oasis about a mile  
away. Bully Bexwerth flag  
on it for alter. Desert  
dogs keep us awake at  
night howling, they are  
never seen, too wild.  
Our bombers going over all  
the time in relays.  
Growing a moustache.  
Another mail in and again  
no mail from Beryl, can't  
understand it. We have  
dugout parties now, one  
dugout invites another to  
the evening and cards and  
supplies supper, such as  
it is. Sometimes they  
are quite good. Our  
truck, Q.5. challenged  
frank's truck Q.4. to a  
500 match, winners to turn  
on supper, we won. Good  
supper. 30, 4th Regt,  
boys washed out to sea in  
undertow, 4 drowned.  
Must watch our step.

Monday 22 September

My birthday, I have ordered  
beer for our bottle party.  
Fed up no mail, everyone  
gets it but me so bugger  
them, I'll play same  
game.

Boys that were drowned were  
buried in the little desert  
cemetery today, will all be  
shifted after war, buried in  
just a blanket sewn up.  
Volleys were fired. Rained  
like hell today, first for  
nine months. No air raids  
yet. Had strange birthday  
party in dugout. Jack  
Rider, Tom Woodell, Mark  
Reorely and I, they bought  
some beer and new bread and  
we had a great time. They  
like the fruit spread that  
Nora sent.

Tuesday 23 September

We are having our own lunch  
today. Frank pinched some  
onions and tomatoes, Jack got  
a loaf and I supply the steak,  
the best food ever. Get  
very hungry here with sea  
air. Flares dropped on  
our dromes last night. So  
bright that one can read by  
them twenty miles away.  
They nearly float. Sky  
is full of our bombers going  
out on raids.

Wednesday 24 September

Watched a big flight of our  
bombers going away last  
night at midnight. Circl-  
ing over our heads with  
their wing lights on, the  
only way we can tell that

they are ours. They zoom and roar over our heads as the drome is only just over the hill. Jack and I went to the heavy workshops, No. 42 and picked up our L.A.D. boys who have been cutting observation holes in cab roofs for our trucks. Camped on beach and dug right in, while there I washed my tarpaulin we tried to catch some fish with it but was too heavy. Wrestling with Joe Delamare, I put a leg lock on him and put his knee out of joint we go it back alright. Great to watch formations of bombers with fast fighter escort weaving in and out so as to kill their speed. Boys put a notice on my Butcher Shop dugout while I was away, "Tom's 'Ole"

#### Thursday 25 September

Jack Rider gone to Alex for stores, extras, etc. Two pay trip. Claude Champman's birthday last night so we held party in his dugout.

#### Friday 26 September

Colonel gone crazy putting swags of the boys on the mat for untidy beds and stupid pinpricking

things like that when we are all but in action. Jack and I play crib every night have some great tussles. I'm on piquet tonight worse luck. Bombers going over our heads in relays nines and tens. Jerry Stuka dive bomber escorted in by two of our fighters one either side, made him land on our drome, nice new one too.

#### Saturday 27 September

Boys digging like hell. Getting more stuff underground. I did four hours of it this afternoon, I'm black as a nigger seldom wear a shirt now.

#### Sunday 28 September

Today has been one continual drone R.A.F. gave Jerry hell today 118 planes all heavy bombers went over all at once did we get a thrill, I'll say and ever since, odd lots have been doing same. Got a luminous oil gauge from a crashed Blenheim near us today. Went down and swam in little lagoon in sea with Nick, Wally Mills, very nice too.

Tuesday 30 September

R.A.F. Dive Bombers overhead  
all day practising sending  
burst of fire into the sea  
BRRRRRP BRRRRRP.

Terrific raids either by  
Jerry on Mersoh Matruh 27  
miles away or our naval  
gunfire, not quite sure  
which, ground trembled even  
away back here. Got  
good mail from B. today.  
Parcel from Doris. Had  
wonderful feed today in  
big dugout, we always  
laugh when using it  
during day. Roof is  
community lavatory seat  
three holes with tip up  
seats or rather lids on  
holes, during the day we  
open these up for vent-  
ilation, also good for  
observing what kind of  
planes are up. We  
always laugh at the  
prospect of someone  
using them. Scorpion  
chased me out of bed last  
night, what with bull ants,  
scorpions, snakes, asps  
etc. not so good.

Wednesday 1 October

Anniversary of arriving at  
Maadi Base Camp. Did  
my own jobs and then took  
over Tom Woodill's truck  
to let him go to play

football. Frank and I then  
drove down to the F.S.P. and  
drew the Regt's Rations I  
drove all round and  
distributed it and finished  
by 4.30pm. Sky alive with  
our planes, had a look at  
the German Stuka Dive Bomber  
on the drome which our boys  
R.A.F. shepherded down.  
Nearly full moon.

Thursday October 2nd

We of R.H.Q. doing gun drill  
in our spare time in case  
we are needed, using E  
Troop guns. Big doings at  
Mersoh Matruh last night,  
sky was lit up with Ack-  
Ack fire and heavy  
detonations. Played crib  
with Claude Chapman while  
etc. boys went down to the  
oasis on a beer beano.  
Only drawing 50 pt. a fort-  
night, enough for stamps.  
Flies eat us alive most  
persistant damn things I  
ever knew.

Friday October 3rd

All paying in 25 pt to  
finance our canteen, just  
a small one for R.H.Q.  
stamps, beer, cigarettes,  
chocolate. Had card party  
?? in Q4 last night, 3

games all. They turned on a good supper, tinned fruit biscuits, cocoa. Colonel came over and had a long yarn, one of the rare occasions on his part. An old Valencia came over today looked funny lined up on Drome with Glen Martins, Lysanders Blenheims, etc. R.A.F. are painting circles on the captured Stuka. Driving A.4 again today.

