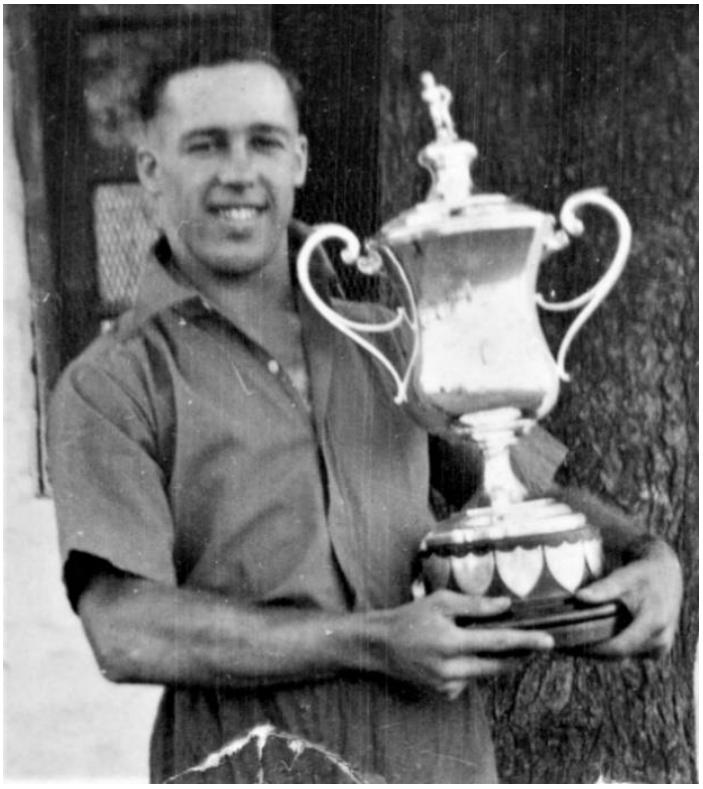
Sergeant Stanley Frederick Moore

1st Battalion, The Cambridgeshire Regiment



Stanley Frederick Moore was born 9th September, 1912, at Helions Bumpstead, near Haverhill. In November, 1931, 'Pony' Moore enlisted into the 2nd Battalion, The Suffolk Regiment, recording his civilian trade as being a farm labourer.

His military service took him to India and the North-West Frontier but in August, 1939 he was posted to the Cambridgeshire Regiment. It was at that time that the Cambridgeshires had expanded, and being a totally Territorial infantry regiment, outsiders were drafted in, in preparation for being on a war footing.

Sergeant Moore was just one of many who came to replace others that were either not fit or too young for active service, and being a seasoned Regular senior NCO, his skills were a great asset.

