

Fred Welsh

Dartboard

The Red Cross parcel came in a brown cardboard box, just like a shoebox but much bigger. It was emptied out of the carton it had come out of a tea chest or a wooden carton which were kept by me and Camp. The Red Cross boxes were kept because you could pull them to pieces gently and you could get out sometimes wire clips that were very handy, you kept those in a little tin. The box we decided that we would make dartboards, and the carton was cut into strips the thickness of a modern dartboard. Tacked together again with the clips that had been taken out, the brass wire clips. And it was made yards long, strip after strip. Rolled together and rubbed with the soap that the Italians gave you that we could never get a lather with it at all. And this was rolled into the shape of a dartboard and then the wires that had come off the boxes, the tea chests, you went there and asked for the wire to make a dartboard. So he gave you wire to make a dartboard and you're back now to your wire clips. This was put on with your wire clips. Usually somebody knew chemistry could make colours that you painted, and the dartboard was painted and really rubbed again with this soap and put in to soak for days in cold water. And when it came out you had a dartboard. So you ran a league playing hut for hut, and the final would be played in front of the colonel and his family and the captains of Italians in the concert hall on the Sunday night. And the darts were all hand made and they were made like the wooden ones that you used to have in fairgrounds. And these were all whittled down and made into... Not very good the first ones, but by the time we'd got to the final darts were coming to be pretty good, and before the game was halfway through the colonel stood up and cancelled the game and said "There'll be no more darts, these men could use these to fight us", they were so good with them. But what happened the darts league went into a night job, you did that during the night. You came right through all the huts. You'd, if 24 was playing 54 they came through 25, 26, 27 until they got to 54. At the darts match we'd look out at the door and at the windows. This would take an hour so two till three and then you went to bed. Because there was nothing to get up for in a morning.