#### Monday October 6th

Topees taken away today looks like action soon. Killed a snake today with a shovel, two feet long. Flies are very trying. Our canteen opened quite well 16 Pounds first days takings. Jack Rider and I beat Tom Woodill and Frank at 500. Dr. Hay treating me for piles, nearly had to go away for operation, damn sore. New N.Z. Ack Ack Regt. just came up, mobile Bofors look good too. Anti Tank Regt. also just came in, N.Z.'s too, guns mounted on cut down 3 ton trucks, very mobile. Had a swim with the boys.

#### Thursday October 9th

Went on ten day manoeuvres left camp at 11am went 32 miles back to Daber and cut inland. North 15 miles, rough stony, rocky and dirt, got lost and found twice. Picked up guns at 7pm. Fillet steak for lunch. Travelled till 12-15 midnight in desert formation. Slept on rocks, tired out. Each truck doing own cooking.

#### Saturday October 11th

Nothing but dashing full pelt from place to place in pitch dark, ground terrifically rough, no lights, each truck ten yards from next, sometimes crawl sometimes go like hell and 50 miles an hour in close convoy is sure nerve wracking. Dust hides each truck, it hangs in palls. Anti-Tank Artillery etc. etc. criss-crossing all over the desert.

#### Sunday October 12th

At G.O.C.'s conference he stressed that our infantry must not stop to star gaze at our shells going overhead but must keep going into the barrage, our range being lifted as they cover the ground. Ditto with mine-fields to tread lightly but

not to dodge about, as mans  
weight won't set one off  
and if attention is side  
tracked enemy will mow  
them down with covering  
machine gun fire. G.O.C.  
indicated at tough time  
taking Halfaya Pass. Lot  
of fun straightening out  
Ross and Haj's bikes with  
a pick after terrific  
rough ride on our truck.  
More manoeuvres tomorrow.  
No mail missed again.

#### Monday October 13th

Roger Morrison (or Mertle)  
and Scotty gone to hospital  
with dysentery. Still at  
Baggush. Been as far as  
Sidi Haneish. The  
plaintive notes of the  
last post strike our ears  
so often as another one of  
these great fellows are  
laid in the little desert  
cemetery, it is nearly  
full now. Dusk is the  
usual time.

Three burst are fired as  
a last salute the mates of  
the deceased usually make  
him a cross to their own  
pattern, some are well  
made and clever, others  
very simple and plain.  
R.A.F. crosses are usually  
black with white letter-  
ing, five sergeant pilots

were put there in one day.  
Went for swim with boys,  
picked up shells for Beryl.  
Got her and my own ring back  
by post today wearing them on  
fingers side by side.

#### Tuesday October 14th

Tomohawks and Hurricans came  
swooping up off adjacent  
aerodromes and roar low over  
our heads then letting go  
with their machine guns at  
the sea, just a test, but it  
brings back memories when  
those same splutters were  
aimed at us.

Another poor devil laid in  
the little fenced off plot  
today, one of our own boys  
died with dyptheria.  
Rain and wind today with  
heavy dust storm just before.  
Flies are fair buggers.  
Water supply cut down again  
today. Y.M.C.A. mobile  
cinema here tonight, three  
cheers!

#### Thursday October 16th

Curried bully today and one  
had to stand in the wind  
while eating it to keep from  
catching fire

#### Sunday October 19th

Co. Frazer 5th Field injured  
badly, intelligence officer

killed, driver injured, his car went over a land mine in Marsoh Matruh.

Monday October 20th

Boys all on leave from G.5. So I take it over and go on manoeuvres for three days, Bert Jones cook and 2 only occupants.

Friday October 24th

Manoeuvres just same as last three, driving at night in formation etc. very dark nights but get a lot of thrills.

Monday October 27th

Another air raid today or rather tonight landed on the aerodromes just adjacent. Sky is full of our aircraft all day. Officer buried in the little plot also one other N.Z.E.T. Went to Quasaba. Got a new officer today, Billy Blyth going back to A.T.R. His name is Clarkson - Dobbs so all the boys are giving each other hyphenated names. Pork came in today and we had a great feed.

Thursday 30 October

Sent a cable to Marj. Another raid last night in bright moonlight but we missed it.

Sunday November 2nd

Quiet day.

Monday November 3rd

Church parade in full battle order today. Mills played football and had his pants torn off so Nick took his off and stood on the sideline for the rest of the game without any. He didn't care.

Tuesday November 4th

Killed scorpion alongside my head crawling up the wall. Frank cut his tail off, black one too. Driving for rations today. Hultquist M.P. committed suicide yesterday, buried today prior to transfer to our Regt.

November 5th

Held party in Q.4 last night I sang so much I couldn't speak at the end. We have formed the Western Desert Scorpions Quartet, Frank (base) Tom Woodell (Melody) myself (tenor) we were encored so

much that I lost my voice  
(Labatory man) (German Clock  
Mender) and so on. Did a  
shoot over the sea today.  
I passed, my new rifle is  
a corker. Big air raid  
last night we were singing  
as loud as we could to  
drown the roar of night  
fighters and the crashing  
of bombs on the adjacent  
Aerodromes. An old scotch  
soldier says "Dinna think"  
its the worst thing one  
can do out here. He says  
"When you can't sleep,  
work'. and when you can't  
work sleep'. Never think'."  
He certainly is right.  
Pork again today.

#### Thursday November 6th

Drove for Tom Woodill today,  
was shown over the latest  
types of Glen Martin Maryl-  
and Bombers and a big  
Bristol Bomber. 24  
hour Ariel Blitz going on  
today, planes landing and  
going all day, sky full too.  
South African pilots showed  
us round.