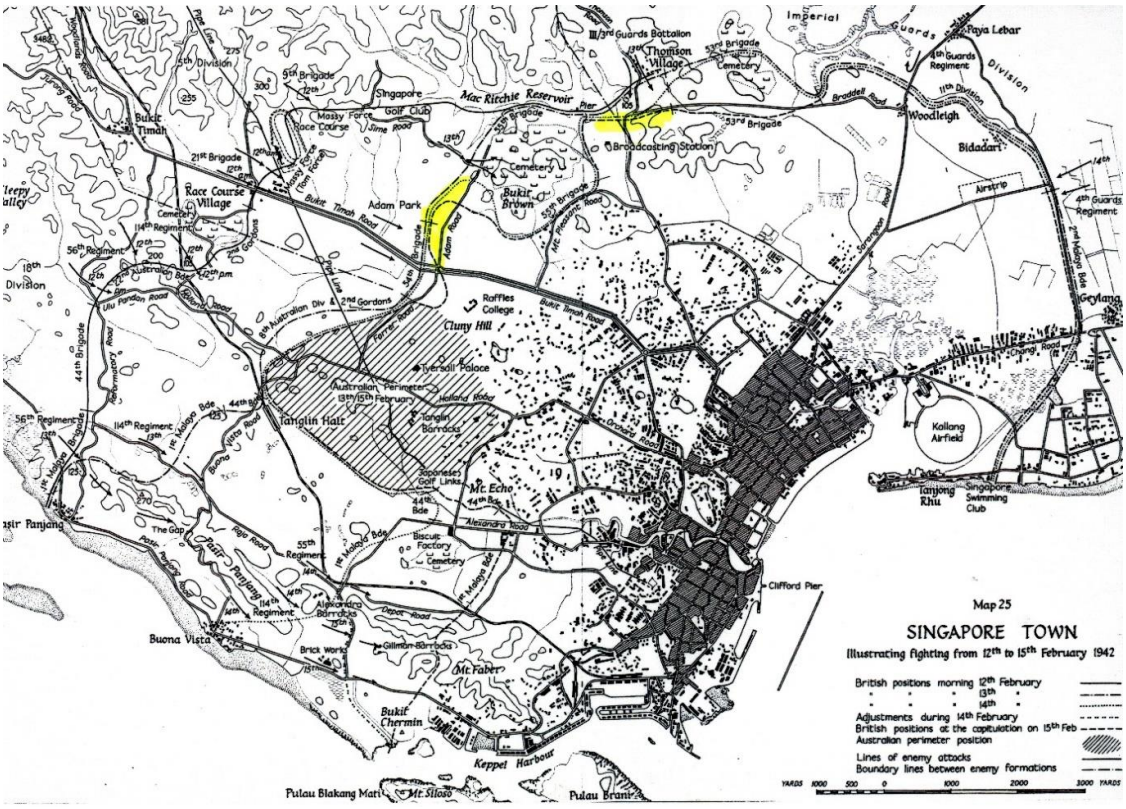
Pony Moore's greatest test was of course at Singapore, where he and others of the 1st Battalion landed as part of the 55th Infantry Brigade on the night of the 29th January, 1942. Things couldn't have looked any blacker as the situation had deteriorated rapidly even before they arrived: earlier two important vessels, HMS 'Prince of Wales' and HMS 'Repulse' had been sunk; enemy ground forces were practically in control of the Malay Peninsula having swept all the way down in a rapid succession of leap-frog attacks in a matter of weeks; and to cap it all, the enemy had command of the skies, enabling them to deploy bombers wherever they wished.

Rumours among the men circulated as to their own destiny, some suggesting the Americans would join them, others worrying about their sister battalion, the 2nd Battalion, who had arrived earlier on the 13th January and been moved up country to Jahore to stem the Japanese advance. Speculation suggested they had been cut off and lost.

Moving to Seletar airfield on the 9th February to bolster its defences, the troops were dismayed to find that no attempts had been made by the RAF or others before them to make any preparations, there being no trenches, no barbed wire, no obstacles of any kind. Instead they saw masses of supplies and equipment left and abandoned. Trenches were soon dug as they prepared for battle, although within hours they were soon on the move again. Although not receiving any intelligence reports the apparent noise of battle to the west of the Island was enough to confirm that the enemy had landed in strength and were embarking on the next phase of their attack by ground forces on "Fortress Singapore".

On 11th February the Battalion headed south by Thomson Village and dug in once more. Later large numbers of retreating Australians from the west was enough to worry Lieutenant Colonel Carpenter, the Commanding Officer, that further attacks would be imminent. In a direct action to stabilise the situation the C.O. gave orders to send out night patrols close to Bukit Timah village. Armed with fresh information, two companies moved out next day to prevent further infiltration and having spotted a battalion of Japanese, (together with Indian troops that had changed sides) leisurely bathing by Pierce Reservoir, Captain Gurteen's "B" Company opened fire with seven light machine guns and his 2 inch mortars, killing over 50 and wounding substantially more before departing the scene. Equally "C" Company had success in neutralising an enemy observation post that had been instrumental in delivering accurate fire on our lines.

The Battalion moved once more, this time centred on the higher ground of the Adam Park estate on 12th February, situated to the north of Bukit Timah Road.



1st Cambridgeshire fought at Adam Park (highlighted to the left), whilst the 2nd Battalion were engaged close to Braddell Road further north.

Preparing the grand 'black and white' luxury houses and grounds into a full-blown defensive perimeter, the 1st Battalion stood and fought for three days, inflicting numerous enemy casualties as they endured artillery and mortar fire, constant sniping, infantry attacks, air bombardment and little news from higher command. Isolated, they received no intelligence from the rear, and much-needed artillery support was sporadic, to say the least. Men fought hand to hand, some in burning buildings, and right until the very end they gave no ground although the Japanese were to their front, left and right, and in the latter stages employed tanks.

