

QX17905 Pte JACKSON, L.  
"D" Coy, 18 Pl, 2/15 Inf Bn

Taken at 102 ACC, Burleigh,  
by Sgt HARDWICK, F.H.  
29 FS Sec - 12/9/45

I left Syria towards the end of June, 1942, by train for Alexandria, arriving there approx 6th July, where we stayed overnight and then moved through Alexandria on the morning of 7th July with 20 Bde in convoy to calm down the panic in Alexandria, and then took up our positions in the last line of defences from Alexandria, - this line of defence was previously occupied by an English Unit, - and stayed there for approx 2 days until 9th July, and we were then told we were going to El Alamein to be held in reserve to 30th Corps in preparation for a break through. English AASC were attached to our Bn; about 11th July, the Germans broke through near the NZ Div and our Bn went round the rear of the NZ Div to counter-attack, if the Germans broke through too far but the Germans were driven back by the NZ Div where we stayed for a day until 12th July, and were then relieved by the Essex Div and then moved back and took up positions previously occupied by 2/32 Bn, where we stayed for three days until 15th July, and then moved up and relieved 2/24 Bn on the Hill of Jesus, who had been badly knocked about having withstood six counter-attacks in one day.

After relieving 2/24 Bn at the Hill of Jesus, we immediately started digging fresh positions ordered by the CO - Col OGLE - and immediately sent out patrols in the area. Two nights after our arrival there the Bn started sending out fighting patrols. We stayed on the Hill of Jesus for approx three weeks and were relieved by 2/13 Bn; we then moved back to El Masa, which is the next station on from El Alamein, and became a Reserve Bn again. We stayed in the position for approx three weeks and then prepared for the Bulimba attack on 1 September - approx 84 personnel killed and total casualties 180. The objective was gained by "D" Coy only but had to retreat owing to shortage of ammunition and weakened state of personnel; communications were cut off and finally was able to obtain a smoke screen to enable us to withdraw at approx 0930 1st September - most of us were out of the attack. We were sent back about 8 miles behind the lines and stayed for night, returning next day, and then moved up and relieved the 2/24 Bn. For about two weeks the Bn was occupied in vicinity of El Masa and carrying out operations in preparation for big Alamein show. General leave was given over this period of 2 persons of each Coy twice a week. I went on leave to Cairo about 15th September for 7 days.

When I arrived back from leave about 22nd September, our Bn had been relieved by 2/48 Bn and the Bn had moved back about 12 miles behind the line and carried out operations for El Alamein Battle. This lasted until 27th October, when we moved up, took up positions we had dug in the start line, went into attack on 23rd October with 2/17 Bn with us, and 2/13 and Gordon 51 Highland Div attacked, and moved through our positions as soon as we had obtained our objective. We advanced about 8 miles during the night. We stayed in this position and attacked again on 29th October with the whole of 9 Div.

Three of us were hit and ordered back to RAP, one man hit badly and we were carrying him back. When we came across a post which we thought was the 2/17 Bn position, we called out our Identification and were immediately fired upon. We remained near the position for about 3/4 hour before we were surrounded by the Germans from the post we had mistaken; we were asked questions and searched, but these questions were not persisted with.

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We remained at this post until night of 30th, and moved back by Germans as they retreated and were shifted back to El Daba PW Camp on 31st October, where we stayed a few hours and then they took us to Mersa Matruh and handed us over to the Italians who moved us back to Tripoli about 10th November. We remained there for about three days and then moved to Sicily and to Italy to PW Camp 66 at Capura; stayed here about 6 days, then moved up to a Colonial Camp 57 at Outanai. I remained here for 5 months and sent on working party to Chili 106 and remained until capitulation of Italy and then roamed the hills for about 6 weeks, before being recaptured by the Germans and taken to small camp near Chili and then on to Stalag 11A, stayed for six weeks, transferred to 11B, where we were sent out on working command. During advance of Allies the Germans started marching us to the mountains but we were overtaken by the 9th Army after two or three days march.