#### November 7th

Jerry hit our train at  
Fouka last night blew up  
most of it, ammo etc.  
Looks as if we move up soon  
everything points that way.

Phil Oldham killed a fox I  
am curing it for him after  
skinning it last night,  
accidentally pulled its plume  
off. More Grumann fighters  
flying about today.  
Went to Doctor today about me  
chest and breathing he said,  
just hereditary asthma if it  
gets too bad he will have me  
injected. Sighted etc.  
Check-Slovak schooner sneak-  
ing up to Tobruk with supplies  
for our chaps hugging the  
coast too. Known at the  
most dangerous trip in the  
world today.

#### Saturday November 8th

All Blacks played Springboks  
over by the heavy workshops  
area, must have been about  
eight or ten thousand of us  
there, N.Z. won 8 points to  
nil. Good game too. We  
were surrounded by a battery  
of N.Z. ACK ACK, guns in case  
of a surprise visit by Jerry.  
Our unit number changed to  
53. Getting ready to move,  
got four agriculture books  
from Cyril Leesdale.  
2nd General Hospital from  
Helwan, just moved in lock  
stock and barrell. Snowy  
Sheffield still with them  
too, must try and see him but  
it is nearly hopeless as our  
Div. is scattered all over the  
desert in an area of hundreds

of miles. Got new photos  
of Beryl and Haydn.  
Corkers too.

Monday November 10th

Life is a story in three  
volumes the past, the  
present, the yet to be,  
the past is over and hid  
away  
the present we are living  
every day.  
the next to come, the  
yet to be  
is locked away God keepeth  
the key.

Thursday November 13th

Left Sidi Haneish at last  
to move up, our convoy  
100 miles long. Bert  
Jones, Bill Mason, Jack  
Rider and myself in Q.5.  
Passed Mersoh Matruh at  
3.15pm everything moving  
up. Last twenty miles at  
full pelt over rough stony  
ground, hell of a ride  
got to our dispersal area  
to find we were the last  
truck the trucks later  
having got lost, not close  
enough on our tail.  
They found us an hour  
later, twenty three of  
them carrying mostly rations  
and cooks etc, bedded  
down at 10 o'clock very

cold and hard stony ground  
71 miles.

Friday November 14th

Laying up today, travel  
tonight, slit trenches very  
hard to dig. One of the  
boys accidentally shot only  
a hundred yards from us I  
Thought he was fooling at  
first but saw him writhing  
on the ground so raced over  
to him. Shot through the  
throat blood just pouring  
out I'm afraid he's a gonner  
couldn't do much till Doc.  
came along.

Saturday November 15th

(Sunday November 16th??)  
Poor devil died a little later  
a cobber accidentally shot  
him with his own rifle.  
Travelled 60 today over  
rough rocky ground in desert  
formation, guns all round us  
we in long column in the  
centre. Hell of a journey  
bumping and jarring all day.  
Got to our spot at dusk at a  
bearing of 282. We are now  
43 miles from the Egyptian-  
Libyan border 30 miles inland.  
In a mug of water I did my  
teeth, shaved, washed,  
washed my feet, finally  
washing a pair of sox what  
a job. Resting today being

Sunday as well. Thous-  
ands of vehicles moving up  
stretched out for miles in  
width and miles in depth.

November Monday 16th (17th??)

R.H.Q.'s their D on R's  
broke down and had to be  
loaded onto our truck, going  
too rough. Slit trenches  
have to be dug as soon as  
we stop in solid rock too,  
country is as barren as ??  
Moved off last night at  
6.15pm in close formation  
15 yds between columns,  
seven of these and 15yds.  
between vehicles. Zig-  
wagged till 12.15 midnight  
skirting mine fields. etc.  
Quite a number of the  
lighter vehicles getting  
bogged in heavy sand.  
Pulled out by four wheel  
drive trucks, picked each  
other up again. 6th 2.B.  
all moving up now, 12 miles  
from the border, R.A.F.  
patrols us. Thousands of  
vehicles everywhere one  
looks, to the horizon in  
every direction. Bedded  
down till 5.am and "stood  
to" at that hour. Resting  
again today. Moving up  
again to night should  
contact Jerry any time  
now. Jerry has gone back  
a few miles for rations

Eric Wyeth badly burnt by  
primus blowing up, he has  
gone back. Any vehicle  
breaking down now must be  
immediately burnt, hope  
ours keeps going. 25  
miles last night. Still  
doing pretty well for tucker.  
leaving Bully and biscuits  
till we have to, our acquired?  
stuff is still holding out  
well.

Life is mostly froth and  
bubble

Two things stand like stone  
Kindness in another trouble  
Courage in your own.

Tuesday 18th November

Travelled 30 miles last  
night at four miles an hour  
plowing through sand etc.  
Heavy going, Pitch black  
nights, no lights, cigaretts  
etc, trucks loom up along  
side going full bore in  
heavy sand, one has a very  
unnerving job driving at  
night here, trucks are so  
close to keep contact,  
collisions are many but  
whats a few dints between  
friends R.A.F. is doing a  
great job, no raid yet.

Wednesday 19th November

15 miles last night took  
six hours to do it winding

in and around mine fields.  
I have got dysentry worse  
luck. Terrific lightning  
storm fork and sheet all  
night. Very near to  
Jerry now. I wonder if  
he hears the roar of our  
advance it is terrific.  
Dysentry must worse.