Tired but unbeaten, the news of surrender on the 15th February was met with anger, resentment and disbelief, so much so that these proud men were the last to lay down their weapons. The 1st Battalion suffered 47 men killed over those three days, and the Japanese (in one regiment alone) over 500.

Pony Moore was serving with 'D' Company and was severely wounded on the night of 13th February. He had been doing the rounds of inspection among the slit trenches of his platoon's three sections when having chastised a corporal for moving his men too forward without notifying platoon H.Q. there was an explosion. Moore recorded that moment in his diary written in June, 1942:

> *"Bang!" something hit me in the chest, a piece of shrapnel had entered my body, as I turned to report back, rifles and a machine gun fired at me. It seemed as though I was full of hot metal, I felt very uncomfortable but was not really in pain, this occurred almost at the corner of a house, I was still able to turn and run to the front of the house, where I sat down, I was still in possession of my "Tommy Gun" and grenades. I sat on the lawn where I lost a terrible lot of blood also I had hemoridge, (haemorrhage) blood just flowed out of my mouth".*

He was in such a bad shape that he was mistaken for dead and narrowly escaped burial. Seen to move, a quick witted soldier ensured that he was to be seen by the Medical Officer, and he was later moved to the ill-feted Alexandra Hospital for further treatment to his many injuries. Miraculously he survived the horrific excesses committed by Japanese troops as they burst through the hospital on a rampage of murder, bayoneting doctors, nurses and patients alike (of the 323 murdered, 230 were patients). Moved to Changi Gaol, his wounds were so severe that he remained there for the rest of his captivity. At Changi he wrote his own personal account of the battle and also typed the names of those that had become casualties as well as those recommended for awards during the fighting, creating a valuable source of information.

Moore's 'Certificate of Service' book contains the following testimonial:

> *"Clean, honest and sober. A sound man with plenty of common sense. Has initiative and intelligence and has proved himself to be a good leader. Very reliable."*

Perhaps he should have added 'courageous' too.

Sergeant Moore died in 1983 but his many items connected with those times were gifted to the Cambridgeshire Regiment Collection by his widow, Violet, in 2002.



Sgt. Moore carried this leather wallet in his shirt pocket throughout the actions in Singapore, and this clearly shows that it shielded him from further severe wounds on Friday 13th February, bullet and shrapnel damage being apparent. Below, some of the contents:







ARMY BOOK 64

SGT S.F. MOORE.

5825542.

SOLDIER'S SERVICE

AND

PAY BOOK

"DAMACED IN ACTION."

SINGAPORE

13-2-42.

SOLDIER'S PAY BOOK (ACTIVE SERVICE)

A.B. 64 (PART II)

Army Number 5825542

Surname (capitals) MOORE

Christian Names in full Stanley Frederick

REGIMENT OR CORPS

Instructions to Soldier.

1. You will produce this book whenever you require an advance of cash on account, or when instructed to do so.

2. You will give a receipt, on the acquittance roll, to the Officer paying you, for all cash advances made to you. The Officer making the payment will sign the corresponding entry in this book on the page for such payments.

3. You will make no entries in this book, except to sign your name on pages 7, 9, 11 and 13.

4. Should you lose your book you will at once report the loss to your Commanding Officer, when a new book will be issued to you, but it must be understood that no pay can be issued in respect of the period before the date on which you report your loss, until your balance has been ascertained from the Paymaster.

Last Payment 14/1/42
1

NAME in full MOORE Stanley Frederick

Army No. 5825542 Rank SGT

Date of Attestation or calling up for permanent service 25/11/31 Age on Enlistment 19

*Terms of Service 12

Whether serving on Regular, T.A., Section D or Supplementary Reserve A[illegible]tion or Record of Paper R

Married or Single M.

NOTE.—The account of the soldier while on active service will be kept by the Fixed Centre Paymaster concerned, and all communications relating to his accounts should be addressed accordingly.

