

**BENDIGO****July 29th, 1915**

Beginning from this day, I will set down as faithfully as possible, events that have been my good fortune or otherwise, to have participated in during my life in camp and abroad. As before mentioned, you must not expect too much in the way of "literary" effort. Any mistakes you will have to excuse, and anything you can not understand too clearly, pass over or help yourself to understand, by using what imagination you possess.

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The war had been the subject of discussion for many months. Who should go to it and who not. Of course, I, personally, agreed with everything that was brought forward. It saved such waste of time and breath, and as I had had my mind made up quite a long time as soon as an opportunity presented itself, well, they could argue amongst themselves, because I would be well away with my mates. The opportunity came sooner than I expected, and with a few more eager fellows, all thirsting for the blood of Hun, presented myself at the recruiting office.

I went before the Doctor and, whether he had any personal grudge against my family or self, was pronounced fit. After I had withstood his attacks, in the shape of punches in the chest and back and a few more places, too painful to mention, I felt as if I could have fought the whole German army. Well, I was at last a "mug" not a soldier. You receive that name later on. "Mug" is a distinguishing adjective, distinguishing between the two. I hope you can follow my remarks without any trouble.

The military Authorities were kind enough to grant me 14 days leave of absence. Thus I had that many days left of civilian life. Well I marched out of that office with my chest out and head up. Some guy.

When everyone heard the news, some remarked that it (the way) would soon be over now. Chilla Moore is going. Other remarks were passed, but not quite so nice. People to my face said I was a brave lad, get the brave, while behind my back it was "oh, he is too young" or "I wonder what on earth went wrong". Well I was too busy to worry much. Several things had to be done and I managed to get about half way through my affairs, then had to apply for a weeks extension, needless to say, this was granted, Thought at the time, the allies could not want to win the war in a hurry, This week soon passed and on

**AUGUST. 19<sup>th</sup>.**

I reported at the recruiting office to Capt Bain. This of course was the Depot, situated in Pall Mall. By joves, he was pleased to see me. He was all smiles. I wonder why? There were about 20 others standing in the office. All were conducted to a room upstairs. In the centre of this room someone had placed a table. On this was a Bible. The cap sat at the table, said a lot of things about duty, etc. Everyone said "I will" and then started to kiss the Bible as if it were

some long lost friend. We were then declared "Soldiers of the King". Must say, we did not look like it. Afraid none of us realized the full meaning of those words, or of the oath we had taken. That came later. I think somehow, even if we had have known, we would never have gone back on our word. Boys became men in a very short time. I guess I accepted whatever was in store for me with a light heart. One could not do anything else.

After taking the Oath we went down and assembled in front of the building. The Capt. informed us that we could take our choice, pay our own fare to the camp or walk. A few minutes heated argument soon decided what was to be done. Everyone was unanimous in the agreement that, the Government could go to the devil and we would walk. Afraid that with many of them it was a case of have to. We started the walking business and arrived at the camp about 3:30. Were greeted with the news, "Camp Isolated". We did not take this too well, especially as most had visions of being in town that evening or with our friends (admiring). That gate after we entered closed on us for three weeks.

As we marched through the camp, the lads greeted us with cries of "How will you have your eggs cooked" and a few more choice remarks. However, it was not very long before we were passing the same remarks to others. We marched to the Q.M. Store, and were issued with a few of the comforts of the camp, such as blankets, JAM, bread, Bully and a few other things (not too numerous to mention). After this tents were allotted us, and we proceeded to enjoy ourselves. The boards were hard; but being full of dash we survived our first night's rest in camp. Our stay in the camp lasted until about November, when we were drafted to Williamstown. I am afraid that while in the Bendigo camp, the citizens of the town spoiled us. We are all grateful to them for their kindness. It says a great deal for them, that on the other side, the lads all had a good word to say about Bendigo People. Being a training camp and situated in the middle of the northern districts, many men other than Bendigonians reaped the benefit of this goodwill. We have passed some bonny evenings, chatting about the times we had in this place.

Of course my opinion has changed somewhat since then. There were some fine Officers in the camp at this particular time. The following are a few whom every man has a good word to say about. They have since paid the supreme sacrifice, but they will always be remembered but those who knew them, as men. The Camp Commandant, Major.R.O.Henderson, Lieut. Billy. Maxwell, Hughie McColl, Fred Morrison and many more whom I have forgotten for the present. These fellows were unselfish in their efforts to make the life a little easier for the men under them, and not as many would have liked to do, just make it miserable for themselves and others too. On the other side, it is said these chaps were the same to all who came in contact with them.

### **NOVEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

At present we are know as the 14/7 Reinf. 7<sup>th</sup> Batt. We are leaving this camp today. We marched to the Town Hall and partook of a banquet, provided by the Citizens of Bendigo. After the usual old men speeches had been made, and not forgetting the eatables that had to be consumed, we marched to the Railway Station.

On the way I saw Evie & Lucy Strahan. Lucy was crying and Evie looked as if she would not need much urging. The station platform was crowded. Everyone seemed to be shaking hands with me at once. Did not think that I was so well known in the town. Anyhow, we steamed off at last. The journey down was not interesting. The same old fences, etc. We are arrived at Williamstown about 3:30. Went into the city that evening

### **WILLIAMSTOWN**

We are to undergo a course of musketry at this camp. It is to last for a fortnight. We were transferred from here to Broadmeadows. Nothing exciting happened whilst here. I have not any dates of anything that happened relating to movement prior to this or after, but just what occurred while in these camps. Went through the usual routine viz, being told off in company's and given tents. This turned out to be a very decent camp, one could get plenty of leave to town and if not obtainable managed to get French leave. The police were very nice fellows. In fact they had to be. It was in this camp that 39,999 men went on strike. The reason for it being that the food was rather rough, leave at the time was scarce and drill opposite. The remaining one of the men namely Pte Nivette, refused to strike. This chap afterwards gained a commission. Guess he deserved it. You can imagine the kind of man he would be. One tat could stick to his side of the question on the face of 39,999 others was pretty game. He turned out a fine fellow on the other side. I have heard since that he died in America.

### **DECEMBER. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

I will skip all the things that occurred whilst in the camp, because they were mostly trips to town and other places, with nothing interesting attached to them. We went on our final leave on this day. Were allowed 10 days in which to say good-bye and a lot more things. We had to be inoculated before leaving and I think that I must have got my own dose and someone else's' too. Afraid I did not thing much of it.

I spent my final leave in Bendigo. I had the last Sundays dinner at Uncle Franks. He gave me a heap of good advice, which by the way came in handy, also a pipe. Had this for many months; but eventually the bowl dropped off in the mud and that ended the pipe. On Monday morning I sad good bye to all the folk at the Station. Dad wished me the best of luck and I guess I would have gone back on my word when he did; but it was no use, the job had to be done. I managed to get away from him, and I could see the dear old fellow waving his hat for quite

some considerable time. I am sure he never mentioned anything. It was a good sight to see him and one that I will never forget. Suppose there were many another like me.

On the Station platform I met W.Coffey and we journeyed down together. As the train moved away from the platform, everyone tried to shake hands with me at once. At last we were well away and viewing the last of Bendigo. I think that Coffey and I looked very poor specimens of Soldiers for fighting purposes. To speak for myself I felt very downhearted. I do not remember thinking of anyone in particular. Sometimes my thoughts would go to dad and different people I had met. I must confess that I thought mostly about an evening that was held at Uncle Franks. One of the best and nicest girls had ever met happened to be there and she would and she would persist on drifting across my train of thought. I did not know why, because I had not seen her very much; but now of course I do. Something seemed to impress me with the fact that she and I would meet again. I seemed to know that I would be spared to come back home again. I never lost that faith and I think that Minnie was the cause of me holding to it. The memory of that evening and my girls face saved me from many a temptation, and helped me to come back clean in mind and body. From the day I left Bendigo I never ceased to think of her, and made a quiet vow to myself that if ever I did come back, the man who got in first from me would have to be good. Guess I did not realize that I would ever see the fulfillment of my vow.

Well Coffey and I grew tired of our thoughts and decided to speak to another. We started a conversation; but it was of short duration. Something like this:-

"How long do you think it will be before we see Bendigo again, Chilla?"

"I dunno Bill'.

Silence for about 20 miles.

Then a song rendered on the form of a duet.

"Take me back, Oh wont you take me back, to dear old Bendigo". Sung once.

More silence for another 20 miles, then question No 1 repeated. No answer. Began to become a little more cheerful. Train entered Kyneton. Bought some sausages and potatoes. As there was no room inside the café to eat them, we sat down on the platform. The train started and Bill thinking that he would cheer me up or keep me in the cheerful mood I happened to be in at the time sat opposite and said nothing. I suppose that we could not answer the question referred to above, so we sat and thought about it. The way we maintained that silence would have made the Parson's Parrot look silly. I was very glad when we reached town.

The train went through to Broadmeadows.

I think that a bigger crowd of babies were never seen to equal the crowd that slighted from that train. However, it did not take us long to get busy and become cheerful again. We now had to make the best of it and it was no use worrying over things. We all rose to the occasion by breaking camp that evening. I went out to Ella's place and had my head shaved at a barbers before arriving. Guess I looked queer. Well this ends my connection with Bendigo. I had some good times there; but now I have to try and forget that it ever existed. Of course I will remember Miss. Welch. Might be able to find an excuse to drop her a letter. Live

in hopes and die on despair caper not for me. I and now keeping a Diary; and I think that it will be short and sweet.

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**BROADMEADOWS CAMP**

**4<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1916.**

We are leaving a lecture today. "How to win the War"  
Temperature 102° in the shade. I cannot find any. After learning all the points about the above I was picked for guard. Had to go down to Port Melbourne. The "Afric" was sailing. Slept on the pier all night, was nice and cold, managed to survive it.

**WEDNESDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>.**

Reveille 8 a.m. I and some others on guard over pier and boat. The troops came down early and embarked. The barriers were opened at 12 o'clock. I and a girl were the first to the boat. Dropped my rifle and took her hand and away we went. Had to meet her that night for being such a good fellow; but never turned up. Returned to camp about 4.p.m. Went to Skating rink.

**THURSDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>.**

Very strenuous time at drill. Had another taste of inoculation. Then the Co., had its photo taken. In the evening Bill Buchan and I went to the Skating Rink. I was rather unlucky. Whilst trying to do a trick managed to fall and had to be carried off the rink. Felt very ill all the evening. Needless to say, we were in camp early for once. I should have met that girl and this would not have happened. Bill still kept going. He never falls or tries. Something like Dunn the Tec. Does not sleep. I had a bad night.

**FRIDAY. 7<sup>th</sup>**

I had a reveille of my own. Ted Armstrong answered my name and the lad stayed on the floor. Went on Parade this afternoon. Feel much better. Lectures on landscapes. The only part that interested me was where there any MP's on it? Things are serious, because i have not a pass for tonight. Went out. Met a nice girl. The said girl gave me her brooch for a Souvenir. Some girl. Home late.

**SATURDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Thudded again. Guard. Slipped them up and went to the ring again. Had tea at the Café Canton. Did not fall at the rink and managed to do the trick I was trying when I fell last time. From there we went to St. Kilda and Luna Park. Arrived in Camp at 12:30. The MP's we all asleep then.

**SUNDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Church parade. The sermon was about drink. The parade informed us we would die drinking. He was a very cheerful king of cuss. We all came to the conclusion that if we did not suffer a worse death than that it would be worth while caving in. Went out to Ella's place in the afternoon. After tea, I went to, well I just went and arrived in a camp late as usual. I am having a good time and life is not so bad after all.

**MONDAY. 10<sup>th</sup>**

Issued with web equipment. There is the usual furphy flying about that we will soon be going abroad. I will be glad. This afternoon we knocked off work to lump coal. That is no drill. All men to stay in and put their equipment together. I felt like pitching mine somewhere. Staying in camp tonight. Had the oil there is to be a roll call. Feels strange.

**TUESDAY, 11<sup>th</sup>**

Extended order drill. Twas very extended. Too long to be pleasant. In the Afternoon that fool Walters picked me for guard. I will murder that man yet. Fed up with the guard business. 6a.m to 6p.m. Heavens.

**WEDNESDAY. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Did not murder Walters. Changed my mind and did the guard. We tried to put the Provo Sergeant in the clink but he would not bite. Joel Plym-Corporal of the guard, and poor little me standing in the cold. This Sergeant gave me fits. Anyhow in about two seconds he was surrounded. I believe that man left guards alone in the future.

**THURSDAY. 13<sup>th</sup>**

Treated to another lecture. All managed to get leave and went into town. The crowd became very merry. I brought them home. When the train was slowing down at Broadmeadows, I under the impression it had stopped. The platform was hard.

**FRIDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

Same old routine drill all day then into town. We are beginning to wish that we were sailing. I received my regimental number today, From now on I am known as **4539**. Feel like a convict.

**SATURDAY. 15<sup>th</sup>**

A washing parade was held today. All men who could not wash themselves decently had to attend. I was on it. Went out to Ellas place and stayed to tea.