Thursday 20th November

Passing just water with a  
little blood had nothing  
to eat at all two days.  
Boys made a bed for me on  
top of the load forward,  
am so weak can hardly stand.  
Doc. wanted to sent me  
back to hospital. I did  
not want to go after  
getting this far so he  
has given me another day.  
I'm swallowing concrete  
by the gallon. Sleep is  
very hard to get as  
driving is all of night  
and stops during the day,  
can hear the guns now up  
in front, last night star  
shells tracers etc. filled  
the sky. Gives one a funny  
feeling moving up into it  
again.

Friday ???

The angry grumble of guns  
is incessant now, 28  
fighters went over just

now. The navy is shelling  
too. One of our D on R's  
fell off his byke and the  
clutch handle pierced his  
throat, bleeding to death.  
Rotten damn things in such  
rough country.

Friday ????

Moved 15 miles up. Jerry  
came over and raided us at  
lunch, our Bofors got going  
and kept them well up, they  
gave them hell, then the  
R.A.F. came and off they  
went. A very big regiment  
of medium tanks picked us up  
last night, all disguised as  
3 ton trucks. They are  
travelling with us now we are  
holding the left flank, the  
Indians have pushed Jerry  
out of Sidi Omar. Our  
bombers going over in great  
numbers, so are the fighters,  
another raid today but the  
R.A.F. get stuck into them.  
Dysentry getting worse have  
had nothing to eat at all for  
three days and getting weaker  
all the time. Doc wanted to  
send me back today but I  
pleaded for another day, it  
might stop tomorrow, 36  
passes in twelve hours,  
still passing a little blood,  
have barely stirred for two  
days bar running outside!  
Doc gave me some gruel, Bill

made it up, first to eat for ages. Our chaps contacted Jerry this morning bashing up forty five tanks, captured 200 prisoners also made big holes in the IRI Crack Division "Rigotetto", 3 planes yesterday 8 today, twenty four R.A.F. gone over again. These tanks with us are "Valentines" 16 tons armed with a Besa cannon firing 800 shells to minute and a Biren 21b gun and mortar. We move now at a moments notice. Relays of 40's 15's, 20's all day long going to Jerry.

#### Friday 21st November

Jerry reccy planes came over late in the afternoon yesterday our ack ack opened up from all directions but he was too high. Had a quite night. Our machine gunners doing picket for us. We captured an enemy aerodrome by parachute troops with 17 planes 200 ground staff and 70 pilots. Our boys escorted the planes back to our lines which will be repainted and used from our side our artillery is sending over a

terrific barrage this morning so many guns firing that it sounds like a machine gun. 15 more Jerry tanks were destroyed yesterday making a total of 60 we lost 20 I tanks which are some of the best.

#### Saturday 22 November

We moved post haste yesterday at 2pm chasing Jerry going full bore, at 5pm we ran right into his flank and shells started bursting all along our lines but a Tommy Regiment had the situation in hand so we kept going trying to cut the rest of him off at the coast road. Travelled till 2am in the morning twice running head first into salt swamps and what a mess guns, limbs, quads, 3 tonners, P.U.'s etc all mixed up side on, end on, backing and rocking, well and truly stuck, the roar of revving engines was terrific as they towed one another out back or front first talk about a mess, Q.4. got bogged well down so we went right through and came back head on to him and hitched up. In the process of jerking to get him started the two cable burst asunder and came flying back and

coiled itself round the cab miraculously missing me who was standing on the step by inches, it would have just decapitated me with no trouble. We bedded down for four hours and then off again. Six Jerrys walked in and gave up. Dawn broke to find us standing to and also to find four strange trucks and a staff car full of Jerrys in our lines which we promptly snaffled, I think they mistook their lines in the dark. The trucks were Aussie ones captured by them in Greece and painted over with swastika and signs. A Jerry plane dived over us this morning having a look but our Ack Ack gave him a hell of a fright. We will be chasing him all day today by all accounts, sleep is rare, tucker is bully, sausages beans and biscuits. One gets plenty of excitement these days. Whopping I Tanks moving up ahead all the time, beauty's too. Allan Ross and Steve Weir captured an Iti and Jerry in an Aussie truck going to Fort Cappuzzo, they also get a blitz buggy for themselves. Hurrican just shot

a Jerry down in a dog fight near us. Just passed 4 graves of tommies near a bomb hole. R.E.'s crosses made out of Benzine Boxes, so pathetic. We have now travelled 330 miles west. Heading straight for Tobruk now twenty miles to go Jerry has been pushed out by I tanks. 50 more just passed us manned by Tommies waving and singing out to us. My dysentery is still crook, am only a passenger. Took me all my time to dig a slit trench.

#### Sunday 23rd November

Day of days today, yesterday late afternoon we travelled at 4pm till 9pm. I was picket with Bill Mason from 11 to 3, funny sensation not knowing when attack will come, the boys sleeping under and along side their trucks some talking in their sleep etc. us wandering up and down rifles ready, the sky lit with star shells and flares up a few miles, something is going on up there. We moved at 3pm again and stopped at dawn, as dawn broke our guns not 50 yards from us gave us a thrill by opening up, we were just eating a tin of sausages then she started

our machine gunners went into action at a hazy number of trucks a hundred yards away, shells started landing in our lines, bullets screamed all round us, Gee: tracer shells were going in all directions I grabbed my rifle and got behind a wheel as did Jack Rider we saw hazy forms in the dawn, our guns did great work getting direct hits on tanks etc. straight away, then four or five of our trucks crews made a charge with machine guns at four Jerry truck loads of Jerry while we covered their advance, bullets were screaming and ricocheting all round us, one went through our windscreen, just missed my bum and Jack's legs. We got down behind the wheels, and then we saw our boys stop firing as the Jerry's came out holding up their hands.