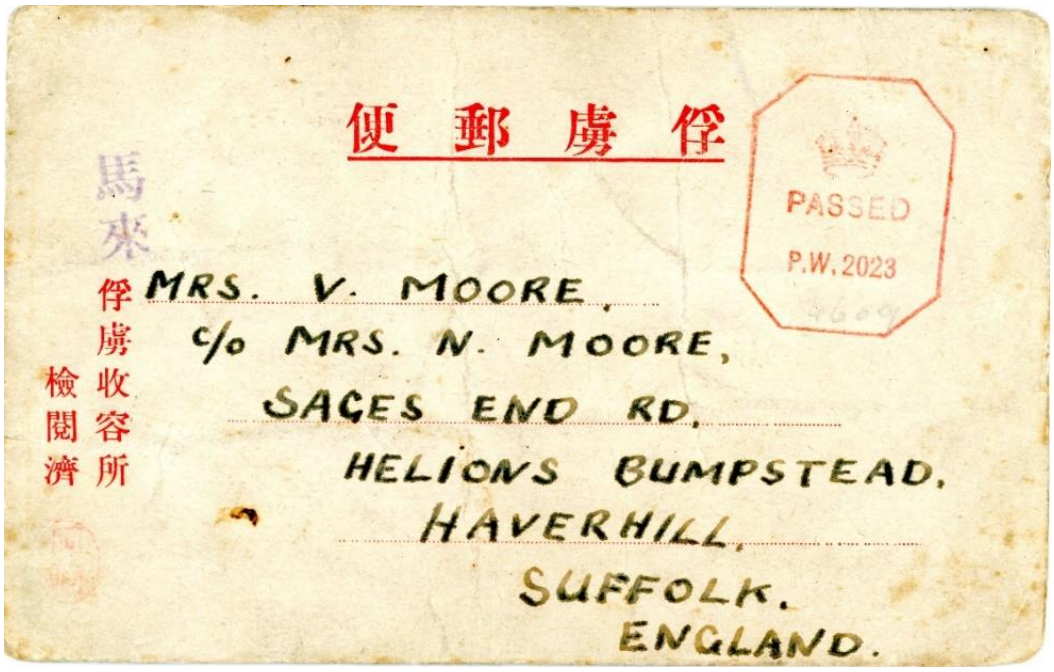
* In the case of Regular Soldiers serving on attestations for normal periods of enlistments.

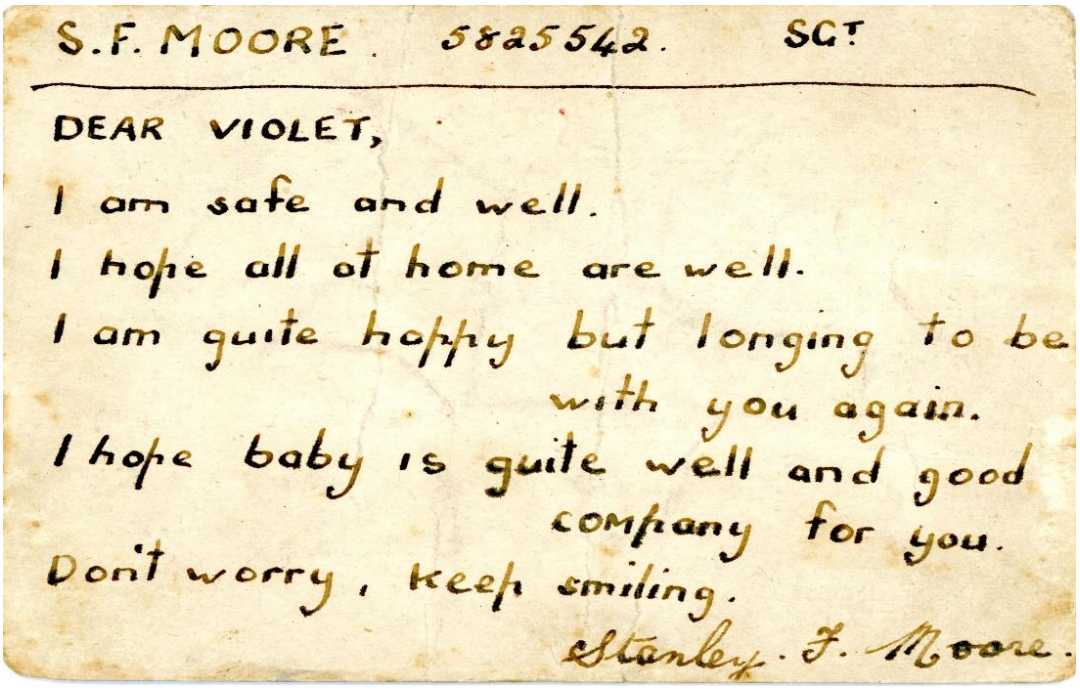
2

TEMPORARY EMOLUMENTS.