Took Win and Cis to the Theatre. Arrived at Camp 11:30 tired but happy. The savaloy merchant gave me enough of these to feed the tent full of hungry men waiting till I came back. He was a good fellow; because I had no money. The theatre ruined me. Girls and Chocs.

### **SUNDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Nothing much doing today. I am going to Ella's place again, for the weekend. Arrived there, and after tea I had to go to Church, It was decent; but one gets fed up with that. Came back to Ella's. Had supper then off to camp.

### **MONDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Had a very easy day. Ted and I put the gloves on. He was too good for me. But we enjoyed the bout. Up to the shower. Made up my mind to stay in. Went to be Happy.

### **TUESDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

Great stunt today. We gave to go on a route march. Just a matter of 20 miles. I have been cursing everyone whom I thought could be responsible for it, when I arrived back in camp, my feet were covered with blisters. Bathed them. Swore at everyone that got in my way. The army has gone down in my estimation. Naturally I did not go to the rink. Slept soundly and rose as fresh as a lark. I don't think.

### **WEDNESDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Some excitement. We are all out on strike. All but one poor man. He does not want anything. We want more beer, I mean tea; also food and leave. Had to argue the point for two hours. Eventually they gave in. Ted O'Brien was out spokesman. Nivett did not strike. He would have made 40,000 if he has come with us. As it was we only mustered 39,999.

### **THURSDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

Yesterday's doings still the topic of conversation. Came in from jerks. Parade and bayonet exercises all the morning. The same blessed game in the afternoon. Went to the Bijou in the evening. A little Better.

### **FRIDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

More bathing and bayonet exercises to follow. The bathing suited me and a lot of pleading with out O.O. "Dick" Wright resulted in my staying in from the more strenuous play. I had the laugh on the mob. In the evening I stayed in again. Bill

Buohan and Coffey went out. I was lucky. They had a midnight roll call. I made their beds up; but old Dick was too shrewd. They were the first things he looked at. The wanderers were caught. As usual I turned up trumps.

### **SATURDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

The other fellows have gone out to jerks. My morning off. If they catch me I will be off properly. Will be going to the Aquarium and from there to Alphington. I am in the predicament known as "temporary embarrassment" or in plain words "broke". However the Gods will smile again.

### **SUNDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Arrived back from Ella's last night. Informed that I had been detailed for City Pioquet. Gave a chap 2/6 to take my place. The gods smiled yesterday. St Kilda.

### **MONDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

Survived a strenuous day at drill. Off to town. Met a couple of nice girls. Spent most the evening with them. This has to be brief.

### **TUESDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Drill. Managed to get two days leave. Brother coming from Western Australia. O.C. called me a liar; but gave the leave. Went to see Aunt Addie & Kate. Back to camp, the out to Ella's place. Slept there. Better than those boards.

### **WEDNESDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Camp back to camp this evening. Have to go on Pioquet. I cannot get out of this lot. Have been issued with all out things. It will be out last day in Aussie tomorrow.

### **THURSDAY. 27<sup>th</sup>**

The O.C. issued instruction that no man was to leave camp. Then said that if he caught anyone in or rather heard if anyone staying in, there would be the dickens to play on the boat. Needless to add there was not a soul left in camp. I went out to Ella's. Said good-bye to Cis & Frank. She came to the station. Arrived in camp. Reville 3:30. I cannot sleep.

### **FRIDAY. 25<sup>th</sup> At Sea.**

Breakfast. On parade ground. We are to go today. Praise the Lord. Beginning to get a little doubtful of the job now. Suppose I will come back safely. It rained all the way down to the boat. I was wet through when we arrived. Of course there were many others in the same state. On board. Had to serve dinner. Managed to



serve it; and left none for myself. All up on deck. There is some crowd on the pier. At last we are off. T'is a dull sight and not very cheering to see people crying and looking as if the world were going to swallow us all. Had a very decent trip down the bay. Have passed through the heads. No chance of getting back now. Slept in hammock. Some fun trying to get in.

### **SATURDAY. 29<sup>th</sup>**

I do not feel to clever. It was good fun trying to get into this confounded hammock last night but it is rather awkward trying to get out. Reville has sounded and in more places than one. My stomach seems to be where I thought my throat was. I think I am going to be ill. Managed to crawl up on deck. My friends of yesterday do not want to take me to their bosoms. They are all standing in an attitude of expectation. Seem to be in a good position on the rails. Everyone asking me how I feel. Just the thing. Well I would have been only some ass thought that he was a good soldier when he came on board, and must find out that he isn't when I came up the stairs. It is all over, the side. I am having my meals on deck for a few weeks. I was only ill for one little half hour. Feel good oh Now, Slept up on deck. No more hammocks for me.

### **SUNDAY. 30<sup>th</sup>**

Feeling it. Hopped below for some breakfast. Had a kind word for the fellows who were still ready to die. Told one ohap life was not so dull after all. He came down to breakfast with me; but did not stay very long. Yesterday I did not give a damn where we ere; but someone said we are 150 miles south of the coast. I do not mind now. Peculiar. Cheq. Hughes making an impression on the ignorant. Me included. His knowledge of Geography is rough; but we are in that mood that we will stand anything. All good friends. I wonder how long it will last.

### **MONDAY. 31<sup>st</sup>**

Am beginning to get me sea legs. They help a concert this evening. All artists were counted out. Went to bed happy. About 3. the "Themi" shipped some sea. I as usual happened to be where it came. Had to go down below. My language pretty nice. Did not realize that I was so well versed in swearing. Made some of the chaps blush.

### **FEBRUARY. TUESDAY. 1<sup>st</sup>**

We are going round Cape Lewin. Some going too; but mostly to the arde of the boat. Land about 40 miles away. Sea very rough. Do not feel to well. Had to go on top deck to drill. Very nice trying to keep your balance, also your meal and drill at the same time. Played cards in the evening

**WEDNESDAY. 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Viewing the last of Australia, Wonder when we shall see this part of the coast again. Everyone looking as if they had lost something. Ted Armstrongs birthday. Having a game of cards and a tin of pineapple to celebrate it. Rather a tame celebration.

**THURSDAY. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Have reached the Indian Ocean. This happens to be very calm. Am quite a good sailor in this kind of water. Shoals of flying fish rising all the time. Have been up on the bow deck all day, watching the different species of fish pass the boat.

**FRIDAY. 4<sup>th</sup>**

Medical examination. Everything O.K. After this we did 1½ hours drill. It helps to keep one fit. The time is starting to drag. This is not quite so lively as I thought it would be. There is simply nothing happening. Same old sea.

**SATURDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Had an argument about tattooing. Ended up in the while five of us going down and having it done. Was very painful while it lasted. I nearly fainted; but managed to stick it and one a bet I had with Bill Coffey. Came up and found that I had been licked for guard. Went on at 10 o'clock until 10 the next morning. No sleep and came off very tired. Felt like going to sleep more than once; bit it would never have done. We might have run over someone. They seem to like me for guard. Must think I am very conscientious.

**SUNDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>**

There is the devil to play. That ' ' ' ' ' Malters has placed me on pioquet and I have just come off guard. He must think I am a damn good soldier. To disgusted to write.

**MONDAY. 7<sup>th</sup>**

Still on pioquet. Learnt that the scheme is to do a guard then a pioquet. It will not come around to often. The Hun will be watched carefully by me. I am getting enough practice. Watched the boxing. Henery Lewis won his contest. Great man now. I will man the little squib one of these days.

**TUESDAY. 8<sup>th</sup>**

We have started sports. When I say we, I mean the whole ship. The heats of the foot races were ran off out O.C. won his. Tug-o-war won by our Co., Ted Strahan won the boxing. Guess he can go some. I beat them all to the tea table.

**WEDNESDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Drill this morning. Shower at 2 o'clock. Was a good boy and studied shorthand. Nearing the equator. Hope to be in Colombo by Friday. 14/7 won final tug-o-war. Some coy this 14/7.

**THURSDAY. 10<sup>th</sup>**

A holiday has been declared so that everyone can take part in sports. They are proving very interesting. Every description of game has been indulged in. Two vessels have passed. These are the first we have seen since leaving Australia. The chaps on board are signaling to them. The finals in the boxing and wrestling to be decided tonight. We pass over Equator about 4. o'clock tomorrow morning, it is beginning to get very hot. Will be glad when over.

**FRIDAY. 11<sup>th</sup>**

Have been playing 500 most of the day. Very little of interest occurred. Heard a furphy that we are going to Alexandra. So soon too.

**SATURDAY. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Horace Westaways birthday. 25 years old today. It is hot passing Ceylon. The island looks beautiful. Can see what everyone says is Liptons tea plantations. They extend right along the coast. Nearing Colombo. Looks very pretty in the distance. The natives are sailing around in their boats. Expect to see more of this place tomorrow. Off to bunk now.

**SUNDAY. 13<sup>th</sup>**

We entered the harbour last evening. This morning we were awakened by the niggers shouting and climbing all over the boat. A number of bargers have come alongside. We are going ashore in these. We had to be ready by 10 o'clock. About 400 of us went in the first batch. These boats had been used to bring the coal to ours and we had to get in the jolly of things. The stench was something frightful. I felt decidedly ill. However, we arrived at the pier. Formed up and marched through the main street to barracks. What I saw of the place was very pretty. The streets are covered with some liquid that gives forth a peculiar smell not to pleasant. Most of the buildings seemed to be built on modern plane. Mostly of red brick colour. Tiled roofs and Palm trees growing everywhere made a very pretty scene.

The people I noticed seemed to be the poorest specimens of humanity I had ever seen. They formed an ugly contrast to their beautiful city. Eventually we arrived at the barracks. Here we sampled fruit of all descriptions. When I bought a great stalk of bananas for 6c I thought of what I would have to pay for them in Aussie. There were about 50 on the stalk I had. The barracks were full of traders. They seem to have a license to trade in there. Every class of goods you could think of were offered for sale. Needless to add, we did not buy any. I saw some wonderful silk; but as finds were low I just had to admire it and pass on. We had dinner here and spent the afternoon speaking to men who were on their way back home. Some of them looked as if they would be lucky to reach there. They gave us a fair idea of what we were getting into. Seemed to think it would be all over before we got there.

About 5 o'clock we formed up and marched back to the boat. Some of the things I saw on that march to the barracks and back are too horrible to mention. I for one will not be sorry to get away from it. Colombo is a beautiful place; but all the beauty seems to lie in nature's work. The people seem like animals.

### **MONDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

The boat is crowded with niggers. They have been coaling the boat all night and will be doing so until 4. Most of them are Singalese. Some are very well educated. One lad could speak about three languages. Not bad for a nigger who coals a boat. We are told that this is the fastest coaling station in the world. To look at the men working I can quite believe it. There is one continual stream pouring in to the boat. They hand the bags to one another, chanting some dirge all the time. The only sense I could get out of their song was the one thing, ta-ra-boom-da-a. Seems a great song to work to. There is one fellow going to dive from one side of the boat and swim under her and come up on the other. He is getting the best sum of 2/- for doing it. I wonder if the man who gave it to him would take the same risk at that price. He did the trick and looked pretty scared when he came up. Not for mine. We are leaving this evening and you think that everyone will be satisfied to go. Hope I can see this place again.

### **TUESDAY. 15<sup>th</sup>**

Left Colombo last night 7.30. It is decent on the sea. We are getting rid of that beastly smell the nigs left behind them. The sailors are washing the boat down. I have been in the bow of the boat most of the day. Everyone is very quiet, I am busy getting the taste of fruit out of my mouth.

### **WEDNESDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Drill this afternoon. Presentation of prizes in connection with sports. A euchre tournament tonight I am to play with Corporal Scott. Only lasted one game. Corporal Plym and Newgate were the better players.

**THURSDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Played cards this morning. While at drill this afternoon the alarm was sounded. Three blasts on the boat whistle. By joves it frightened the wits out of us. A boat had been sighted and apparently they used it as a means of alarm. We all rushed below and placed our life belts on. Then lined the decks and awaited the worst; nothing happened. Just as well the water looked very cold. There are some men on this boat who cannot help being brave when nothing is going to happen.

**FRIDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

Sighted another boat this morning. There was not n alarm. Found out that the "Them" is 11,400 tons and sister ship to the "Demosthenes" same weight. A few boxing contests were held during the evening. Nearing Red Sea.

**SATURDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Washing day for me. Have decided that I will have a clean up. Finished about 11 o'clock and I am very glad that it is over. That is a woman's game. Expect to see land today. Sighted the island of Socatra about 3 this morning. As exhibition is to be given by the Turkish Delight Band, This is composed of the sailors on the boat. Passed Off. No comments.

**SUNDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

A number f porpoise swimming around the boat. They leap right out of the water and seem to have no trouble to keep up with the old ship. Church parade today. The padre put it over on us. Forgot what he said. Know I was not sorry when he had finished.

**MONDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

The "Marathon" passed on its way with troops for Persia. That is the furphy that was sent around. I suppose that it is right. We are lying off Aden, We were going to call in there; but plans have been altered. Can see nothing but a long stretch of desert country. Passed the Island of Perim of British fame as a stronghold. People are signaling our boat. Entrance to Rea Sea. Can see a few of our Battleships.

**TUESDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Have sighted the 12 Apostles; These are a group of rocks so names after the Apostles. Lectures on how to put it over on the Hun. Lieut. Deegan the Speaker. Guess it is a pity he ever left home. We call him "Jerry". Eight vessels have passed us today. Getting quite lively.

**WEDNESDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Two Oil boats passed us. At least some fellow said that s what they are, and having no authority on which I can dispute him, will have to take his words that they are so. Had a kit inspection. Mine did not take too much time. Ted Strahan boxed the sailor's champion and gave him a doing. Passed a man-o-war. Expect to disembark about Saturday.

**THURSDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

On Pioquet. Tomorrow we expect to be in Port Suez. The ships co. are giving a farewell concert tonight. The affair was a great success. Bought some souvenirs. One of their songs.

**FRIDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Entered the Gulf of Suez this morning. Land on both sides. Looks very pretty. Suppose it must as we have not seen any for some considerable time. Arrived at Suez 5.p.m. Anchored outside the Harbour. The port officials came on board. They had some nigs rowing their boat. They look as bad as those we have left behind at Colombo.

**SATURDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Can see the harbour plainly. It is not so pretty a scene as Colombo seems to be a great number of vessels here. A few battleships. These have nets all around them. I think they are what are called "Torpedo Nets" have lost all my money at two up and crown & another. Rather a bad state to go on shore like this. Something will have to be done. Lent Westley 1/-. He won £8/-, . Everything is lovely.

**SUNDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Church service. Spent the greater part of the say chatting to the Niggers. We are to disembark tomorrow. I for one will be very sorry to leave the vessel. It has been a bonny trip up to date. Often wonder whether it will continue to be so. Cannot get to sleep for the noise that everyone is making. Have to join in, Most of the fellows are busy packing their kits.

**MONDAY. 28<sup>th</sup>**

Confusion everywhere. Orders are being given at the rate of 25 to the second. We are going off. The noise reminds me of the sale yards. Everyone speaking at once. Rumor has it we are bound for Cairo. After waiting about all day, we entered the train at 5.p.m. We have something like 190 mls to go. Have had some good fun with the niggers while waiting for the train to go. We are off at last. This journey occupied 9 hrs and we were not sorry to see the last of the

After an all night journey, we have arrived at some station. We have to march from here to the Aerodrome Camp at Heliopolis. When the whole bunch had disembarked some R.S.M. took charge. He told us off properly. I was not sorry when we came in sight of the camp. Had our breakfast about 9. Recovered sufficiently to go and have a look at Heliopolis. After seeing what we could of the town, we came back to the camp. Were greeted with the news that drill was on the cards for the afternoon. We were a sorry looking lot when they had finished with us. My feet are all blistered. Damn' ' ' ' ' '

Drill again. In the afternoon we went on a tour of Cairo. Hired a guide. He happened to be the biggest liar in Egypt. Saw the Blue Mosque. This was built in 1166 A.D. The Blue Glass was put in 1357 A.D. Passed through the gate of Zualuir. Went to Native Bazaar. Saw the Tomb of Sultan pf Turkey. This is not the present Sultan. His old dad. Then went to the Silk Bazaar. By joves the girls would be in their glory if they could get loose in her for a while. Cannot describe this. T'is too beautiful for description. Feeling rather fatigued, we adjourned to the

nearest café. Then back to camp. We were satisfied with our days outing, even if the guide wanted more than he earned.

### **SUNDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Church Service. After this the rest went out. I did not feel too well, so stayed in and wrote letters. Went for a walk about the camp. Some size.

### **MONDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>**

Nothing special happened today only of course, they did not forget the 14/7 had to drill. I am beginning to hate the sound of that word. Very tired. Off to bed.

### **TUESDAY. 7<sup>th</sup>**

Easy day. We were allowed off half an hour earlier on account of doing our drill well enough so suit the chap who is instructing us. We are jolly thankful for small mercies now.

### **WEDNESDAY. 8<sup>th</sup>**

Have to go on guard today. Have finished two hours. Very hot and I am tired of it already. On again at present. The nights are just the opposite to the days here. It is getting quite chilly. Will not be sorry when this is finished. Wish I were in Bendigo again.

### **THURSDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Relieved from guard at 9. o'clock. Thank Heaven. Heard that we have not to drill this afternoon. Thank Heaven again. This is pay-day. The princely sum of 10.piastras has been given me. About 10/-. Gee I can have a good time with that. Am off to Heliopolis to spend it. Went and had a look at the flios and then back to camp. They are some swank with their pictures here. When you go and have a drink, you get moving pictures at the same time. You get them whether or no. Very tired.

### **FRIDAY. 10<sup>th</sup>**

Battalion drill all day. By joves they must mean to murder us. Guess I'm a stickar. When they kill me the rest will not be far behind. Went into Heliopolis and bought some silk.

### **SATURDAY. 11<sup>th</sup>**

Have finished the drill part of the performance. There is to be one more to our liking. We are going to the "Kursaal Theatre". This was very decent. One act especially by Madame Lisandre. This lady was acting at the Bijou in Melbourne. She poses in different scenes and the effort is made up with the light that is



thrown on her. She did not have many clothes on; but that did not matter. Had tea in town and then back to CAMP.

### **SUNDAY. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Went to the Pyramids. Enjoyed it. Took 20 minutes to climb to the top. Went inside and saw the various tombs supposed to be where they buried all the ancient Egyptian Kings. Had to take our boots off to go in. The passages are worn as smooth as glass, where thousands have trodden in their bare tootsies. Had a look at the Sphinx, Catacombs they are underground burial places. Pharaohs tomb and then made a Gypo give us a ride on his donkey. Poor Donkey.

### **MONDAY. 13<sup>th</sup>**

Same old routine. Went into Heliopolis and bought knife. Buo and I have one each. The man who sold them to us said they were the only two of their kind in Egypt. We believed him. Well from Australia. No one loves me. I'm awful happy. Everyone reading letters except me. I am going for a stroll. Life is a bore after all.

### **TUESDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

I did not go to the town. Off to the mess-room to write letters. If people will not write me any, I will coax them. Then I am going to sleep to get rid of this horrible lonely feeling.

### **WEDNESDAY. 15<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture on outpost duty. Frank Wells is the chap giving this Lecture. What he does not know and what we will learn from him, will fill a good sized book. Searching for brown paper to send some silk home in. No one has any. Damn and few more nice words as well.

### **THURSDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Issued with rifles today. I must look extra well when I have a rifle in my hand. Have been picked for escort. They will make an M.P out of me if I am not careful. Nice job. Taking the prisoners to the different clinks. Rise at 5 in the morning to do so. Ted and Frank have not been chosen, Rotten looking soldiers.

### **FRIDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Left the camp at 7 this morning. By train to Cairo. Stayed there about 1 hour. Brought the birds back to Zetour and Heliopolis. They were nice specimens. Arrived back in time for boxing. Percy Seckold was knocked out. We were all sorry to seem him beaten. Nice fellow. So am I, The band played a few times and we went straight to bed.

**SATURDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

The 14/7 has been broken up. That is to say, one half have detailed to go to France, and the other to stay in Egypt. I am with the latter half. Nothing doing today. We are all trying to realize that most of our mates have been taken from us.

**SUNDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

I do not feel too well. Last night it rained. We have since heard that rain only occurs in these parts about once every six months. I think that the chap up top gave them six years supply at the one time. I was sleeping on the floor of the hut. The rain came. The huts are built of cane and quite nice for summer sleeping; but will not stop the rain. This lot came on and in about five minutes the place was flooded. It was pouring over the ground, depth about two inches. Chas did not move until the level rose to four. I had to get up then. Managed to get wet though. Everything we had was the same. This morning I have a severe cold. Feel very oncus.

**MONDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

I have caught something this time. Off to the Chemists. Have to go to bed. Paid today. Must get up. Went down to the village about bought some mixture. Could not sleep. Coughed all night. Everyone cursing me. Nice lot of boys that left Australia with me. They seem to have no trouble to express their opinions.

**TUESDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

No better. Off to the Rifle Range. Did very well. Do not feel any better. Influenza set in. Westaway rubbed my chest and acted the mother generally. Also the ass. Hope to be myself on the morning. Think I must be some other fellow now. Feel very clever. I could die. Rumor has it we are to go to the Range again tomorrow.

**WEDNESDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Feeling well. Off to Range. Came back at 3 o'clock. Cleaned rifles. Horace gave me another rub down. Will be dead tomorrow.

**THURSDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

I called on the Doc this morning. Very nice man. Gave me some medicine also some work. Some of these M.O's would insist upon giving man medicine & duty if he had one leg in ' ' ' '. I took a holiday and the medicine. Don't not know what became of the duty, feel much better. That is the first sick parade I have been on.

**FRIDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

I must be better. I am informed that the Corp would take it as a favor if I would report for guard. I do not favor the proposal. Bill Walker trying to convince me that I am a living picture of health. Strange to say I cannot agree with him, had been given the job as Orderly to the guard. I have to wash up the mess tins and get the food. Feel ever so much better now. Concert tonight. I will be there.

**SATURDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Concert was off. So am I. We have a holiday. Went into town, I bought a bed. Am not taking any more risk Hughie might turn the wrong tap on again.

**SUNDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Church parade. No leave to be granted today. Some furphy flying about that we are going to leave this camp. Guess we will be very sorry to part with all the nice Officers in it. Especially one dear man. Lizzie he is called. One of the worst type of S.M. you could meet. Made the life pretty rough for us and we do not forgive that kind of thing easily. Look out I'm getting snaky.

**MONDAY. 27<sup>th</sup>**

Had to mount guard until 2 o'clock. The Band then relieves us. Rumor has is we are bound for Cairo to act as City Picquet. The Coy is getting a good job at last. Everyone bustling about preparing for the move. Will be a decided change from here.

**TUESDAY. 28<sup>th</sup>**

We left the Aerodrome camp at 6.30 this morning. Arrived at Cairo about 12. Our section has been detailed as No. 8 Special. Duty commences at 6.15 p.m. Visited the Soldiers Home during the afternoon. There was a Skating Rink (roller) But we did not like the look of it, and stayed off. Do not like this place. There are few Arab and Turkish prisoners on the cells. Rum looking chaps.

**WEDNESDAY. 29<sup>th</sup>**

Granted leave. Off to Cairo. It is very hot. Has a look at the various sights. Some sights too most of them. The gardens were the best. One could get cool in there. Became tired of wandering about and arrived in cam and 4.30. Tea and dress for Picquet. Left 6.15 and patrolled the same street for 4 hours. Some rotten sights in the city at this time of night.

**THURSDAY. 30<sup>th</sup>**

Nothing to do until 6 o'clock. Off again into the City. On the same Beat. A hawker who was pushing a load of dates caused us some amusement. The wheel came off his barrow and the dates were scattered about. We helped him pick them up also helped ourselves to as many as we could stow away. He was profuse in his thanks. So were we. Sat down in the gutter, in the gutter mind; ate the dates. Then a little urchin selling peanuts made friends with us. Helped him get rid of the load he was carrying. He recited the whole horrible story of a peanut vendor's life. We were very attentive just as long as the peanuts held out. Poor Beggar drew a blank. We had no money to give away. When he found this out he seemed to notify all his relations in some wireless means, and soon we had half Cairo around us; but the Picquet you know, knows no fear. They abused us and we just strolled down the road to the Camp.

**FRIDAY. 31<sup>st</sup>**

We are leaving Kasr-er-nil barracks today. This was not such a bad place after all. Have to go to Aerodrome camp again. Arrived there hot, tired and dusty in time to learn that we were to be broken up once more. We have all been separated. I'm in the 57<sup>th</sup> Batt now. Most of the others have gone to the ?? (page 30 Friday 31<sup>st</sup>) Had to sleep out in the parade ground all night. Off to some place tomorrow.

**APRIL  
Saturday. 1<sup>st</sup>**

Marched to Zetoun Railway station this morning. Boarded train. The train in question is composed of long flat trucking. We traveled at the rate of 100 miles as far as Tel-el-keber. It might not have been so fast; but the way those trucks sway about made me think it was. Altered our opinion of the Gypos railways. The country we passed through was I think the irrigated area. Each side of the railway there was nothing but lines of date palms. The land was sown with all kinds of great foods. Seemed rather a contrast to what we had been used to. We arrived at Tel-el-keber. Disembarked then someone found that we had no right to do so. On the train again and arrived at a place named Fairy Post. We marched from here to the camp. It was a few days before we arrived here that the ???? (page 30 Saturday 1<sup>st</sup>) from Tel-el-keber across the desert to this place occurred. Do not think the chaps who were on that will forget it. I meet Arthur Strahan here. He took a few of us into his tent. They are not to nice here by the reports we have heard.

**SUNDAY. 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Went to Church. Afterwards we drew our day's rations. Also water. Had a look around camp. Cannot see anything but sand, flies, dirty soldiers and niggers.