The action lasted about an hour all told and our few vehicles right in the centre of it all. I did not feel scared at all, just wild but felt shaky after it was all over. We captured eight signal cars a swag of

trucks about two hundred prisoners and knocked out a number of tanks and trucks. I was put on to guard with some others the Jerrys, some only boys, some were badly wounded. I watched them being dressed, the others were searched, one came in on a stretcher but died, we had no casualties at all. Jack took over as guard and escorted them back a bit so I had to take over the driving, we got going again for another mile or two and ran into another swag. Jack came up in an anti-tank truck. Our guns went into action only two hundred yards ahead of us against a swag of Jerry tanks. This had been going on now for 5 hours. Shells are flying in all directions and we are just hoping for the best. Jerry shells are bursting around us all the time, we are right in the middle of it all. Our machine guns and infantry are only about 8 or 9 hundred yards ahead cross-firing with Jerry. We must all keep together here in case of flank attack from any direction. A big tank battle went on today and our anti-tank boys got badly knocked about, some of our boys have gone too,

poor devils. We hear our boys in 4th Brigade took 8000 prisoners yesterday. Our own total to date is something like 2000 prisoners, am getting over my dysentery. These Big Bertha shells rock us, one can hear them coming, so it is not quite so bad, my ear drums just ring with explosions, and this damn tin hat gives me a headache but can't be helped. One forgets about eating, only doing so rarely, ones tummy seems to nervous to take very much, our own tanks are parked around us, mostly knocked out and the tank engineers are trying to fix them up. We watch our boys firing and watch the hits. One Jerry tank came up to within five hundred yards before we let him have it and did we hit him? I'll say, it blew up later. We recaptured 12 of our own tanks today, our own boys from R.H.Q. going out and driving them into our own lines. Jerry shelled them while doing so, three casualties.

Wednesday 26th November

Captain Sellers killed this morning, hit a land mine, driver two broken legs. 3 guns put out of action today. 400 casualties in 25th B. yesterday, hard going. We advanced and landed right into heavy Jerry shell fire, shells landing all round us, we smartly turned round and got out O.K., advancing about two hours later when our guns had silenced Jerry. 115 tanks came in last night thank goodness our squadron got sadly bashed by gunfire, three left out of sixteen. An African convoy of Red Cross came in to us after Jerry let him go; we fired on them luckily missing them not knowing who it was, 10 three tonners, 4 ambulances full of the remnants of S.A. Brigade. B Echolon, they were pleased to see us.

I have missed a week of writing up partly for time and partly because I could not write of the terrible times we went through Jerry's

tanks breaking into our brigade, our efforts to blast him out of existence etc. We were always only a few yards away from our own guns for protection, as Jerry was all round us coming up at our back our sides our front night and day.

I've had as we all have had, one long headache at the roar and crash of our own guns and Jerry's shells landing in our area. We have had many casualties and the jitters are as common as cold, who wouldn't?

#### Monday December 1st

This was our worst day, the night before we stood by to move at 8pm and finally moved up at 11pm arriving at our halt at 2pm we immediately dug in, in rocky ground as best we could among a night party of our infantry who were burying dead Jerrys.

They were lying everywhere our infantry had fought this area two days before and it was not so good. A trench I thought would save me alot of toil

in was already occupied by a dead Jerry so I made my own a few feet away. At dawn we had a look around and found ourselves on top of an escarpment and what a mess. I finished my hole and at 8.30 Jerry started shelling us, we got down as usual and he stated using smoke, before we knew where we were we could not see a hundred yards and the dust made it worse, out of all this about forty Jerry tanks came out of the haze and machine bullets were flying like hail, our trucks were mostly in the road of our own guns who opened up full bore at a hundred yards range some having to fire through our own trucks to get at him. Trucks caught on fire everywhere, Jerry firing shells from his tanks as well as machine guns just blasted us right and left, one gun crew were blasted off their gun and crawled back on hands and knees to fire again, to be blased off again and what could, crawled back again, another shell landing under the gun blowing them all up. Colonels car hit fair in the middle his batman and I.O. being killed

men falling around like  
ninepins, our driver thought  
it best to make a dash for  
it, so up and off over to  
the truck, I lifted my  
head to see the truck mov-  
ing and did I go, I'll  
say bullets were scream-  
ing, shells were burst-  
ing and oh gee! I  
made it, grasping the back  
and scrambling in as best  
I could laying flat on  
the floor hoping for the  
best, we got out after  
running the gauntlet for  
about half a mile but did  
not know which way to go.  
Our officer came pelting  
down so we followed him,  
trucks here and there would  
burst into flames, what a  
shambles. One of our  
trucks were pulling a mate  
into the back when a tank  
shell hit him in the back,  
disembowling him but sav-  
ing his four coppers.  
Doug Agnew was hit in the  
back, we scampered for  
Tobruk full pelt and what  
a ride, will I ever forget  
it? Shelled most of the  
way in. We looked back  
to see trucks and tanks  
blazing, and the sky full  
of smoke. We have pract-  
ically no officers left at  
all the Colonel refusing  
offers of lifts, showing  
us the way out, no word of

him as yet. Wonderful chap.  
We got into Tobruk through  
lines of defences well out,  
and tallied, up, we have lost  
well over half the Regt  
nearly all our guns and crews,  
and what is left is a sorry  
sight. There are twenty two  
left of the 24th Batt. over  
800 strong, a hand full of  
25th. batt. some strength,  
26th nearly same. Anti-  
tank is the same. I bet our  
casualties lists are  
terrific. Off our truck we  
lost Bill, he must have been  
left behind poor little devil.  
Our trucks are riddled with  
bullet holes, some being  
blown half away, but still  
somehow went. Stories from  
the boys are terrific of esc-  
apes and awful happenings.  
The hospital ship has taken  
a swag away tonight.