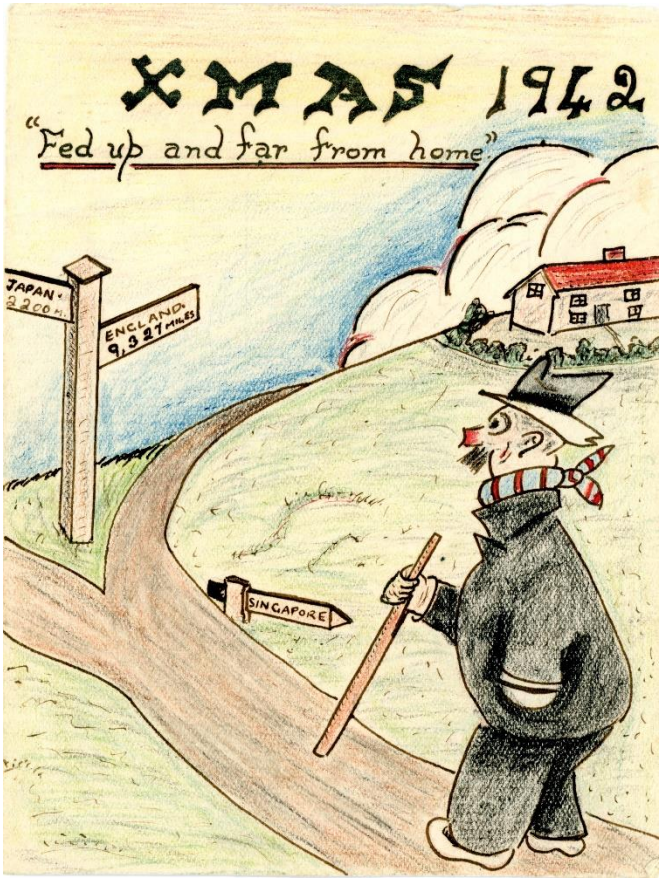
PERIOD.	NATURE.	RATE.

Later all prisoners of war would have the opportunity to send a post card home, courtesy of the Emperor of Japan, to inform loved ones of their survival. Sergeant Moore was able to send this undated example home, although not giving any indication as to the present circumstances in which he was facing, his concern being one for his beloved wife, Violet, and his young son at home and their welfare:

