

Archives: Part I
by Mohammad Khan

Dear Quinn,

Many thanks for your letter about Orion.

We have kept our position at Fort O'Neil as instructed as we monitor the base intently from the forest. Not much activity on these parts, everything is dead. The grounds ahead and behind us lie gray and ruined from the fighting before. I haven't seen anything from the base yet but the stories the others tell terrify me.

It's been a silent few days. When it rains, the water mixes with the soot filling the mud and turning into a black goo.

To cut down on resources, we began rationing a quarter piece of bread each and a small can of water. Low on food, water, gasoline, even the rats have left us to die.

Makennen says we're almost ready to take on the base about 3 miles away. I won't be able to write again until afterwards.

I still talk with Old Henry and Henry still speaks of the days when there were people everywhere, free to wander, free to do anything. The others leave him alone to his archaic thoughts but I indulge him. Least I could do, he's the only one left who was there before it happened. The scorched outlines in the ground were those unlucky enough to be near ground zero. And the soot flying through the air are those from the incinerators. I can't imagine the freedom he saw. I could lie in my daydream forever until the stench of burning flesh reaches my nose and the smog of the incinerator from the base fills the sky.

Once, when Makennen and I stood post, knee deep in mud, keeping watch, I could hear from the base the hollow cheers mixed with the scream as people entered the incinerator. Do you think they realize their loss in humanity? How could they do this to each other?

The wind blows the soot off the scorched earth. Sometimes I wonder if we'll ever see the green patches Henry's seen. I still keep our photo with me at all times, it's the only proof that I was here. I hope my legacy doesn't become soot flying in the wind.

I haven't seen the sky in months. I switch to the South posts near Fort Aires in a few days after we take the base. I can't wait for the sunshine again.

Take Care,
Alonso