#### Wednesday December 3rd

We are just resting in Tobruk  
now and it is great; peace  
and quite but what happens  
now we can't see as our  
division is nearly "mah feesh."

#### Thursday December 4th

Fred Davey came dashing in  
today looking me up to see  
it I got out O.K. he is well  
and did not so badly, his  
convoys of benzine being

chased about the desert a bit by tanks, but otherwise alright. The last was seen of Col. Weir was him sitting behind a few rocks balaclava on, no tin hat smoking his pipe and firing a Tommy gun as hard as he could go, refusing all offers of lefts, but urging etc. vehicles to get out. He had discarded his crowns and was to all intents and purpose a one pipper in case of capture. One of our guads got a tank shell fair in the back, exploding and setting it all alight, along came another shower of shrapnel and burst the camel water tank on top, showering water down on to the fire putting the lot out, what a miracle. Another got a fizzer right through one side and out of the other not exploding, behind the drivers seat. Tobruk has had 2000 air raids to date but the barrage of Ack Ack fire is phenomenal, we saw it last night the sky is just long lines of tracer shells. We got under our truck and watched it out of the way of falling shrapnel. Jerry still lands odd long range shells amongst

us but we don't worry much after the terrific amount we have had pelted at us. Mills got a big piece of shrapnel on his head and bashed his tin hat in, he being O.K. A big push is being started, while what is left of our boys help to guard Tobruk etc. Poles are going out with others. They are tough boys. The Black Watch have been badly bashed here too, and Aussie telling us of a bayonet charge by them at a machine gun post, two of them headed for one gun and left a trail of blood fifteen yards long and finished up with their bayonets home, but both dead as the Jerrys were too. Tony Freyberg got out O.K. and we hear he wants us back at base to reform again as quickly as possible. Some of the boys are using French 75's, as our own guns were blown up or lost. We have made up one battery of eight guns out of the three regiments, what a big loss. Jerry sends a lot of fizzers over and do so sigh with relief when we hear a dull plop and she skids along the ground. All the trucks or the few we have left are riddled with bullet and shell holes and what marvellous

escapes some of them were. Lofty Cole came tearing out in his Quad towing a limber when he found it was on fire, he stopped and put it out with his fire extinguisher and drove on, to be cornered by a Jerry tank a bit further on who caught him amidships and blew the lot sky high. Walter Batty ahead saw it, stopped, swung his truck around and fired point blank at the tank blowing the tracks right off it, nine Jerrys got out, so he let go another among them and that was that, what a hell of a thing this sort of thing is, but one sees red and can't be blamed. Jeff Stogg went out last week with three trucks of ammo to help the 4th Feild Regt. at night, he has not been seen since. Major Rowle got it in the face, a big loss. Our other two majors are both missing, in fact our offers are nearly all gone. Today we have just been in our truck resting out of the rotten sand storm.

#### Friday December 5th

Just resting and getting a few more things that we lost in the way of warm

clothes. Mills Haslam's name was picked out of a hat with six others to broadcast onto a record. He was so excited he forgot what to say, he intend to say that Tom Pollock and his cousin sent their love etc. and were O.K. but it all vanished when the time came. Rumours of us going back to Alex by boat, as we have had no reinforcements, and our division is only odds and sods left. But we did what we had to, drive Jerry back as far and past Tobruk etc others are carrying on now. They all are pretty wild (the Tommies) that we were made the shock troops again, as these always get the full blast of all they have, and we certainly got it. One of our officers came back last night, he had been talking to a Tommy Officer when a shell landed right between them blowing the Tommy to bits and not scratching our bloke.

#### Saturday December 6th

Still resting, the Tobruk hospital is very big having 15 wards with about 70 beds in each and the hospital ship takes a load every other night. Tobruk has been such a pretty town but is just a shambles now, hardly one wall

standing, over 2000 air raids, we had one last night. There are 37 ships sunk in the harbour mostly Italian. The Poles are very feirce, but decent chaps from our point of view. Last week a Tommy regiment was told to take certain hill held by Jerry but got badly cut about, so the Poles were sent in, given a weeks supplies, a weeks ammo, and told to get it, in they went and inside of two hours they had fired off their weeks ammunition and stormed the hill and took it. They dont take prisoners. Jerry gave us a bit of morning hate this morning landing a few all round our trucks from long range, we all are as jumpy as hell etc. old nerves need a rest badly. The 4th Brigade boys tell us they retook the place where the Jerry tanks skitted us at Sidi Rezegh and they buried 400 or our boys there, what a blow to N.Z. Out of our 48th Battery only 23 came out from over 200 the other two Batteries faring nearly as bad. R.H.Q. lost about 39 out of about 90 counting L.A.D SIGS etc. I went

today, out of Tobruk to a point along the Derna Rd to get some canned beer, and cigarettes, the first seen here for five months. Tobruk and outer defences in the perimeter is just littered with skittled tanks, trucks, armoured cars and etc. and big holes in thousands. Hospital ship arrived again today, also six others and a destroyer, it is almost unbelievable as till a fortnight also they only slunk in at night, unloaded in an hour and away again post haste.

#### Sunday December 7th

R.H.Q on parade now is a sorry lot, about ten were there this morning all dressed differently, one looked like a Jerry, Jerry boots and coat, another like an Aussie, another like a Pole, and one in our own gear. Bob Day and I went to Holy Communion today, we were a queer gathering, planes droning overhead on patrol. A dozen or so infantry came marching up, the officer called out "Battalion Halt'." It sounded so queer, as a battalion is roughly eight hundred men, these were all that is left. We go back to Baggash tomorrow.

Hurrah'. Xmas in a  
peacefull area.

