

**From the Diary of Bernard Wechtaluk for the 50th
Anniversary of the Trip Over the Burma Road**

69th DRS

- Fri., Feb. 16, 1945 - Left Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas. Destination unknown.
- Mon., Feb. 19 - Arrived at Riverside, California, Camp Anza. Preparing to go overseas.
- Mon., Feb. 26 - 11:00 AM, boarded U.S.S. Admiral W.S. Benson at Terminal Island (near Los Angeles) for an unknown destination - rumor has it that we are headed for Bombay, India then to New Delhi, India.
- Tue., Feb. 27 - Set sail for the open seas at 11:30 AM. Got a bit sea sick.
- Wed., Feb. 28 - Sea was pretty rough, got seasick (again).
- Wed., Mar. 7 - Crossed equator at 5:21 PM.
- Wed., Mar. 14 - Arrived in Melbourne, Australia at 2:00 PM. Sure glad to see land.
- Fri., Mar. 16 - Left Melbourne at 10:30 AM.
- Thur., Mar. 22 - Recrossed the equator.
- Mar. 23 to 25 - Destroyer convoy.
- Sun., Mar. 25 - Found out we are headed for Calcutta, India instead of New Delhi.
- Tue., Mar. 27 - Arrived in Bombay at 11:00 AM. Boarded a train at 9:30 PM for Calcutta.
- Sat., Mar. 31 - Arrived at Camp Kanchaapara, Calcutta, a replacement depot at 2 PM.
- Fri., Apr. 20 - Got our trucks, I drew number 11 in the first convoy, checked the truck over and found it to be in good shape. Went to bed a little restless and anxious to start off in the morning. Rained all day, nobody around to put the tent flaps down, clothes got a bit wet.
- Sat., Apr. 21 - First convoy leaves Calcutta. We started off at 8:00 AM. Drove 30 miles to railroad and put the trucks on the train. Train left around 10:00 PM.
- Sun., Apr. 22 - Second convoy leaves Calcutta. Drove off train, arrived at American staging area. Slept in trucks over night.
- Mon., Apr. 23 - Third convoy leaves Calcutta. - Got ready to travel, took a bath in the stream next to camp.

- Tue., Apr. 24 - Advanced party leaves Calcutta by plane. - We started off at 6:00 AM. First 20 miles pretty rough, tight turns, going uphill all the way. Traveled and drove 150 miles all day.
- Wed., Apr. 25 - Drove about 50 miles then ferried trucks across river, took about 1 hour. Traveled 85 miles.
- Thur., Apr. 26 - Arrived at American camp, visited the British canteen and bought this diary there. Didn't drive today, traveled 85 miles. Mosquitos pretty thick. Sure enjoyed the canteen.
- Fri., Apr. 27 - Saw a leper asylum outside of camp. Traveled 172 miles. Nothing of importance happened, did see tea groves for the second time. Heard native drums during the night, also, heard jackals.
- Sat., Apr. 28 - Left at 7:15 AM. Traveled 112 miles, 80 miles were rough dirt roads, almost hit a few cows.
- Sun., Apr. 29 - Played a bit of catch and wrote a few letters, got sack time and got truck serviced.
- Mon., Apr. 30 - Sack time, went to see a movie, Tall in the Saddle, was very entertaining.
- Tue., May 1 - Traveled about 60 miles today. Got lost from convoy and had a little trouble with the truck. May not have enough gas to get to Kunming, China. Stopped here in Ledo, India (near the Burma border). Got 2 bottles of beer.
- Wed., May 2 - Kunming is 1,079 miles from Ledo. Rough road first 18 miles. Lots of Chinese soldiers. Traveled 97 miles. Roughest and toughest yet, mountains all the way. Got stuck and was towed last 1/2 mile, nothing serious, transfer case in neutral. Cliffs almost 1,000 feet down.
- Thur., May 3 - Started out at 8:00 AM. Cliffs and mountains for 22 miles, last 6 miles downhill. Broke down after 4 miles, but caught up with convoy eating dinner on the run with Bill Wood, made 12 miles in 4 hours. Last 70 miles good dirt road, a bit dusty. Rained during supper and still traveled 96 miles. Traveled 835 miles to date.
- Fri., May 4 - Traveled 76 miles, road pretty good, all level. Saw battle field of Myitykina, Burma.
- Sat., May 5 - Traveled 104 miles. Few mountains and rough roads. Lots of fox holes and bullet holes, battle of Bhamo, Burma was about 6 to 8 weeks ago.
- Sun., May 6 - Drove about 90 miles to junction of Ledo Burma Road. Jap shells around, got a dud. Saw some dead Japs.
- Mon., May 7 - Traveled 103 miles, all winding roads and sharp curves in the mountains. Road bad, took about 9 hours. Saw lots of Chinese rice fields. Got some Chinese money. About 5,000 feet elevation. Found out that it's 792 miles to Kunming.

- Tue., May 8 - Started out, went about 3 miles and ordered to return to camp, something wrong up ahead. Scouted around camp and found lots of skeletons, probably Japanese, a P40 cracked up here. Very cold at night. Surprise, I received 3 letters from Ray (cousin). War is over as far as Germany is concerned. Chinese here are like vultures.
- Wed., May 9 - Still here, don't know the reason why. Days very warm. Went scouting around, visited a Chinese village, pretty crude homes made of blocks of mud. Lots of Chinese rice patties on sides of mountains, world's greatest engineering feat.
- Thur., May 10 - Traveled 81 miles through Salween Mountains, crossed the Salween River on a very poor suspension bridge, rolled like a wave with a truck on it. Climbed to a height of almost 9,000 feet. Mountains look pretty, roads bad and dusty. Finally raining quite often. Been traveling for 84 days, we are 1,384 miles from Calcutta.
- Fri., May 11 - Traveled 139 miles, roughest and toughest all the way with twisting roads and sharp curves, took about 13 hours. Ran out of gas once. Went to 9,600 feet, highest yet. Crossed 2 suspension bridges, Salween River crossed twice.
- Sat., May 12 - Traveled 13 miles. Roads pretty bad and dusty. Russia declares war on Japan.
- Sun., May 13 - Traveled 83 miles. Dusty. Made good time and one more day to go.
- Mon., May 14 - Wasn't going to leave today, but left about 10:30 AM. Roads level off, not much mountains, but dusty. Traveled 122 miles to Kunming. Received 16 letters. Ate at Chinese restaurant, had fried rice and eggs.

Calcutta to Ledo - 694 miles

Ledo Burma Road (Ledo to Kunming) - 1,014 miles

Total (Calcutta to Kunming) - 1,708 miles

This was written as it was put in a small diary I kept while we traveled from Kelly Field to Kunming. It wasn't in any particular sentence form because I only had a very small diary to work with. This should bring back some memories. Enjoy.

Best Wishes For The New Year !