Guess the nigs are beyond description. Some of the boys are too. Strolled down to the canal. We are allowed to swim in this. Seems a strong current.

### **MONDAY. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Swimming parade. This is something like it. A chap will be able to keep clean. Our first drill here today. By joves it was some drill. Were issued with cork helmets. Then as usual I was picked for guard. The helmet did it. I always do look nice. Two hours of guard finished.

### **TUESDAY. 4<sup>th</sup>**

Six hours guard gone. Two to go. Rations very light. They say this is a training camp. Aerodrome was awful. It was a training camp too. Getting very hot. Have come off guard. We have to sleep out in the open as there are no tents for the "new" men. I think I will have no difficulty about going to sleep.

### **WEDNESDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Parade. Dinner. I wish these flies would leave me have mine. Greedy things. Hot as ' ' ' ' Furphy flying around about that we are going to France. Hope it is not true.

### **THURSDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>**

Swimming parade, breakfast. Drill, half holiday. Been having a chat with Gallipoli chaps that are here. They do not seem to think too much of the business. Guess they should have a fair idea whether it is the game it is cracked up to be or not. We are going to move to some place again. The old heads say we will get used to it.

### **FRIDAY. 7<sup>th</sup>**

Issued with Rifles. Rifle exercise all day. Some exercise too. Drill hours have been altered. Start at 4 in the afternoon so that we will be able to miss the heat. Am a carpenter now, or at least have got a job helping him. He is doing very little work and I am helping him do it.

### **SATURDAY. 8<sup>th</sup>**

Drill again. Went for a swim this afternoon. Had to do a night stunt. We have been walking all over the place. Do not know what on earth for. I am too tired. Off to bed.

**SUNDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Church. Swimming. Issue of tobacco and cigs. Also issued with furphy about Mesopotamia. Evidently the French one would not go down, so they are trying this. Well, anywhere will do me.

**MONDAY. 10<sup>th</sup>**

Digging trenches. Good fun. As fast as we throw the sand out of the trench, it falls in again. Knocked off and went down to the Canal for a swim. Had dinner. When we arrived back at our lovely trenches, we found that the whole lot had fallen in. Rather rough on us.

**TUESDAY. 11<sup>th</sup>**

Drill. Damn. Dig trenches. Lecture on how to do it. The Lecturer did it with a book. We buried the makers' name.

**WEDNESDAY. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Trench digging to break the monotony of the usual routine. Issued with slacks, lovely things. Examined by medical officer. Pronounced fit for Active Service. Things are not bad after all.

**THURSDAY. 13<sup>th</sup>**

Sand storm yesterday. Rather a large amount of dust about today. Still digging trenches. I am thinking of committing suicide. This is blessed agony. I would only. I think it might be a little warmer in the other place than here. Back to the tents. Everything covered with dust. Fairy Post is a rotten place. Some of my friends do look nice cut-throats. Guess the people in Bendigo would not know the nice boys of they saw them now. Bill Buohan is cultivating a moustache. Guess I will go one better, am growing the lot. Water is too scarce to waste any shaving myself.

**FRIDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

Very little to do. Had packing parade. Pulled the tent down on 10 minutes. Put the blessed thing up again. Furphy that we are going to some other place tomorrow. Everyone is packing and jabbering like a lot of monkeys. I am doing the same.

**SATURDAY. 15<sup>th</sup>**

The Batt leaving Fairy Post today. Bound for a place named Hog's Back. This is supposed to be where the first line of trenches are. Relieve Tivvey's Brigade. A nice route march of 10 miles before dinner. Arrived at the joint about 11 a.m. Prospect looks bad.

**SUNDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**HOG'S BACK**

have not to attend Church parade. On fatigue. This place is worse than fairy Post. Guess the Parson will have an easy time from now on. Hot as 773H.

**MONDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Eight Hours day in Melbourne, we have a nice little march of 8 miles to do. Rather a nice holiday when one think about it. Mending targets. Orderly for guard.

**TUESDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

Have finished my share of guard. Have to get the meals for the rest now. Off at last. I am very tired. This is something like a soldier's life I take it. No water or very little and nothing much to eat. This pint a day business for washing, shaving and drinking purposes makes one think of a drought. Suppose it is all for a good cause.

**WEDNESDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

The crew were inoculated today. They are giving us 48 hrs off duty. Guess I could do with about two years. My arm is swollen. Towards evening I became very ill. Had to go and cart water. Went to bed to die but could not.

**THURSDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

Paid today. There is a Canteen kept by a nig here. He did a roaring trade today. Think we just bought him out. Had a glorious feed of evil smelling eggs and chips. Also a nice drink of beer (only one). Was nice and we quenched my thirst. This is the first drink I have had. Like it. Some new reinforcements arrived from Aussie.

**FRIDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

Good Friday. A man can be a good Catholic today. What meat there is he cannot eat; they have some fish on the menu for our meals today; but not for me. I went to Church or at least made a good endeavor to go. My mates belonged to other denominations than the Church of England. I thought that I would belong to them too. Result R C's and C E's had Church. Other denominations had to dig trenches. Rather a severe thud. Heard we are to go to France. Could have learnt a few prayers to say or have said some if Church had been on.

**SATURDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Easter Saturday. Went to the rifle range. Could not hit anything. Found out that Ted Armstrong was marker on my target. Every time I fired he waved a miss. I thought there was something doing. I am a fair shot and I guess he would hop if I were shooting at him. Nearly got put in the clink for disputing with one of the Officers,

**SUNDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

We are going down to Fairy Post for a swim. The Capt reckons it will be a nice holiday. All on board the light railway. Some train this. The trucks swing about and we have to balance them to keep the old things on the line. Arrived at Fairy Post and went down to the Canal. Managed to lay in the sun all day, making myself a lovely brown. I was a lovely red when we left. Came back and had to go on Patrol. The pack rubbed all the skin off mine back. I am too busy cursing to write any more.

**MONDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

Easter Monday. Came off patrol. Sunburn very sore. Went to see old Iodine. He gave us sympathy and duty. I stayed in the tent and argued the point with Bill Williams whether I should go out on parade. Anyhow I won. Bill is a good fellow though.

**TUESDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Anzac Day. Have been issued with a tin of Peaches. This is between 10 men. Also a bag of boiled lollies. I wonder what wag thought of all this to give us. A holiday to commemorate the landing on Gallipoli. On patrol again.

**WEDNESDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Back from patrol. Inoculation again. Double dose this time. Arm not too clever. Something like a hat-pin stand now. Full of holes. Could not eat any dinner or tea. Feel very ill. Off to bed.

**THURSDAY. 27<sup>th</sup>**

Very sick. Want us to do fatigue. We will not do it. Ashamed to say I fainted. Laid in the tent. Had to go on patrol this evening. Feel queer yet.

**FRIDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Digging trenches. It was very painful work. Some fun dodging guard. Ramsey in full evidence. This chap is somewhat of a mystery. He is a Corporal one minute, then a Sergeant and half his time a private. Anyhow he seems to have plenty of cheek and energy. Not enough to catch me though.



**SATURDAY. 29<sup>th</sup>**

Lefty today for Sphinx Post. This is supposed to be the front line. I cannot see anything but sand. On guard during the evening.

**SUNDAY. 30<sup>th</sup>**

Nothing doing today except guard. Of course I am that used to it now, that I do not notice the job.

**MAY  
MONDAY. 1<sup>st</sup>**

Eight hours day in Brisbane. Worked on our dugout. Like baling water out of some pond. Have to go out on a Detachment Post. Very cold in the evenings.

**TUESDAY. 2<sup>nd</sup>**

We are clearing a space in front of the trenches of bushes. This is to make it harder for anyone to creep up unobserved. Put up barb wire entanglements. In the evening went on Patrol. This is a good job but very lonesome. Four of us go out at intervals of two hours. One has to be careful coming in, because the chaps are so nervy, they would put a bullet through you in their fright. Bill Buohan, Bob Hunter, Bill Coffey and myself have this job permanently. Not too bad. Can have a quiet smoke.

**WEDNESDAY. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

We have been informed that the Turks and Arabs are about 30 miles off and making our way. Hope they get lost and miss us. Would serve them right. Strengthened our trenches. On patrol again this evening. Did not have a quiet smoke as per usual. Too busy \watching for the enemy.

**THURSDAY. 4<sup>th</sup>**

Main column of Turks 7 miles off. Scouts 5 miles. Something seems to tell me that this is a furphy. Altered our dugout. It may stop a brick now. On patrol and short rations.

**FRIDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Short rations a little rough. Leaving the trenches for the camp. We are to have a rest. Not a bad idea. Think the Turks must have got tired too and gone back home again. Had a good sleep this evening.

**SATURDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>**

We are to attack Australia Hill. Marched all over the damn country. Came back to camp knocked up. Went to bed disgusted with the Army.

**SUNDAY. 7<sup>th</sup>**

Church parade. I did not attend. Thought there might be some more trenches wanted digging. Very hot. We have to go back to those blessed trenches again. Hope those Turks have gone away. They are nasty men according to the Gallipoli chaps.

**MONDAY. 8<sup>th</sup>**

On fatigue. Going to trenches in an hour. Rather a stiff march in front of us. Were not allowed to drink our water. Have been ill. Put up our tents. On guard over water. Feeling bad. Have drunk too much water I think. Guess it is either a feast or a famine.

**TUESDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Still on guard. I have been relieved by an M.P. This is because I was giving the water away. Expect I will get into trouble; but what does it matter. Have been let off with a caution. Rations short. All the chaps are getting angry. Have to dig trenches tomorrow.

**WEDNESDAY. 10<sup>th</sup>**

Trench digging. Feel ill from want of water and food. Everyone sick. Went over to the horse troughs for a drink. Going back to Sphinx Post tomorrow. Stand to 3.30.

**THURSDAY. 11<sup>th</sup>**

At Sphinx Post digging trenches. I am going to give the Canteen a fly. T'is 5 miles. Guess I will get a drink of water anyhow. Had my drink of water at the tanks. Went to Gypo canteen and bought some eggs and chips. Filled a bag with fruit and biscuits and started back to the boys. Everyone glad to see me. I was glad to get back. Too far across that sand by yourself. I am tired. No water. Missed my ration. Get some tomorrow when the camels come.

**FRIDAY. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Have not finished our trench. Feel ill through walking yesterday. Red Bowbridge placed in guard-tent for refusing to work any longer. We all refused to do anything until he was set free. They let him out. Had a good tea. Rissoles. They are a mixture of bully and biscuits fried. Good Lord.

**SATURDAY. 13<sup>th</sup>**

Trenches again. Thirsty hot and tired. Ted and I are going to walk into the Canteen together this time. Guess I am frightened to go by myself. Had another good drink of water. Brought back a dozen of beer. F.Wells in charge of this. Also some fruit and biscuits. Buried the beer in the sand to keep it cool. It is to be rationed out, when a fellow gets a little beyond himself and wants a drink.

**SUNDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

CHURCH Parade. They issued us with Prayer Books. They could have the whole turn out for water. Very hot.

**MONDAY. 15<sup>th</sup>**

Bill Buchan is 23 years old today. We did not wish him many happy returns of the day. It would have been too much out of place. We are to go back to Ferry Post. Anything will be better than here. The 14<sup>th</sup> Brigade is to relieve us. Heaven help them if they fare any worse than what we have done. Raided the camels for water. Everyone seems to have gone out of their minds. I managed to get a drink; but it was hard work doing so. At last we are off. Left here at 3 o'clock and arrived at Hog's back at 8. That was not too pleasant a march. The chaps were dropping like flies. Tired.

**TUESDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Left Hog's Back at six this morning. 111° in the shade. Arrived at Ferry Post about Midday. Guess if we had another week or so at Sphinx Post, we would have been raving lunatics. Have had my first shave and the first decent wash for a month. Feel a little better. Westaway met us when we came in and laughed at us. He did not know what it meant to go without water and food. Hope that he never does. Went to bed early.

**WEDNESDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Reveille 4.30. Route march 6 miles. Arrived back at 10 o'clock. Do not drill until 4.30. Too hot for work. Went down to the Canal and had a swim. Jokes it was bonny. Guess one feels as if he had not had a rough time now.

**THURSDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

Have a holiday. Not too well. Rumor that we are going to France. Hope it will be better than this place. Issued with uniforms and paid.

**FRIDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Medical Parade. Coffey and I classed as unfit. Have to report to the Transport Officer. Saw Bill Trainor about it. Told us not to be idiots but go while we had the chance. Went down and had a chat with Lieut. McCallum the T.O. Said we would have to be there Monday Morning. Damn him.

**SATURDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

On Q.M's fatigue. Went to Canal. Swan across and back. Coming back my legs cramped on me. Thought that I was a goner; but turned on my back and managed to get cut lower down. Back to tent and got caught for guard.

**SUNDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

Came off guard. Did not go on parade. Out last day with the crowd. Guess we are not looking very cheerful.

**MONDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

No word yet from Transport. They may have forgotten. Have been hanging about all day. Nothing doing.

**TUESDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Off to Moasoa. Have to report to Transport. Over in transport. Took mules to water. They are awful to have anything to do with.

**WEDNESDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

They have issued Coffey and I with two packs. We have to oil them and fit them on the mules. Pack mule drivers how. Heaven knows what we will be next. My mule does not love me. Have to take them to water. Had a drink.

**THURSDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

The Batt is going on a route march. I have to go too. Also Coffey. We have to lead a mule each. Known as D Coys packmule drivers. Hang D Coy, the mules and everything connected with the Army. Bill and I with our two cobbers proudly marching in the front of the Coy. My friend refused quite suddenly to budge. Tried all ways to coax him; but her was not having any. Pompey Elliott frantic with rage. So am I. Turned its head towards the stabled. Nice little mule now. Went straight to the stables. Of course I had to go too.

**FRIDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Inspection by Pompey. Hope he has forgotten the mule incident. All is well. He only looked at me for a few minutes. That means he has my image in his mind for future reference.

**SATURDAY. 27<sup>th</sup>**

Laid in the tent all day. One thing about this job, you do not have to work very much. Harry Godden came across to see us. Still the same old guy. I have not seen him since leaving Australia. He is also a packmule driver. Seems to think that it is a good job. Glad someone does.

**SUNDAY. 28<sup>th</sup>**

Having some great fun. Branding all the mules. When you shove the iron on them they do not mind which part of you they kick. Feeling lazy. This job is spoiling us. A little better than doing drill though. Can see the Coy drilling out in the square. We do not attend now. The chaps in this turnout do not know what it is to go without anything. They seem to get just what they want. Well we will not be far away now.

**MONDAY. 29<sup>th</sup>**

I have not kept any date between this and June the 4<sup>th</sup>. I suppose that we have been very busy at our new work. Not that it takes much to learn; but one has to keep going. As far as I can remember, we held a Sports Meeting at Moasco, something similar to the show in Bendigo. This was the first military sports of this kind we had had. All kinds of contests we held. The main event and the best in my opinion being the horse jumping.

I remember that the Sergeant of the transport rode one of our horses, named Major. In the trials the previous evening, this animal jumped well, and we had expectations of him winning a few of the prizes. However, Dean put him at the jumps and he made an awful mess of the thing. The bugler was not long in sounding the call "take him home" he proved rather a useful horse in future events.

This meeting was very successful. It broke the monotony of the usual routine, and afforded no end of good natured banter between the Battalions for many a day afterwards. They only had to cry out "take him home" to out lot, and there would be a series of arguments. That is all it ever came to though. The most humorous thing was the donkey racing and jumping. These brutes took their riders wherever they pleased. I had my own grueling on my own sweet tempered animal. However, like the rider of repute, I sat on him until the saddle came off. Then I had to come. Naturally I was some rider; but no amount of persuasion could tempt me to try the experiment again. A few band contests were held. Numerous foot races high jumping and in fact everything that made for sport. We thoroughly enjoyed the whole of it.

**JUNE**  
**MONDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>**

There is to be another inspection of harness and mules tomorrow. Cleaning away for all we are worth. I helped Westaway and Jack Collins do theirs. Then the pack mule drivers had to wash the limbers. This did not please us too well; but the job was soon over. I am wet through; but happy.

**TUESDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>**

I am on day Picquet, This constitutes taking off the horse's nosebags, in fact, being a general flunkey to everybody connected with the stable. Inspection by Butcher Mokie. We have managed to secure the greatest number of points in the Brigade. Have heard that we are to send our mules away. These were placed in the trucks this evening. Was not sorry to lose the dashed thing that I had to look after. Issued with a fresh number,

**WEDNESDAY. 7<sup>th</sup>**

The O.C. sent two water melons down to the lines to be divided between 40 men. This is our share of the event yesterday. Good fellows because we won the Brigade inspection. He is also a good fellow. Very generous man. Wonder if it hurt him. The troops are calling him choice names.

**THURSDAY. 8<sup>th</sup>**

Had another stunt today. Tramped all over the country dragging my cobber with me. Guess this job has its disadvantages as well as its advantages tacked on to it. Came back tired and weary. Laid in the tent and discussed the best and quickest way to get rid of troublesome officers. Could not think of anything kind. Off to bed and I will not need any rocking to sleep.

**FRIDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Shaved my mo off. It was getting to be beastly long for comfort. Used to get in my tea when I was drinking. I was not very sorry to part with it; but I do not look the same by any means. Rather a nice looking fellow with no Mo. Wonder what they would say is Aussie if they were to see me. Miss Welch would be surprised. Heard that she is growing a very nice girl. H'm. Nothing to do but play cards

**SATURDAY. 10<sup>th</sup>**

Went down to the Canal for a swim. I am looking much better. Think that having no drill to do must be doing me good. Will see that I do not do any from now on.

**SUNDAY. 11<sup>th</sup>**

There is Church parade in the Coy's; but they do not require the attendance of any heathens. Needless to say, the Transport are not going to go. Afraid the wings I get issued with will be singed.

**MONDAY. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Picquet tonight. Have nothing to do all day. Some wise folks would say, that I have something to do then. Went up and had a chat with the boys in the Coy. Met Frank Jenkins. He and I had a yarn about Bendigo. Brought a Bendigonian to light. Had a photo of Will in it. Some turn out that they had in connection with the Easter Fair.

**TUESDAY. 13<sup>th</sup>**

Frank came down again. We are going down by the Canal to hear a concert tonight. Inspection on this evening. A severe dust storm has been raging all day. Attended the concert and heard Peter Dawson sing. He was exceptionally decent. Other fair.

**WEDNESDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

Went over and returned the visit of Franks to me. Had to come back at the hic. We are going away tomorrow. Rumor has it that we are really off to France.

**THURSDAY. 15<sup>th</sup>**

Very busy all day. Have to clean up the camp. Leaving here about 9 o'clock this evening. One party is to go with the Sergeant, the other in charge of the Corporal. I am of the latter party. Had some fun getting our things placed on the trucks. There are 30 of us have to get on top of one truck. Made out bunks on these as well as we could. Off at last. Bound for Alexandria. T'is very cold.

**FRIDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Arrived at Alexandra about 8 a.m. this morning. The trip through last night was pretty rough. Have got out of the train and scattered about the pier. Surrounded by the niggers again. Thank Heaven we are going to leave them well behind. The boat that we go to France in is named the Transylvania. She is supposed to be one of the largest small boats afloat. After we had exchanged our money into French coinage, (mine did not take much exchanging) we embarked. Had a look round the boat to see where we would sleep and decided to sleep in our limbers. We just missed cabins by inches. We are not going to leave here until tomorrow night. Have been touring around the old vessel. She is well equipped and by all accounts a bonny sea boat. As regards the trip across we have nothing to fear;

but submarines, and they only hit you once. Well there seems to be plenty of wood and different things to get hold of. I will be there.

### **SATURDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Anchored here for the day. Saying farewell to all our Sieeta friends. They are all on the boat trying to palm off some of their old goods. As money is scarce, they are not doing the best of trade. The boat is very crowded. Seems to be a large number of men on here.

### **SUNDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

We left Alexandria last evening. Orders have been issued to the affect that we are in dangerous waters, and every man has to act for himself if anything happens. Sounds very cheerful. The sea is calm and I am enjoying myself thoroughly.

We have left Egypt and I think that there is not one man on board who regrets it. Speaking for myself, I can safely say, that the most horrible time I have ever had has been there. The misery and torment that a man was called upon to undergo will not be forgotten, and I think that if we are going into anything the same, it would be better if a submarine did sink us. It would save no end of suffering, and needless at that. The things I have seen whilst in that country will always be remembered by me, as the vilest and worst that humans could do to each other. Anyhow let the future hold what it will, I intend to come out of it, if I am spared as honorable and clean as I am leaving this place. It can not be any worse.

### **MONDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Sailing through the Mediterranean Sea. The chap at the wheel is steering a zig zag course. This is to elude the submarines and so helps protect us from attacks. We have been met by the Torpedo Boats that are to escort us to France. Three of them. They can travel some. Sea beginning to get rough. Sick? No fear.

### **TUESDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

I have been elected Mess Orderly. No one considered whether I would like to do the job. Anyhow I have Westaway for companion and he will see that they pay for their folly. If I have my way, I will poison some of these guys before the trip is over. Had to go down into the galley for the meals. Phew it was hot. T'is awful hot serving the meals and then washing the dishes up after the brutes have finished. The chaps reckon that we have passé the islands of Sardinia and Corsica. I, have not seen the. I am too damn bust washing up greasy plates. I, have a number of islands around me. They, consist of plates, cups and saucers, waiting to be washed up. All for 2/- per man. Think that I will have to raise the fee 6d.



**WEDNESDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

Passed a French munition boat. Appeared to be something wrong. One of the Torpedo boats went across. We expect to be in Marseilles on Friday. Seems to be a number of Friday's connected with this soldiering business. They say that is a very lucky day too.

**THURSDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

A British Submarine in sight. Queer looking object. Shaped like a big cigar. Just as well it is not one of the other side. Or lord what an awful sight I would be surrounded by dishes and things if one of those hit us. Land in sight. We are told that we may reach Marseilles tonight. Very nice to know that we may reach the place. Well the land does not look very far away and I recon a good swim would do me good. All excitement waiting for the morning.

**FRANCE. MARSEILLES****Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>**

We drew up alongside the pier this morning. This seems to be a very busy port. Vessels of all kinds are gathered here. Perhaps it will not be worse than the Gypo land we have left. Seems to be some nice girls knocking about. Sounds strange to hear them speaking in French. One expects white people to talk English. In another land where you cannot talk to anyone. We are to leave the boat at 6 p. m. The Coy's are going earlier. Off at last.

**SATURDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

When we left the boat, we had a matter of 3 miles or more to walk to camp. We could not see much of the town owing to it being dusk. I and several others have been granted leave today. As we have not much money we will not be able to have a very good time. We met a French Soldier, who could speak English. Invited him to dinner. At the time we did not think about paying for it. It cost us 18 francs a man. The Scotchman of the party paid. I gave him my guarantee that he would get it back again. I have a bad memory. Any how he will not miss it.

**SUNDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Went for a stroll again. All the girls are out in their nice clothes. There are some clinker looking girls among them too. This is a very pretty place. Saw a street lined with barrows of flowers. When we got to the top of it, we had a look down. It was like a large flower garden and a beautiful sight. Tried to buy some smokes; but as I could not make the lady behind the counter take an Aussie shilling in payment for them, had to go without.

**MONDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

The artillery have left today. Something has happened. We have been paid. I think that the heads were short themselves. Smokes, wine and all the good things flying about now. Thought they were starving in France. You seem to be able to get anything if you have the money to pay for it. Home safe and sound.

**TUESDAY. 27<sup>th</sup>**

Have been cleaning up the camp. Limbers have to be put on the train. All pretty merry. I am intoxicated with the thoughts of the nice journey in front of us and more so with the equally nice wine and champagne we have consumed. All loaded. I mean the limbers are on the trucks and ready to start. Left at 10 O'clock this evening.

**WEDNESDAY. 28<sup>th</sup>**

This is supposed to be a three day journey. We are bound for a place called Abbeville. Something just passed us. Heard that it was the Paris to Marseilles express. If that was a train it was going some. I do not want to ride in any expresses. The country hereabouts is very pretty. We are passing through the wine country. Hundreds of vineyards on each side of the track. Vines are growing right up the sides of the hills. Stopped at some station. A lady gave me a souvenir. Had some nice wine to drink. Two of us went down to the café and very nearly bought him out. Seem to get a devilish amount of coins for a five franc note. In the train again and I am doing my best to go to sleep. This is rather an awkward procedure, as two of us have to share the seat. You can imagine how we do it. Grumbling at each other all the time. The other fellow wants the lot; but he can't have it.

**THURSDAY. 29<sup>th</sup>**

As usual the last to get up. Country through which we are passing looks mighty nice. As I have no head for description it is beyond me. Arrived at some station and were regaled with hot coffee. Some French Nurses' were the donors.

**FRIDAY. 30<sup>th</sup>**

Arrived at Abbeville 2 a.m. this morning. This is the Depot where all things that are mighty and have to do with War are issued. Had a look around the town. Remember Bill Coffey trying to dance with one of the girls.

**JULY**  
**SATURDAY. 1<sup>st</sup>**

We left today for the line. Destination unknown. This journey has to be done by road. Expect to have quite a nice time. I have been promoted for a time. Will be allowed to drive the A.M.C. Cart, better then walking.

**SUNDAY. 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Camped at one of the villages. Had plenty of money. Also fun. Off again today.

**MONDAY. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

This country we are passing through is under great cultivation. By what I can see, it seems something similar to Closer Settlement Scheme they have in Aussie. All kinds of vegetables growing along the sides of the road. No fences around the property. The country is exceptionally hilly. I remember one hill that we went down was so steep that the mule I was driving had its head in the cart in front and kept pushing the driver of that vehicle off his seat. Passed through a number of towns, the names of which I did not get.

