

Leslie Thornton**Leave in Cairo**

Off we went, everybody, four days leave in Cairo. First day, or I should say two hours after we got there, two sergeant-majors were under close arrest. I wasn't one of them by the way. What happened they went into a red light district, out of bounds. Didn't know the area, hadn't been to Cairo before, but went into an out of bounds area and the Military Police picked them up and put them in. Well after some phone calls the adjutant, of course, said "Release them", and, of course, they were released and carried on with their leave. There was a big hotel called the Hotel de Roses and it was a warrant officers' and sergeants' hotel really. And we made our way to this big hotel. In it was a heap of Americans. They were pleased to see us, we got on well with them. And the beer was on but what happened was that when it's gone it's gone, you couldn't drink it all night. So these Americans started and we were square tables and there were tablecloths on and everything with little squares. And these Americans got, they filled every square. They went to the bar and they filled every square up on the table with beer – half pint beers. So as much as you wanted, but when it was finished it was finished. And we had a terrific night. Dancing, no women there but we were dancing and these couple of Yanks about six foot four had hold of me and they're dancing round holding my legs off the floor. And we went away after that to our billet. Not quite sober, you believe me. This went on for four days. The strange thing that happened in Cairo, while you'd been in Italy for so long you lost completely your road sense. You'd been used to no traffic on the roads or traffic coming one way, and when you got into the city of Cairo the traffic was going up and down. You were standing on the roadside trying to get across petrified. I mean I remember myself, I would cross the road easy dodging the traffic, but at that time you couldn't, you seemed to have completely lost your road sense. It's one of those things that happens I suppose when you go to a place where nothing happens in that respect.