Monday 8th December

Left Tobruk at 7.15am got  
a few shells lobbed at us  
as we went out but got  
through O.K. Turned off  
the Tobruk - Bardia Road  
at 39 kilo's and struck  
out into the desert, very  
rough going - picked up an  
escort of Anti-Tank and  
Div. Cav. who escorted us  
for 30 miles. We did 90  
miles and just got through  
the wire and stopped.

Tuesday December 9th

Started again at 8 and  
travelled all day doing  
128 miles.  
Waited for fresh benzine  
supplies and off again in  
single file, picking up  
the road, Cairo side of  
Sidi Borrani. Had a  
couple of halts with  
benzine block age but  
finally got back to Buggush  
at 2.30 in a raging sand  
and wind storm. Worst  
ever. I got 12 letters  
that night GEE! They  
were good after having none  
for a month.

Wednesday December 10th

Got back to my old dug out,  
cleared it out of sand and  
am waiting now for fresh  
meat, the first for a month.

Thursday December 11th

150 reinforcements came up to  
us which has filled a few  
blank spots, but we need a  
lot more. More mail and  
parcels are arriving all the  
time.

Friday December 12th

The church army has put up a  
marque near us for selling  
teas, chocolate, cigarettes  
etc, Whoopee. Jack Rider,  
Frank, Tom Woodill and I  
had a terrific feed of fillet  
steak and tinned vegs. and  
fruit and milk to finish, hell  
it was good.  
In the five days I missed  
writing up, we had run out of  
tucker, so our truck with  
Frank Rearery Jack Rider and  
I went out at night to try  
and pick up our supply column.  
We left at dark on a bearing  
of 110 and was supposed to  
pick them up three miles  
back, we got that far after  
seeing nothing and halted.  
What a weird sensation away  
out in the desert on our own.  
Black as the inside of a bull

and we all scanned around to try and see something. The silence was terrific, one could hear the thump thump of our own hearts, we whispered to each other to quiet our breathing and try and pick up any sounds which we did, but nary a sound did we hear. A motor byke all bashed up loomed dimly up a few yards away, we went over to it to find it was a Jerry one alongside a Jerry direction post. We were starting to get a bit jittery by then. As everything seemed like a morgue. We all thought bugger this, we are too liable to be picked up here, so made up our mind to go back, the engine starting seemed like a thousand; one expected a hail of shells or something all the time. Jack stepped on it after betting our back bearing on the compass, and did we go, I'll say, he shook the guts clean out of us, but we got back safely and heaved a sigh of relief when one of our gun crews called us sharly to a halt. We went out again at dawn to find the column was 13 miles back and on getting there, ran nearly into a

tank battle on our right only a mile away. We stuck a full load aboard pronto and got out smartly as shells were starting to make nasty noises. Star shells and Verey lights are continually in the sky at night and one does not know what they might mean, one just wonders and hopes. Swags of our bombers fly over us all day escorted with fighters, we cheer them on. The Anti-tank boys went out to our last battle area at Sidi Rezegh to sabotage our guns if possible, and they had a hell of a job lifting and dragging the crews away to get the guns out, one officer lying prone sighting along his rifle just as if he was alive. They were going back next day to bury them but got called away, some other unit will do it. Reports from captured boys of ours and where we have recaptured in this crazy battle, they say the Jerry's respect and treat all N.Z.'s very well, sharing blankets and food what they have with them. The Itis do the same but they hate the Aussies as bad stories have got about. The Jerry's we capture are well treated, being both clothed and fed well. One of our hospitals changed hands four times in one day.

These are very much respected. The A.D.S next us is a sight, trestle tables are operating tables, candles and lamps for light, dozens laying waiting outside on stretchers, and walking wounded too. They all shaft with us, what a job for them. A captured German Doc. looks after his own in a seperate tent Jack went out and got 24 of our infantry boys who could not get back before, being there for two days, all being wounded, one poor devil having had an explosive bullet in his privates, splitting open each testicle, the same to his penis and blowing most of his crutch out, they brought him in lunched up in in a Bren Carrier, a mass of coagulated blood, poor devil. Major Rowle died today, much better for him too. Shortly rush had his legs pulped, one can go on and on and on but whats the good.

#### Tuesday December 16th

The weather for last two days has been terrific storm and rain Jack has gone up the bluie again

attached to Div. Ret.

#### Monday December 29th

I have seen many men break down and cry at various times, and for strong men to do so, one can be sure it is under heavy stress. After leading us out of our last days action in which we got bashed about a bit, our Quartermaster broke down when he realised the job was done, and didn't care who saw him, it was a touch and go job. Our Colonel, Steve Weir when at Maadi Base Camp giving a lecture to reinforcements, officers, and men did the same. A stronger and braver man one could not wish to find, nore a more manly man. In the course of telling about an incident on our last days fighting, he quoted the instance of how he was watching our gunners, some of whom had blown off their guns by sheils fire from tanks, and how they were to be seen grimly crawling back, one badly wounded in legs and body with a shell in their arms, others dragging them any way they could, striving desparately to gain their object of ramming another one home, to blast the tanks which had blasted them. In

describing this action he broke down, they were his gunners, knew them all by name, had been through Greece with most of them, had harried them with bad language and good, praise seldom being given, but praise from him was praise indeed. So one realises that ones softer emotions are not always controllable even in the strongest of us. At one part of this crazy campaign, one of our advanced dressing stations was taken by Jerry. General Von Rommel came in and asked in good English how things were. Our Doctors told him that they were short of water so he sent a truck away to get some, which later returned to say he was sorry but he could not get any as the British had cut them off. Rommel then passed out saying as he went, "It's a great war isn't it?" In quite a jovial manner. His big car and five motor byke escort then made off for their own lines. German prisoners assure us of the good treatment given to our boys who are captured and is proved by those who have escaped. A popular way of getting