**TUESDAY. 4<sup>th</sup>**

Today we will arrive at our destination. Must say that I have enjoyed this journey by road. Although one is not able to keep much record of what is seen, because there is always about 100 odd things that you have to do. It seems hardly creditable that this country is engaged in one of the most cruel wars. Everything seems so peaceful. One thing that is noticeable and that is the fact of there being very few men about. Guess they must have had a rather strenuous time enrolling them.

**WEDNESDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Managed to get wet through last night. Sleeping in a chaff house. Had an inspection today by General Birdwood. Guess they do not mean to leave us along very long. Can hear guns and thing going off about 15 miles away. Does not sound very inviting. Saw a couple of Aero planes.

**THURSDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>**

Usual thing. Fooling about waiting until some ass tells us we look nice soldiers. Issue with Gas Helmets this afternoon. Went out and had a look around the town. Stenbecque is the name of this place. On Picquet tonight.

**FRIDAY. 7th**

All had to parade today and go through a miniature Gas attack to test the helmets. Was horrible while it lasted, was not sorry when they had finished with us. Think I must have had a bad helmet. Have been feeling very ill.

**SATURDAY. 8th**

Left this morning for another camp. 16 miles route march to a place named Estaires. Men lying all along the road. Guess it was as bad as Egypt. Very tired.

**SUNDAY. 9th**

Stayed at Estaires or rather the outskirts of it until noon today, when we marched to a place named Saily. Here we relieved the 24<sup>th</sup> Battn and by the look of them they were not sorry to see us come. They seemed to think that we were going to have a very nice time in their place. Anyhow I was too knocked up to think about what we were going to have.

**MONDAY. 10th**

Have been allotted some farm for a billet. The lads are to go into the line here. Things are going to be made hum by what one can gather. H'm they can't get much worse.

**TUESDAY. 11th**

Heard that some of the lads were killed. The limber drivers go up to the line every night. I am going to have my turn at it soon.

**WEDNESDAY. 12th**

Met Frank Jenkins this evening. Saw Walter Jackson of Bendigo fame. Driving some kind of wagon. Some noise in the direction of the front.

**THURSDAY. 13th**

Met Harry Newson another Bendigonain. He is in the Mining Corp. He informed me that the heads were going to make a great advance on this front in a very short while. Wonderful where these men get their information from. Suppose it is true.

**FRIDAY. 14th**

I am taking over Harry Oldens team this afternoon. All the crowd laughing at me. This is my first trip with limber. Guess they are not the only drivers in the Army.

Had some fun getting used to the mules. They seem very much like some Aussie girls I know.

### **SATURDAY. 15<sup>th</sup>**

Took my mules out to several places today. There is one place that I would like to take them to and the pleasure would be all mince. Have to go up to the line this evening.

### **SUNDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Have done three trips last night and this morning. Feeling very tired and knocked up. Off up again tonight.

### **MONDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Arrived back at camp about 2 a.m. this morning. Had to wait up until three in case I was wanted. Off to bed at last.

### **TUESDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

Had to go out several times today. Went to the D.A.C for ammunition. Took load of bombs to the line. Managed to get hung up in the telephone wires.

### **WEDNESDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Have been carting wounded men all day. Early this morning there was a hop over. Guess our side got hurt some. Rumor has it most of the Batts are wiped out. Some awful sights among the men I brought down. Jack Ferrari was killed. Met Ernie Wirth. He is in the A.M.C.

### **THURSDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

Have been relieved from my job. I have nothing to do but wait about and listen to what reports come in. Two or three shells landed behind our stables.

### **FRIDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

Of to the line again tonight. Had a pretty bad spin. They seem to wait for us now, and train a machine gun on or across the roads. The trouble is that a man is as so high up in the air sitting on these mules, that he is a good mark. Got away from it alright. Cannot get anyone to come near the limber when near the line.

**SATURDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Practically all the men are inebriated. I am the one exception??. The Corporal had gone up to fight the Hun and everyone connected with him. He only went as far as the first Estimanet. Guess he had sense.

**SUNDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Have been having a very easy time of it today. Played cards for a while and then went and drew the issue of Rum for the Battin. Guess this is vile stuff, although it is said that men fight about 50 times better when they drink it. I have a chap in my thoughts that I would like to have a go at. Will drink some of this when the event comes off.

**MONDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

Very little has occurred worth relating up to date. Had one of the mules shod. Took some shoeing. Heard that Arthur Strahan was killed last evening. Guess he was a fine fellow. All the decent ones seem to be knocked over.

**TUESDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Hears that Bill Buchan was killed. Guess there is another one gone. This is getting a little too bad. Wish the blessed thing was over.

**WEDNESDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Cleaned my harness. Mail in. received two letters. One from Winifred and the other from Ella. Ella mentioned that she received a bottle that I threw overboard with a message in. Some lady sent it to her from Port Fairy. That bottle must have traveled some.

**THURSDAY. 27<sup>th</sup>**

Had bad luck today. Kicked on the knee by my mule. Made me feel rather ill. Went straight to bed.

**FRIDAY. 28<sup>th</sup>**

Knee no better. Westaway dressed my leg for me. Starting to swell some. I am going to the A.M.C. to see what the Doc will do for me.

**SATURDAY. 29<sup>th</sup>**

Feeling worse. Had to go and draw rations. My knee kept reminding me that it was hurt. Fritz is doing his best to knock our stables over. He is rather a rotten shot. Shells landing to close to be pleasant.

**SUNDAY. 30<sup>th</sup>**

Nothing doing. Have been hanging about all day. The leg is starting to swell rather too much to be very pleasant. Wish that the Doc would give me something more than Iodine for it.

**MONDAY. 31<sup>st</sup>**

Could not get up this morning. My leg has stiffened. Am going to be driven to the Hospital. About time too. Received a letter from Ella. Wonder what she would say if she could see me now.

**AUGUST  
TUESDAY 1<sup>st</sup>**

Off to the Hospital this afternoon. Am in 15<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance. Things look very clinah.

**WEDNESDAY. 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Going on to Estaires. Do not know where I will go from there. Arrived here about 4 o'clock. Have a very decent time here by all accounts. Have been given a bed by the window. Plenty of smokes and books to read.

**THURSDAY. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

My leg not much better. More smokes and Chocolate. Plenty of wounded men coming in. some of them look very ill. Have been trying to walk about, but with very little success. Hope to be able to do so tomorrow.

**FRIDAY. 4<sup>th</sup>**

Managed to walk a little. Guess this is too quiet for me. I want to get out. Will have to ask the Major to allow me. He seems a very decent fellow.

**SATURDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Have learned that I have to go to the Base at Rouen. Not for me. I want to get out of these blessed places. This is all right for those that like it. I don't. Saw the O.C.

and he told me that if I thought that I would be able to get better under his treatment, he was willing for me to stay in this place. 'I stayed.

### **SUNDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>**

Nothing to do but lie and look out of the window. No Church to go to. Would be glad of the chance now, because it would be much less monotonous.

### **MONDAY. 7<sup>th</sup>**

Asked the Major if I could go out tomorrow. All serene. Paraded up and down in front of him. By joves my leg hurt, but I stuck it and he thinks it is O.K. Will be glad to get back. Too lonely here for me.

### **TUESDAY. 8<sup>th</sup>**

Going back to the lads at 12.30. Arrived at the camp. The coy out of the line. Reported to Capt Trainor then down to the Transport. Everyone seems glad to see me. Not as glad as I am to see them though. These chaps have a little life in them.

### **WEDNESDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Nothing to do so far. Helped Bill Coffey to clean his harness. Knee has not lost the swelling yet. Guess this is better than that hospital all the same.

### **THURSDAY. 10<sup>th</sup>**

Another one of the chaps had an accident. His mules bolted with him and fell on top of the dear man. He is on the sick list with me now. We are a bright looking pair. Went down to Saily to the pictures.

### **FRIDAY. 11<sup>th</sup>**

On Picquet. Am writing letters. Received one from Winifred. Guess they are very nice to have too.

### **SATURDAY. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Inspection of harness today. Our harness tip top, sad to relate though, the officer did not look at it. All our work for nothing. Went down to the Bomb school; had a decent time. No church now.



**SUNDAY. 13<sup>th</sup>**

There is a rumpus in the ranks of the Transport. They have to provide a working party for the trenches, and apparently they do not like it. I have to drive them up. Many of them would change place with me I think. They have not to go till tomorrow now.

**MONDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

Creased harness. Took the party to the line. Had to go about 2 o'clock in the morning.

**WEDNESDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Waited about 2 hours for the chaps. They were very quiet when they arrived back at the limber. Guess they had a very nice reception. Fritz kept chucking shells at them all the time. Arrived back at about 5 and slept till 7. More harness cleaning.

**THURSDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Picquet again tonight. Raining very heavily the last few days. The horses and mules in a terrible state. No mail has come in lately. Guess I would not have time to read it if it did. Too busy. I have omitted to place Tuesday's doings. As there was very little done it really does not matter.

**FRIDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

Went to the trenches again tonight. Speaking to Ted Armstrong, he is in the Snipers' now. Not a bad job according to him.

**SATURDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Nothing to do all day. Went to the flics again this evening. They were very decent and I enjoyed them. Things are becoming very monotonous.

**SUNDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

Played crib and washed the old harness.

**MONDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

My birthday tomorrow. The lads intend to keep it up. I will not be backward in helping them.

**TUESDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

21 today. Guess I am feeling very old and war worn. I kept it up too. Had an argument with one of the fellows directly, I hit the outside. Ended in a black eye

for me and somewhat altered face for him. Suppose I will be righting someone all the year round now.

### **WEDNESDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

The Q.M. issued me with a pair of trousers. Gee I nearly lost them, because I was so profuse in my thanks. Seems so strange to have these things issued to you and not have to ask for them. Off to the line in my new pants.

### **THURSDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

Mail in and none for me. Trenches again tonight. Had a long chat to Ted. He seems to be satisfied with the job they have put him on. Mine will do me. Will be on Picquet tomorrow night. My luck again.

### **FRIDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Went for the washing. We have all got tired of doing it ourselves, so we send it on to some old lady. She can do it a lot better than I can. Met a chap named Fownsey from Bendigo.

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From the 26<sup>th</sup> August to 12<sup>th</sup> October I have not kept any record of anything. Sufficient to say, that the dull monotony of it all must have got on my nerves, and I was not in the mood for writing anything. I remember that we held a great sports meeting at some place between Sailly and Armentiers, which turned out a great success. Other than that, there was nothing but the usual routine of cleaning harness and going to the line with rations.

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### **OCTOBER **FRIIDAY 13<sup>th</sup>****

We left the sector today bound for the Somme. We have heard various rumors about the place to which we are going; that are not very enticing. However, we have to go. Our first stopping place is to be Astaires. Rumor has it we are to stop here 3 or 4 days. We arrived in the town about 5.30. At present we are camped in a paddock alongside the Coys.

### **SATURDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

The Germans occupied this town for about 3 days, then they were driven back to their present position. That is about 8 miles away. Some of it is in ruins; but taking the while, it is still a very pretty snow. Leave granted to about a dozen at a time. I was on the first batch/ we went all through the different places. The Church at this place is named for its Alters & Tapestry's. These people seem to spend a huge amount of money on their Churches. Not for mine.

**SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup>**

Still in the old town. We most likely will be off tomorrow. The coy's are having Church service.

**MONDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**

On the road en route for the station at Bailleu. From there we go by train to Longprere. Raining very heavily. Arrived at the station and had to sit for a few hours. Put the mules and horses on board.

**TUESDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Managed to get into the train about 1 this morning. We have about 8 hrs ride in this old bus. Stopped at some place and we made a cup of tea for ourselves.

**WEDNESDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

We are at a place name Buire. We disembarked about 5 o'clock last night and had to march to this place. Arrived here about 11 o'clock last evening.

**THURSDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

The people at this place seem to be Germans or their sympathies. They will sell us nothing but wine. Eggs or bread you cannot get. Guess they are the surliest specimens I have yet seen. Hang them.

**FRIDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

We all had to vote here on the Conscription Rer. I do not think that many voted yes. I know that I was reeling wretched and before I would ask another man to come over here and do the same as I have to, well I would sooner put up with it.

**SATURDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

Left Hunland and are off on our journey to the Somme. Passed through the outskirts of Amiens. Then through a village named Heilly. Camped at Corbie this evening.

**SUNDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Left Corbie and went on to Ribemont. There are a few people in this place. From here we went through Coisy, Dernacourt, Meaulte, Fricourt, Mametz and then on to Montauban.

**MONDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

The Inixantry stayed at Montauban. We came back to Mametz. Have heard that we will be here one month. I think that we are going to have a very rough time of it. The place makes one feel as if he had said goodbye to the outer world. There is nothing here. Not a live thing but ourselves and horses. Mud everywhere, not a blade of grass and as cold as the devil

**TUESDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

The lads are going into the line. I have the job of taking the water up to them. Joves I have had an awful time. Mud about 2 feet deep and the mules trying to walk through it. We were the only three men who got there today with our water. Tired and knocked up.

**WEDNESDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Have been into Albert. This has been a fine city. The remains of the Cathedral are still very pretty. Some beautiful work on the walls. The Statue of the Virgin holding a Child is still on the top; but has to be kept in place by some fastenings.

**THURSDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

We had our first visit to Fritz. He came over dropping bombs. Killed two or three chaps down in Mametz. Did not come anywhere near us. Mail very scarce.

**FRIDAY. 27<sup>th</sup>**

My knee is starting to trouble me. The intense cold must have something to do with it. Going stiff in my leg.

**SATURDAY. 28<sup>th</sup>**

Had another trip with the water carts today. We got into serious trouble. The Coy had shifted to another part of the line. Instead of turning to the left at one road, we took the right hand turn. We kept going on and no sign of the Coy. Went right up through Flers and across the hill on the other side. All of a sudden there was a bang and a roar. About 8 or 9 shells lobbed round us. Then bullets came whizzing about my ears. That fixed me. I was in the lead and round I cam and pulled the others with me. We had wandered into supports and the goats along the track had not the sense to tell us to turn back. We very nearly lost everything. The old water cart had about umpteen holes in it.

**SUNDAY. 29<sup>th</sup>**

Had to taker the water cart down to Dados and get another one. Guess the chap who has to mend it will curse. Came back to the camp and had tea.

**MONDAY. 30<sup>th</sup>**

Fritz came over again this evening. Got two men at Dados. There were about 500 searchlights trying to locate him but to no purpose.

**TUESDAY. 31<sup>st</sup>**

Took the new water cart up to Flers this time. Brought it back safe and sound. Saw the pack-mule drivers. They have a very tough spin. Up to their knees in mud trying to lead the mules. Thank heavens I am not a pack driver now. That would just about fix me. One of the chaps got hurt. Got stuck in the mud. His mule pulled him out when it pulled back. He was hanging on to the reins, strained himself badly.

**NOVEMBER  
WEDNESDAY. 1<sup>st</sup>**

I and the corporal will be going up to the business. I have to lead a pack. Saw a great sight. Stood on a hill and watched a bombardment of German lines. The shells were bursting right along the whole front of this particular sector. Guess they were some size too.

**THURSDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Have heard a furphy that we are going to move out of here in a few days. Will not be sorry to get away from it. One it too miserable here. Dernacourt is the place that we are going to.

**FRIDAY. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Left the camp this evening and came on to Dernacourt. His is not much better. Am on Picquet this evening.

**SATURDAY. 4<sup>th</sup>**

It is about 2.a.m. Snow is beginning to fall. This is the first I have ever seen. Does not seem bad to sit and watch it. It is cold now; but through the night it was awful.

**SUNDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Have nothing much to do. Cleaned some of the harness. It is very rusty and I just put the grease all over mine.

**MONDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>**

We are leaving this place for Montonvillers. The Coy are staying there; but we have to go to another town named Flesselles. This is on account of us being isolated for measles or something similar. Had a very decent trip down. As we have not seen any grass or crop for some considerable time, this country is good for the eyes.

**TUESDAY. 7<sup>th</sup>**

We arrived at Flesselles last evening about dusk. The place where we are camped is in an old Chateau. We have secured very decent stables for the horses and mules.

**WEDNESDAY. 8<sup>th</sup>**

We are to stay here for about 10 days. This is very decent as the billets are good and we have now an opportunity to eat our meals without having to brush the mud off them.

**THURSDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Have to clean our harness. There is to be an inspection by General Haig. Joves this rust will not come off.

**FRIDAY. 10<sup>th</sup>**

One of the lads shot a Deer today. We have some fresh meat. That is what we never do get. There was a little fuss made over that Deer. It will cost the Batt about 100 francs to square it. Anyhow we have the meat and we do not want the money.

**SATURDAY. 11<sup>th</sup>**

Have been issued with two mules for myself. It was between Bill Coffey and myself. Which one would take the mules? As I had been used to driving them, I took over the mules. One is a bonza; but the other, is a beautiful mule; but very vicious. I can n him Paddy and by joves he earns his title.

**SUNDAY. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Had to let one of my mules go. Had a very sore foot. I have now another, I am calling her Biddy. Just reminds me of some of those old, H'm I had better stop.

**MONDAY. 13<sup>th</sup>**

Inspection tomorrow. The lads have been washing the limbers. I have borrowed one of the other mules. Rather a fiery team; but looks very well, and would make the best team in the transport if I could get them. I am afraid Haryy Olden would have something to say.

**TUESDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

Held the inspection. I was put at the head of the crowd an account of having such a fine team. We all lined up looking very spick and span, that is, as far as could be expected, when you think that a few days before we were covered in mud from head to foot. Sad to relate the blessed General did not come near us. He fussed about one of the other Batts. The Colonel was exceedingly angry. So were the Drivers.

**WEDNESDAY. 15<sup>th</sup>**

We have been issued with rugs for the horses. There are for the snow and wet weather that we are to have from now on. Also issued with Jack Boots. These are a leather boot, that reach right up to the knee.

**FRIDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Off today. Went back to the same way as we came up here. Joves the place looks worse than ever. Arrived at Montauban in the dark. Could not see a hands turn; slept in the mud that night and arose feeling rotten.

**SATURDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

Raining very badly. Have made our camp here. The Coy are off to the line. I am going up with a packmule. Nothing exciting happened.

**SUNDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Ten of us in a tent. Just think of trying to get a sleep with ten of them snoring around you. Guess this is rotten. Have not had a wash since we came up this time.

**MONDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

We have to go for rations to the A.S.C. every morning at 5.a.m. We arrive home about 12 noon. Have a spell through the afternoon until about 3. Then you put packs on your mules, and off to the line with them. If you are lucky, you may get home about 2 the next morning.

**TUESDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

Bill Waterman and I are working together. We go to the dump regularly and then take our packs. It is frightfully cold and I am feeling dirty. Water is scarce. That in the shell holes smells or is muddy.

**WEDNESDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Fritz shelled the A.S.C. dump but did not hit anybody. He blew a great quantity of meat and butter up though. That means we are getting to have short thrift for some time.

**THURSDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

We are going down to Mametz for three days spell. It will take the transport 2 days to ship the goods down there, so I am afraid that our spell will be nought.

**FRIDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

We are still carting the Q.M Store about. Have quite a lot of our own stuff to bring yet. I have not much.

**SATURDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

We have to go back again tomorrow. Guess they do like to see us mounted on our horses. Curse them.

**SUNDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

Off again to the same old possie. Pulled about 10 teams out of the mud. My mules are nearly done. So am I. sick of the lot of it. Too much mud.

**MONDAY. 27<sup>th</sup>**

Have been busy fixing up the camp again. One of the horses fell down in the trench. We of course had to help get the brute out. Nobody hurt.

**TUESDAY. 28<sup>th</sup>**

Our O.C. has gone to a school. We have had Lt. Alan sent down to us. He seems a very decent chap. Evidently is one of the boys.

**WEDNESDAY. 29<sup>th</sup>**

A.S.C. being cut up into Artillery. That will mean more work for us to do. We have quite enough as it is. Putting the harness on these mokes is the worst of it all. It is so cold and hurts the hands.



**THURSDAY. 30<sup>th</sup>**

Received a parcel from Winifred. By joves it was very acceptable. Had various visitors this afternoon. Poor devils, they need it as badly as I do. Cigars from Uncle Frank. Found some Three Castle Cigarettes From Min Welch. Guess I had better write and thank that lass. She may go off pop; but as I am so damned far away, it will not matter.

**DECEMBER  
FRIDAY. 1<sup>st</sup>**

Fritz shelling the road. This road has been built over mud. Sleepers have been used first, then road metal. You can feel the blessed thing moving up and down when you go over it with a limber.

**SATURDAY. 2<sup>nd</sup>**

The ground is very slippery. Weather cold and I reckon we will not be long before snow comes. Guess it generally cold for about three days, and then comes the snow/ it is as bad as the rain at times.

**SUNDAY. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Nothing much to do today. Just the usual routine. Went up with rations and had a pretty warm time.

**MONDAY. 4<sup>th</sup>**

We had an awful accident on our tent. Our blankets caught fire through the night and set all the equipment ablaze. I happened to be sleeping near the door; but owing to the smoke I could not get out. The cartridges in the equipment were going off, and one of these hit me solid. Gee I let out a yell and dashed through the door of the tent into the snow. It was too cold outside and just the opposite in. All the others had their heads stuck out under the tent watching me put the asset on the fire bucket. I lost all my things. My pack was burnt to atoms also the haversack. Hang fires.

**TUESDAY. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Extracted a piece of bullet from my leg. Has started to snow very heavily. Cold winds blowing and things are miserable generally. Off to supply. Wish I could have stayed in the tent. Too cold outside.

**WEDNESDAY. 6<sup>th</sup>**

They have started to build a Q.M. Store. That is a-very sure sign that we are going to move. Young Ross who is a carpenter in private life, is the builder.

**THURSDAY. 7<sup>th</sup>**

Infantry are coming out of the line in a few days time. Rumor says we are to go to Ribemont. Hope that this furphy is correct. Anything to get away from this place for a while. We should strike that place for Xmas.

### **FRIDAY. 8<sup>th</sup>**

Arthur Williams and self are going to sleep in a limber. There are too many in this tent to be comfortable. Not to mention the numerous companions we are beginning to get. They seem as if they are very lonely o'nights.

### **SATURDAY. 9<sup>th</sup>**

We both fixed up O.K. in the limber. It is not very convenient to get into; but when you do manage the job, it is comfy and warm.

### **SUNDAY. 10<sup>th</sup>**

The A.S.C. have been shelled out of their job. They will have to make another dump somewhere. This is getting to be a regular occurrence. When a man goes to draw some rations, he generally gets them as if he were stealing the blessed things.

### **MONDAY. 11<sup>th</sup>**

Issue of rum. The crowd are exceptionally merry and dirty looking. Gee, I am afraid that girl I wrote to would not hesitate to get angry if she could only see the object that did the writing. I am a fierce looking fellow. Beard and moustache and dirt from head to foot.

### **TUESDAY. 12<sup>th</sup>**

We have an awful job taking up the hot boxes, these were invented by the Brigade Major. Taylor by name. He is now nicknamed "Hot Box Charley" they kept the food hot in them for 24n hours. Some thing similar to a Thermos Flask; but are very awkward to handle.

### **WEDNESDAY. 13<sup>th</sup>**

Have managed to get the right of the road from Cosy Corner to our place. This has been a source of annoyance to we Drivers for some time. It meant that we had to go about one mile out of the way. However, we have obtained the necessary permission and everything is O.K. Were beginning to dislike the Picquets.

### **THURSDAY. 14<sup>th</sup>**

Extra special cold and I am feeling sleepy.

**FRIDAY. 15<sup>th</sup>**

Two Aero planes were brought down today. It was a most thrilling sight to see them come. Must have been awful thrilling for the poor beggars that were in them. Think that they were planes belonging to the other side. Yes, they must have been. A great number of our balloons are in the air.

**SATURDAY. 16<sup>th</sup>**

Heard that the big gun on the railway siding at Montauban has been giving the Fritz beans. The row it makes when going off is enough to frighten anybody near it. Must be lovely where the shells lands.

**SUNDAY. 17<sup>th</sup>**

The road near Mametz has been receiving attention from the honorable foe all day long. The way the traffic is going, he must be getting uncomfortably close to them. Hope he keeps it there.

**MONDAY. 18<sup>th</sup>**

We were kept awake most of the night by bombs. He kept dropping them all around us, trying to hit the Bazentin Railway siding. Knocked a few of the gunners that were camped about it.

**TUESDAY. 19<sup>th</sup>**

Have counted as many as 19 of those Balloons in the air on this front. They seem to do good work, because there guns are always firing. Each Balloon observes for a Battery. There are quite a few of these said Batteries around here. One place in particular is named Gun Pit Valley. The guns it is said are no more than 6 feet apart. Gives one a headache to stop in the valley long. They are firing all the time. All kinds of them. Had to steal two bags of coke from the dump. We had none on the tent.

**WEDNESDAY. 20<sup>th</sup>**

We have been having a bad time with the packing of rations. It has been so frightfully cold and one has to walk up, and do the best he can to try and ride his mule back. You have two to lead. One you tie on the back of the saddle of the one you are leading. If left alone they will generally follow well, but once they start to pull back, that is the end of your load. The ground is so slippery in places, that it is quite a common thing to have to place your load on the saddle a couple of times before you reach your destination.

**THURSDAY. 21<sup>st</sup>**

It is Bill Coffey's birthday. We have not any thing that we can do to make it any happier with. I gave the poor fellow a packet of Min Welch's cigs. I felt at the time as if I was giving him me very all, but after he came to light with a parcel from home I was jolly glad I had done so. He may not have asked me to have any of his if I had kept those smokes.

**FRIDAY. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Bill Coffey went sadly astray yesterday. He gave himself up to levity, (the inebriated kind) and fell into two or three hundred shell holes, according to his version of it. Anyhow he is hoping e does not have another birthday for another year.

