

Y.M.C.A. HUT MAADI

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

L/Cpl. R. T. Street



Bn. H.Q. 26th. Bn.,

2nd. N.Z.E.F.

Middle East Forces.

1st. March, 1942.

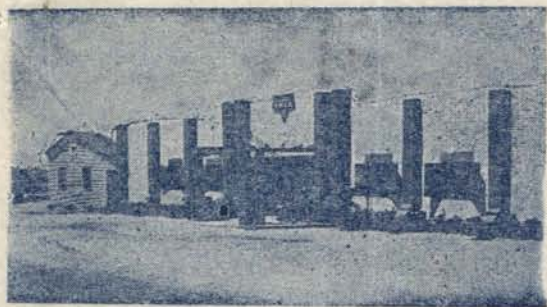
Dear Mum,

Here I am again. It is Sunday evening & I am writing this in the Y.M.C.A. at Base Camp. In my last letter - a week ago, written from the desert, I told you I was to attend a two week's Intelligence Course at I - came in on Wednesday

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railway station in the desert in our I. truck. While waiting on the station for the train, whom should I meet but Howard Cooper (who came over when I did.) & a cobbler. They were going on a week's leave. There was a party of twenty or more chaps all going to Base Camp on various courses of instruction, - cooking, etc. -

We reached Cairo main station in the early afternoon & were met there by a truck from Base Camp. We heaved our gear aboard & climbed in on top of it. The truck had only proceeded a short distance when the engine stopped through some fault or other. The driver got it going



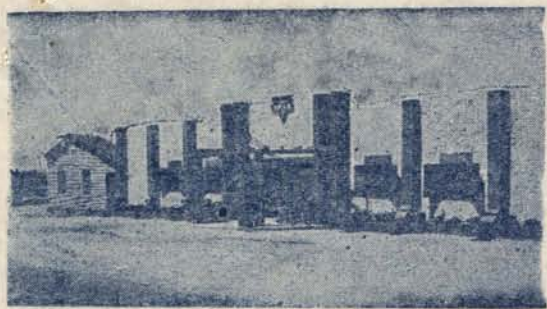
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again & we went on for another block when it stopped again. This time it refused to restart. While the driver tried to get the engine running, we sat on top of our gear & watched the traffic & people go by. We were pestered with the usual collection of "wogs", all with something to sell. One woggin, a boy of about 9 years of age, was naked except for a dirty piece of rag the size of my handkerchief which he had tied round his waist. There are thousands of these woggins in Cairo, & they are a problem to the civil authorities. Besides being a damn nuisance, they receive no education & their future is pretty hopeless. You see them every where you go, hanging on to tram cars, usually with a shoe shining outfit, or a box of some junk to sell. They are pretty sharp, believe me.

Well, we were eventually towed by a passing truck as far as the Base P.O. in Cairo where we had afternoon tea while another truck was sent for. In the meantime, the driver had coaxed the engine of our truck into life again, so we piled



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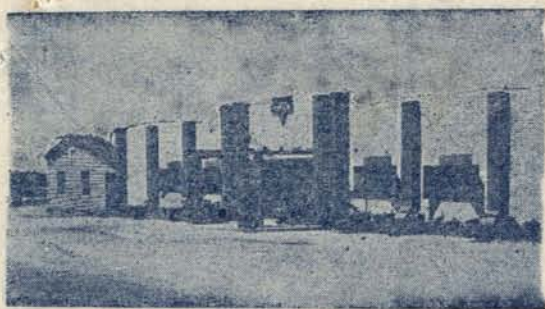
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aboard & set off once more. We had three more stops en route to Camp, but eventually arrived three hours late, just in time for tea.

I am quartered in a hut with six other chaps from different Bns. who are also here on the Intelligence Course. We have straw-filled pallets to sleep on which isn't so hard as being on the sand in the desert. The meals are very good too, & it is a change to eat from a table & to have plenty of water for washing, shaving & showers.

We have lectures from 9 till 12 in the mornings, with a break of 15 minutes at 11 during which we come over here to the Y.M.C.A. for a cup of tea & cakes. We are only two hundred yards away, so it is very handy. The hut I am in is very close to where Paddy's cubicle was last year when he was taking the officers for a course. The lectures continue in the afternoons, from 1.30 till 4.20. It is like being back at college or Varsity again. Our instructor is an I. Officer & he knows his work. He is quite young too.

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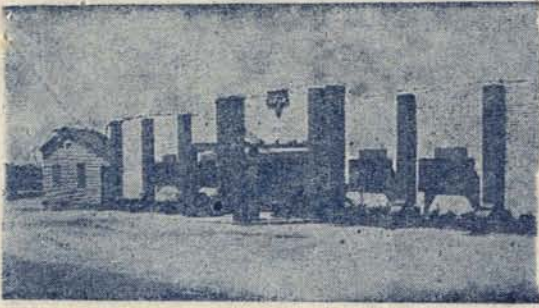


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Yesterday afternoon I went in to Cairo on leave. From 8 till 9 P.M. the girls at the N.Z. Forces Club put on a concert which was very good. Audrey Holdgate was the musical director & she sang several songs herself. She has a beautiful voice & has done some broadcasting since being here. We had quite a talk over old times in the Harmonic in ChCh. & of Timaru.

My old friend Colin Skinner paid me a visit out in the desert the day before I left to come down here. We had the afternoon together & Colin stayed to tea at our mess. In the evening we attended an open-air talkie programme put on by the Mobile Cinema Unit. Later, we had supper at the Y.M.C.A. tent & I walked some of the way back with Colin to his lines a few miles away.

Well Mum, I haven't had any mail for three weeks, except the communication from Maginity. Son & Samuel re. Aunt Grace's legacy. However, we shall have to be content with mail once a month or so, maybe

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for some time. When mail does arrive, we shall get a bundle I expect.

Will Dad please not bother to send me any more "Weekly News". I haven't received one copy yet, as thousands of copies are sent from N. 3. we all get a chance of seeing them. Thanks all the same Dad, for sending the ones already on the way somewhere.

I must close now & write to Edna. I haven't yet received the latest photos of baby. I hope they turn up sometime.

I am fit & well, & I hope these lines find you all the same in Nelson.

Byebye.

Your loving son,
Rewai.

Rewai