release was to say one say a medical orderly, upon which they would be shown in which direction our lines were, driven up to a few miles of them, and then released. Such a lot of Jerry's died with that queer look of amazement and wonder on their face, it seems to impress itself on ones memory. Another thing I call back, two of our Signallers one driving and one reeling out telephone wire to the Batteries from R.H.Q., crawling along about five miles an hour, shells bullets etc. whizzing round like bees and these two boys oblivious of it all, looking a little worried, but still laying wire, skirting the array of flaming trucks, belching guns etc. still doing their job as they knew it, they had had no order to retire so carried on. They did not come out. We had shifted to the lee of A Troop guns to get what shelter there was, we did not realise we were in the worst spot possible, and thus were the last to see these boys disappear into the haze of smoke and mist. Pat Leslie and, and again - in the five days I had not time or inclination to keep up my

diary.

One night, just after tea I had just washed up, or should I say wiped our plates with a dirty wish cloth and had handed out a mug of tea to our truck crew of four, when Jerry started shelling us from our rear. They landed so damn close to us that our minds were but a single thought, into our slit trenches we took our mugs of tea and as one salvoe burst, we would duck up, grab our mugs and take a mouthfull, wait till we heard the next lot coming and down again, hugging mother earth as close as could be. We were not quite below the surface, very rocky. This went on till after dark, over two hours, and they just plastered our area but luckily, damage was slight. I cracked unseemly jokes with young Bill Mason who was by then getting pretty well under the weather, and Jack was little better. I passed lighted cigarettes to them both, lighting them one off another in an endless stream. Old Bert and I seemed to get calmer and did our best to wise crack the two boys, and it succ-

eeded in quite a surprising manner. In a momentary lull a solider came up to my trench, and he sung out to us if we were alright, I piped up and told him "yes why?" He told me he was an Medical Orderly from the 5th Field ambulance which was about a mile to our left and saw us getting plastered, so thought he might be able to do some good over here. I told him our own doctor and R.A.P. was handy, but it was very good of him to come over. He stopped and yarned for about a quarter of an hour, lying down along-side us in the noisy spells. He then said he would go further over and see if his services were needed. He left us and fifty yards away we all yelled "DOWN" and he sprawled flat as another lot of shrieking Jerries came over, one landing only about twenty yards away from our holes. The flash lit us up like on a screen and the concussion is terrific. When the earth, shrapnel etc. had stopped sailing over us, I bobbed up to see our Orderly pick himself up and sing out O.K. and glide off in the dark. Great fellows these. Shortly after Jerry ceased fire and must

have shifted, as we got no more that night. But our heads sung for hours after. I'll always remember the soft "pitter pitter pitter" of falling dirt interspersed with a dull heavy flop or two long after a shell has exploded, it reminds one of someone whispering.

Tom Pollack died on the 4th July 1942 during a Stuka raid in the "Kapongo Box" - as described by (Nick) RACF H. Nicholson (24691) who was in the same truck crew during that attack and later entered the events in his own diary as detailed in the following extract.

#### July 4th Saturday 1942

Since dawn this morning there has been a big battle going on. so far the N.Z. div. have captured 92 field guns, 1000 prisoners and brought down several planes. We are going to attack this morning according to rumour. It has been a bad day for us today. Jack and Tom were killed by bomb while Mo and Tom Woodill were wounded. Mo rather badly. It all happened so suddenly that I can hardly realise it is true. We were sitting in the back of the truck and we were getting to the stage where we almost ignored the drone of planes as they had been going across all morning when another batch came over. We climbed out and put the glasses on them but Jack, Charlie and I just sat in the truck. Mo said they were Jerries and we all jumped out and as we hit the ground Mo yelled "Duck." Charlie went for his trench while Jack, Tom and I dived under the truck. I had no sooner hit the ground when I thought of my slit trench on the other side of the wheel and decided I would be better in it. As I hit the trench I was almost bounced out again by the first bomb explosion. Each one seemed to come nearer than the last. The next thing I knew, Mo was yelling that he was hit in the neck. I hopped up and put a dressing on the wound and called for one of the boys to go for an ambulance at the A.D.S. which was just over the hill. Charlie got up and we decided to get him over to a P.D. and take him round ourselves. Just as the truck was pulling off Tom Woodill ran up and climbed aboard. He had a nasty gash in the chin. On the way over I found that Mo had another wound in the arm. After we had handed them over to the ambulance chaps we started back to the truck to get Tom some cigarettes. We started to wonder how Jack and Tom got on. I remembered that they had kept very still when I yelled out. Just before we got back to the truck a chap said to us "I think a couple of your coppers are marfeish." It was only too true when we reached the truck. They were both lying there dead on the ground where I had laid beside them before I decided to get into my slit trench. They were both badly smacked. Jack had a hole in his chest you could put both your fists in and Tom had a hole in his stomach and his intestines were hanging out. A piece of shrap. had also gone through his thigh and broken it. As for the truck it was riddled. Jack and Tom were taken away in an ambulance to be buried. Charlie, Tom, Frank and I attended the funeral and after they were buried we put stones round them and made a cross of stones on each grave. They were buried next to each other. We saw Mo later and he seemed pretty strong. I went on

ration truck this afternoon to keep my mind occupied. We went out to the guns with rations and they were getting shelled. Planes came over and bombed again this afternoon. Three of our tyres were punctured in the first raid.

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Three other ~~units~~ were in Africa at the same time  
Howard Ingram  
was killed in action  
at El Alamein.

Russell & Bill Ingram in Field Ambulance  
returned home, both decorated.