

**William Virr**  
**Weather in Italy**

The conditions at that time they were very bad in Italy. They are supposed to have been one of the worst times for about 20 years. The last period we was in the line, we was in for, I think it was six weeks before we came out and we were actually up there. I remember I went to sleep and woke up and was covered in snow. And we only had one blanket. Makes you wonder how we really survived, really, you know, nowadays you couldn't do it. But the weather was more or less atrocious in Italy for that period. They did say that at the time that it hadn't been like that for years. Really bad. Before 'Cock-up' we went up Calabritto Valley and we withdrew after we sustained quite a lot of casualties and we were ordered to withdraw back to some German trenches, probably a 100 yards back. And we'd passed these trenches on the way through. And we went back and we occupied these trenches and it was absolutely bucketing down was the rain, it was terrible and the trenches were half full of water. And we were sat in them. But, of course, the Germans knew exactly where these trenches were because they'd already been occupying them and then they withdrew. So they were mortaring us and they knew. If it hadn't have been for the fact that the weather was so bad and the mud was so deep the biggest part of the mortar bombs didn't explode, they were just, not duds but I think it was the softness of the ground that prevented them exploding, quite a lot of them. Although some did and we sustained some casualties. But we were just sat in water. You couldn't lift your head up owing to the mortaring so you had to keep down in the water, there was nothing you could do about it. So, when we came out eventually we were absolutely soaked. One of the only times we got some rum.