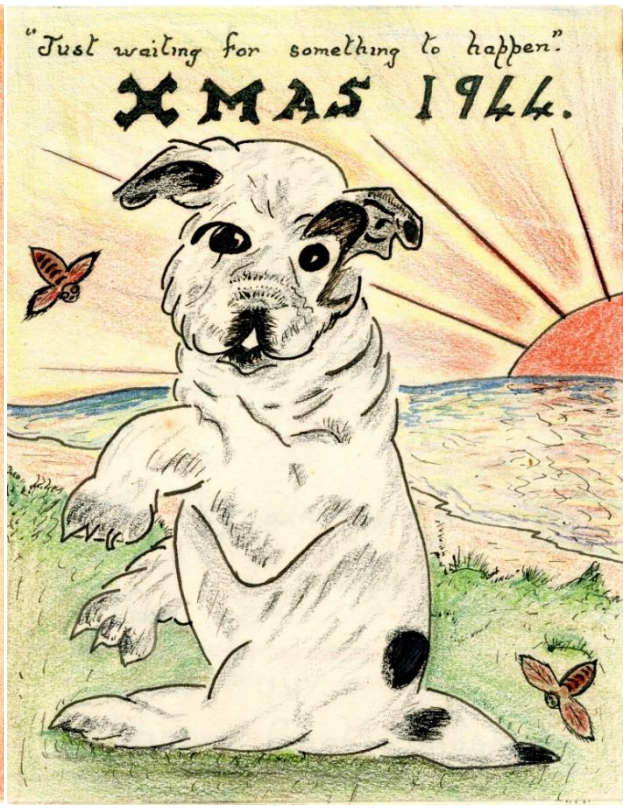




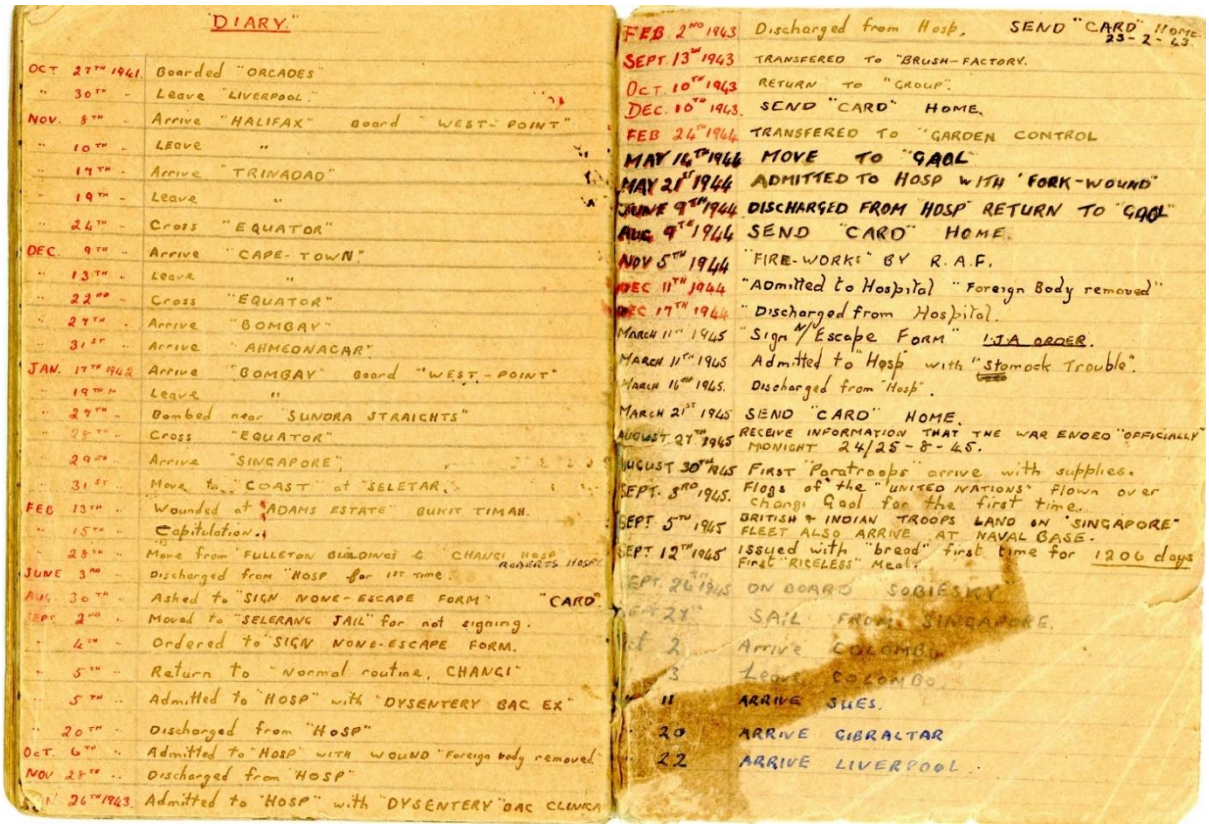
A talented artist, Pony Moore sent greetings cards to his wife, and here are some samples:







Finally, the last page of his diary is seen here, listing the key events of the years 1941-1945:



"DIARY"

