

no thunder though, for here and there, from points we could not see, columns of dun smoke rose lazily.

At last we came to what was plainly a line of defence, and were greatly cheered by the hope that possibly the enemy would be held there. Soon after dark, a short distance behind the line, an officer "pulled us out" of the convoy to join our own unit, from which we had been separated since first going into action. This was our first real halt for some days and nights, and thus a welcome opportunity to rest. We were situated on the edge of a marsh, and day and night the air was filled with the continuous harsh croaking of countless frogs. Mosquitoes, too, were more persistent and more numerous than we would have dreamed possible. They attacked in literal clouds. Otherwise, however, the surroundings were pleasant enough—trees and grass, scrub-covered hills, a stream in which to wash clothing and bathe.

From the nearby high country we could from time to time see enemy aircraft harassing convoys on a distant road. At times the noise of machine-gun fire was almost continuous, and frequently we heard the sound of bursting bombs. By this time we were experts at taking cover. I can still remember vividly how I once wriggled into a culvert so small that I feared I would never be able to wriggle out again. More than once I've thoroughly soaked myself by lying in irrigation channels. Some of the situations seemed decidedly funny—afterwards. All too soon came the order to move. It arrived as we had come to expect, in the wee sma' hours of the night, but I was one of a party to remain behind with an ambulance to deal with wounded should there be any in the convoy. The day before Jerry had been systematically strafing the road, section by section. Prompt with the dawn he reached our section. Like the rest, I dived for cover, and from the shelter of a slit trench watched fascinated while a black three-engined aircraft skimmed bare feet above the road, following along its whole length, guns blazing in short regular bursts.

It was hardly a pleasant experience, this crouching in a muddy hole while round about unseen "things" plopped into the mud and the air was filled with a twittering whistle more menacing than its background of staccato explosions and roaring engines. Have you ever wondered what it is like to be unarmed and helpless while someone has a little sport with a machine gun, with you as the target? We medical folk soon found out. We soon learned, too, the difference between fear and courage. It is impossible not to be afraid, sometimes terribly afraid, under fire. The man who says he does not know fear is either a liar or he is not normal. Courage is simply the ability to keep that fear in check and to carry on with the job just the same.

We had further visitations that day. Once there was a plop in the mud close to my head, and a strong smell of burnt powder. No doubt a spent cartridge case, I thought, and wished there were time to dig it out for a souvenir. Thinking the danger past, I looked up when the plane was directly above me. Quite distinctly, without any possibility of being mistaken, I saw three bombs leave the plane, vanishing as they gathered speed. They were "wailers," and seconds seemed hours as the scream grew in volume, to culminate in the crash of explosions nearly a mile away.

We travelled on again that day, with frequent stops to take cover when the road was threatened, but rejoined our unit without further incident. By this time the "hide and seek" aspect was becoming more pronounced. Enemy planes were never far away during daylight, and we began to travel by night, hiding by day among bush-covered hills. It was a source of satisfaction, though, to think that time and again Jerry flew low over heavy concentrations of men and material, evidently without even dreaming of their whereabouts.

Near one of our stopping-places was a high escarpment, scrub and bush covered to within a short distance of the top. It was a splendid vantage point, so one morning I climbed it, to find a sheltered ledge from which to watch in safety the activities of enemy bombers. All day,