

This was all propaganda put out by the Germans for some unknown reason.

You would have thought that we were scared for they carried automatic weapons and grenades. Well, eventually, the train of cattle trucks arrived and we were herded twenty five to a truck. I tried to enter a truck with my pals but immediately one of these nazi blokes used his rifle butt on me. Even when I showed my badges of rank he SCREAMED "NIX" and had another crack at me. What was the use of protesting any further.

Between the trucks were open trucks on which were Nazi Guards armed with machine guns. To let us know of these they amused themselves opening fire on the many small crucifixes one sees all over Italy. Apparently, the bridge over the river at the foot of the Brenner Pass had been damaged by our bombers for we were here held up for a long time. Of course our hopes rose thinking the Pass was closed.

The day before getting there the train has stopped at a small station and the doors of the trucks were opened but we were not allowed out to attend to nature's call. The halt was just to hand out apples in boxes by some Italians. This only lasted a few minutes and when the Italians started collecting the boxes one of our chaps, as quick as lightning, picked up a couple of boxes, hurried to one of the carts, loaded his boxes and climbed up beside the driver who showed no surprise. Fortunately, the lorry just drove off. He had not been spotted. From our truck we could see nothing unless you stood on your toes and looked out through the small slat window but then all we could see were mountains covered with snow.

Shortly after leaving the Brenner Pass a number of chaps escaped through holes they had managed to cut in their truck floor or through the grid one sees at the bottom of the truck. This grid is there, of course, for washing out the trucks and they managed to undo the screws. This was the nearest point to Switzerland for which about thirty or forty chaps made. Many were captured but a number got through, including two officers of the Kaffrarian Rifles, Thompson and Pollock. They had quite a stiff walk but got through without incident. On arrival at Innsbruck the doors of our 'Compartment' were opened and the Guards went raving when they found so many missing. We were allowed out of the trucks and undressed to wash in the small stream, watched by many of the townspeople: men; women and children. However, it was a treat to get out after being cooped up for three days without any sanitary arrangements so I must be excused for writing the following but it is after all just nature.

Most of us, in fact all I should say, had, after being cooped up as we were, got terribly uncomfortable but one had to just stick it out as long as possible and when things got to bad for a few they used Red Cross boxes which were then pushed out through the small ventilation window. As to urinating we found the small opening at the bottom of the door the most useful.

Here crude sanitary arrangement had been made with long poles over a hole in the ground and in view of all. Most of us as you can imagine had become terribly constipated and the German guards got impatient. I had a bayonet pushed against my bottom and told to get a move on. This I think was worse than bayonet experiences I had experienced during the war when one could at least retaliate.

There were two chaps who they caught in the act of escaping who were allowed to wash themselves in the stream but a young S.S. stood over them with a cocked revolver. What could the poor chaps do. While this chap was carrying out this dangerous guard job I saw his pal hand him a glass of Schnapps. They told us later that when we moved on they were fastened down with barbed wire in an empty roofless truck. This they said was terrible as they could not move and had terrible weather to contend with.

Some of the guards /