OCT 27TH 1941 Boarded "ORCADES"
" 30TH " Leave "LIVERPOOL"
NOV. 8TH " Arrive "HALIFAX" Board "WEST-POINT"
" 10TH " Leave "
" 17TH " Arrive "TRINADAD"
" 19TH " Leave "
" 24TH " Cross "EQUATOR"
DEC. 9TH " Arrive "CAPE-TOWN"
" 13TH " Leave "
" 22ND " Cross "EQUATOR"
" 27TH " Arrive "BOMBAY"
" 31ST " Arrive "AHMEDNACAR"
JAN. 17TH 1942 Arrive "BOMBAY" Board "WEST-POINT"
" 19TH " Leave "
" 27TH " Bombed near "SUNDRA STRAICHTS"
" 28TH " Cross "EQUATOR"
" 29TH " Arrive "SINGAPORE"
" 31ST " Move to "COAST" at "SELETAR"
FEB 13TH " Wounded at "ADAMS ESTATE" BUKIT TIMAH.
" 15TH " Capitulation.
" 28TH " Move from "FULLETON BUILDING" & "CHANGI HOSP" ROBERTS HOSP
JUNE 3RD " Discharged from "HOSP" for 1ST time.
AUG 30TH " Asked to "SIGN NONE-ESCAPE FORM" "CARD"
SEPT 2ND " Moved to "SELERANG JAIL" for not signing.
" 4TH " Ordered to "SIGN NONE-ESCAPE FORM.
" 5TH " Return to "Normal routine, CHANGI"
" 5TH " Admitted to "HOSP" with "DYSENTERY BAC EX"
" 20TH " Discharged from "HOSP"
OCT. 6TH " Admitted to "HOSP" with WOUND "Foreign body removed"
NOV 25TH " Discharged from "HOSP"
" 26TH 1943 Admitted to "HOSP" with "DYSENTERY" BAC CLINICA

FEB 2ND 1943 Discharged from Hosp, SEND "CARD" HOME. 23-2-43
SEPT 13TH 1943 TRANSFERED to "BRUSH-FACTORY.
OCT 10TH 1943 RETURN TO "GROUP".
DEC. 10TH 1943. SEND "CARD" HOME.
FEB 24TH 1944 TRANSFERED TO "GARDEN CONTROL
MAY 16TH 1944 MOVE TO "GAOL"
MAY 21ST 1944 ADMITTED TO HOSP WITH 'FORK-WOUND"
JUNE 9TH 1944 DISCHARGED FROM "HOSP" RETURN TO "GAOL"
AUG 9TH 1944 SEND "CARD" HOME.
NOV 5TH 1944 "FIRE-WORKS" BY R.A.F.
DEC 11TH 1944 "Admitted to Hospital "Foreign Body removed"
DEC 17TH 1944 "Discharged from Hospital.
MARCH 11TH 1945 "Sign "Escape FORM" I.J.A ORDER.
MARCH 11TH 1945 Admitted to "Hosp" with "Stomach Trouble".
MARCH 16TH 1945. Discharged from "Hosp".
MARCH 21ST 1945 SEND "CARD" HOME.
AUGUST 27TH 1945 RECEIVE INFORMATION THAT THE WAR ENDED "OFFICIALLY" MIDNIGHT 24/25-8-45.
AUGUST 30TH 1945 FIRST "Paratroops" arrive with supplies.
SEPT. 3RD 1945. Flags of the "UNITED NATIONS" flown over Changi Gaol for the first time.
SEPT 5TH 1945 BRITISH & INDIAN TROOPS LAND ON "SINGAPORE" FLEET ALSO ARRIVE AT NAVAL BASE.
SEPT 12TH 1945 ISSUED with "bread" first time for 1206 days First "RICELESS" Meal.
SEPT. 26TH 1945 ON BOARD SOBIESKY
OCT 2ND SAIL FROM SINGAPORE.
" 2 Arrive COLOMBO.
" 3 Leave COLOMBO.
" 11 ARRIVE SUES.
" 20 ARRIVE GIBRALTAR
" 22 ARRIVE LIVERPOOL.

Pony Moore had three bullets removed from his chest, plus three chunks of shrapnel. He also suffered much internal damage, the liver being penetrated, but thankfully his lungs were not affected. His survival was indeed a miracle.

Sergeant Moore's son, Michael, wrote a book entitled, 'Battalion at War,' (pub.1988) outlining the actions of 1st Cambridgeshire at Singapore, interwoven with details of his father's experiences.

Martin D Boswell 18/7/2020

All items featured are part of the Cambridgeshire Regiment Collection