**SATURDAY. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Rumor has it we are to go out for Xmas. Guess we are feeling well. The furphy is correct. The Coy are coming out of the line. Guess we will be moving shortly. They always move rapidly when you least expect it in the Army.

**SUNDAY. 24<sup>th</sup>**

On the road to Ribemont for out Xmas Spell.

**MONDAY. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Xmas Day. We are celebrating this in Ribemont. It is extremely cold. Snow has been falling. We have a pudding, about two pounds between two men. As usual all ours were spoilt. So we finished up with stew for Xmas dinner. Well I suppose that others are not so well off.

**TUESDAY. 26<sup>th</sup>**

We are to play the A.S.C. football. Had a win. Off tomorrow for La Chausse.

**WEDNESDAY. 27<sup>th</sup>**

Came into La Chausse about 12 noon. Had a decent trip down here. This seems to be a very nice village. There is a still better one across the canal or Somme. Picquigney is the name. Stay here three or four days. Went into Picwaigney this evening. Seems to be a large town. Plenty of shops and Cares also Estimanets. Of course I did not go into them. They had a hard job to get away. I liked looking into the shops so much.

**THURSDAY. 28<sup>th</sup>**

Have to go to a place named Vignacourt to draw the rations. I am off there today. It is a bonny day for this kind of work. The sun is quite warm. Open country on this trip. Something similar to La Chausse this village. Very little mail flying about.

**FRIDAY. 29<sup>th</sup>**

Guess the old year will not last much longer. We have all be speculating as to whether the next will be as worse and eventful as this one has been, guess it would be a relief to know what really is going to happen to us.

**SATURDAY. 30<sup>th</sup>**

We have to move into the Somme again tomorrow. Rather hard luck having to go away and leave this.

**SUNDAY. 31<sup>st</sup>**

Left La Chausse about 11 o'clock this morning. We are going through the same way aw we came out. Hope to arrive at Montauban about 5 tonight. It is very cold now. Came in sight of Montauban about 3. Much earlier than we expected to do so. Had an awful job trying to pull our limbers through the mud. Several of the teams got stuck. We are camping a good deal further from the road this time. I have gone into a hut that is being built. Eric Marshall, Bob and Dan Drummond, Walter Butler, Paddy Paterson, and myself constitute the inhabitants of this particular humpy. We are making it very warm and comfy, because we are told that we are to be here for a considerable time.

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As will be seen by the preceding attempt to keep a Diary, it has not been a very successful one. You can gain from it, however, the hum drum existence that is led by the simple private in the Army. There are no attractions of any description for him. What little bit of diversion he may be lucky to get, is generally created for himself. Therefore, I think that I can be quite excused of if I do not take the trouble to keep another Diary. I will just make notes of what I see, and I am sure it will be more interesting to others and myself to read in the future. As for the life o have had during this 12 months abroad, I earnestly hope that some of the things I have gone through will not occur again. I think one would be better dead and finished with all. My lot has not been as hard as others. I have bee lucky enough to escape the line, and now that I have seen a little, I do not think that I am so eager to go there. This is bad enough, but I do not think it can be compared with the line. Au Revoir.

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## JANUARY 1917

As mentioned before, I am not keeping any records. From now I will do my best to memorize such things that have appealed to me. It is almost impossible to do the work one has to and find the time to jot down in the little book, the records of the days doings. They, I am afraid, would not prove of much interest to anyone, and some of them are best forgotten.

However, to return to the subject, we had succeeded in building a fine and comfortable hut. It was lined inside with straw and Galvanized Iron for roofing. Also sides. It was just as well that we made this so, because the chaps who slept in the tents suffered frightfully. The Doc said it was worse than no protection at all. Well, during this month, things started to freeze. The ground became as hard as iron. You could not dig a pick into it. The shell-holes of water were frozen to the depth of 2 feet and more. It has been recorded as the coldest month ever experienced on the Somme for a period of 30 years. I can quite believe it. We had to break through the ice for water, keep the fire going all night, warm our boots near it in the mornings, and especially those gum boots, to get them on. Wherever you left anything that you had taken off, you would find it in the morning, stiff as a board. We used to sleep with as much on as possible. During our stay here, we had a very rough spin. Trouble horses and mule, because of the nature of the roads, they were like glass. I had rather a nasty experience one afternoon, and it shook me up some. I was going as usual to the dump with rations. We could see this particular dump as we came to it, and everything seemed quiet. When we got within a few hundred yards of it, Frits opened fire on us, with whizz bangs and other such gentry. That is what I was told afterwards, so I suppose it is correct. Anyhow, I was taking the lead, and the next minute I woke up and found myself laying in a shell hole. They told me a shell had landed on the side of me and I had got all the force and no shell. It was sufficient to double me up and send me headfirst into that hole. Both my mules were wounded. One in the face and the other in rump, through the stomach and the head. All I got out of it was a severe shaking. The other chaps did not get hurt, although he pelted the devil out of us till we got away. I had a spell after that, as my mules had to be taken away. And fresh ones sent.

We made ourselves miserable and happy by turns in this hole, until Fritz was coliging enough one day to evacuate on our front. He left Bapaums on the 16<sup>th</sup> March, and our chaps moved after him on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Six of us had to go with pack mules to follow the Coy. Guess I will never forget that trip. We had the time of our lives. The old Hun shot at us from coming near Coys. There were about 64 mules and their driver's altogether. 6 from each Battn in the Brigade, and they formed a rather nice target. There were a good many knocked down, but none of our chaps got hurt. We were not sorry to come away from this. We came back to the transport, and found that they were ready to move up to the Company's. There was one thing that surprised me very much. That was the nature of the country that Fritz had been occupying. On our side it was Mud, all Mud. On his just the contrary. There were evidence that he had been growing crops and all kinds of vegetables, and I can tell you, we welcomed the change.

We camped at a place name Fremincourt. Whilst in this place, we saw an air fight, which resulted in our side being the losers. There were about six of our planes flying towards the line, when all of a sudden there was a roar of machine guns fire, and about as many Fritz Aero planes came out of the clouds. In a very short time they had sent three of ours to the ground. It was awful to see the men jumping out of their planes and coming down to the ground. Pieces of aero plane & men were dropping everywhere. One poor fellow was going round and round with his plane, and the German kept on following him, pumping lead into him all the time, until at last his machine burst into flames, and he jumped out. One German was brought down, and when they found the men, one of them had sunk into the ground up to his armpits. He had come down with such terrific force.

We stayed here about three days and were then relieved by the 14<sup>th</sup> Brigade. We came back to a village named Villers-au-Flos. While here there was another exciting event happened. The chums had a Balloon anchored in the yard where we were billeted. They decided to put it up. However, the chap in charge said he did not expect to see the observers again. They went up, and the next thing we could see, was one great blaze, and an immense Taube (German) flying around the thing, and blazing away at the men, who in the meantime had jumped over the side and were descending in their parachutes. Bullets were flying all over how place, but none got hurt. The only injury sustained, was by one of the observers, who had a mark right along his face, where a bullet had grazed him. It happened so quickly, that all were taken by surprise, and by the time we had recovered, the Taube was well on the way home, and no doubt the Pilot was telling the other what good fellows they both were.

From here we went to Boloncourt. We stayed here for a week I think, and then went down to Mametz. We had three weeks spell, whilst here. It was a spell, because the Coy's were camped quite close to us and used to carry their rations from store to huts.

We held divisional Sports here and I remember writing home to min and telling her what a crack Battn I had the honor to belong to. I received some well meant sarcasm by return. However, our Brigade did very well, scoring the highest points in everything, I must say here something about the Officer we had over us. Our former Officer had joined the Coy, and this man had come to us from the Artillery. He was the Manager of that Buck-jumping Show (Skuthorpe's) and right from the jump he made it hot for us. We could never get on with him, and he got what we all wished he would in the end; but that is a future tale. The brutes name was Mansfield.

Our next move was to a place named Vaulx. This was on of the warmest spots we had been in up to date. Put in a week here, and I had some very narrow escapes. At the time we had another Corporal. Bill Waterman by name.

Whatever I had done to this fellow I do not know; but he seemed to have to have me set, and out of the seven night and days we were there, I was up with rations to the line, practically all the time. I could never forgive him for it, although now I laugh over it. But there were plenty of chaps who hardly went near the line. It became so hot as we say, that Bob Patterson lost his temper and told him what

he thought of him. Guess he used to lead us a dance from then on. We had to take rations to Norieal and from there they were taken on to Bullecourt. That was rather an uncomfortable job, because where we dumped the rations, was a three road meeting and no fourth outlet. The result was, if he started shelling, you were caught like a rat in a trap, because limbers kept crowding behind you, and there was not room to pass. We used to have some rather awkward experiences and I for one was very glad to get away from it. While here the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade Hospital, was shelled. The Huns I believe gave them 3 hours in which to shift it. The whole trouble being, that they were situated in the midst of a group of Batteries.

Anyhow he must have got tired of being shelled and not being able to retaliate, so he put about 30 shells into it. It was awful to see the wounded getting taken away from it.

After leaving this place, we pulled into Bapaume or rather the outskirts of it. Here we had a pleasant camp, and as our Officer had gone away to a school and we had secured a fine fellow, Twoomey by name, we ere quite satisfied. We used to go from here to Corbie and buy Canteen stores. I remember one trip in particular that was exceptionally funny. A Lieut. Doutrehand used to buy for the Officer's Mess. He and I started off to Contay one morning to buy anything we could.

However, he was a very generous chap, and we stayed in Corbie all night. In the morning I hitched up the mules and went to see what he had bought. He had a great many different things, among them being a great case of eggs.

We loaded the stuff into the limber, and we were both feeling the effects of the coffee we had been drinking. He made himself a nice seat on top of this case of eggs. Then informed me to trot all the way home as they were wanted for dinner. Right. Off I went. When we arrived at the camp, the eggs were taken out. That case had 12 doz gross of eggs in it when we left Corbie. There were 10 whole ones left. All the rest had been shaken to pulp. Douts called me everything and I swore back at him. That lot cost the Mess £10/-/-. I said I didn't give a damn what It cost the mess, my orders were to trot, and if he choose to so far make an ass of himself as to sit on the top of the crate, well he deserved all he got.

Needles to add, I did not get any more Canteen trips with him again.

Well after having two or three inspections, the Heads decided that we were quite fir to go on further. So off we went and eventually arrived at Contay. This was a decent sized village, and from here we used to go to Amiens. The weather was good during this time. June. Our nice Officer came back from the School to us here. We gave him such a welcome home. Seems that we are not allowed to kill men like these. I had a photo taken of me whilst here, and everything I had on was borrowed clothing. I think that a good number of the chaps thought that I had just lobbed, when I went down to the village. We had a decent time here, Money was plentiful, Champagne was more so, I was well in with one of the ladies who kept a shop. She was an English woman, married to a Frenchman, and seemed to take a fancy to me. That is the best of being such a gentlemanly fellow.

We were soon on the road again. This time bound for a village named Herissart. Guess this was the last place God made in villages. We could get nothing but bad beer. We went to Amiens, when I say went, walked 18 kilos to get there. At least we did not. Bob and I were lucky enough to get in a motorcar. Otherwise we would have been like the others. Take half day to get there and the other half to



come back. We only had the days leave. Had our photos taken again. Seems as if we can not get enough of it.

We stayed here about 1 week. Then it was decided that another shift would not do us any harm. One thing about the Army, when they say go, it is a long time before the word stop is thought of. So we ended up by going to a place named Baussart. A particular thing happened when on the way to this place. We had managed to become separated from the Brigade. How it was done I do not know. However we came across a number of German prisoners, with the usual stupid Tommy guard. The O.C asked the chum if he had seen any Australians go past that particular place. He had seen them. Did he know what Battalion they belonged to? No. BUT THE GERMAN SOLDIER standing alongside him knew. He could speak broken English, and he said the 57<sup>th</sup> Battn went along up the road to the German camp near Baussart. That struck us as rather unusual that he should know.

We were here a few days and had to do a forced route march to Corby. The distance was 46 kilos there and back. We did it in two days. And all to walk and drive our mules across blessed bridges that the Bridge Train made across the Canal. To come to Baussart, our route lay through Contay, Vadencourt, Harponville, Varenness, Acheux to Forceville and then on to here. Baussart was one mass of rats. They used to crawl all over us when trying to sleep at night. And they were no small rats. We did not have a bad time here; but I do not think that very many were sorry to get away from it. We entrained at a station name Arques to go back to the Sailley sector. When it was officially known that we were going to that place great was the joy of the troops. However, on July 7<sup>th</sup> we all tumbled into the train and had a six hour journey to Stenbecoque, coming through Doullens, Frevent, St.Pol Aire, Thiennes and on to Stenbecoque.

We made camp and were not long in getting down to the town. A good many of the people remembered some of the lads. It was about 12 months since we had set foot in the place. We were told that we had seven days to put in here. That developed into three weeks, and from that to another month or more. Even here so far away from the line we had casualties. We lost 12 of our horses. Fritz was trying to get some Artillery that were going along the road, and unfortunately for us, he hit the paddock where our prads were feeding. The chap on the Picquet heard the bombs drop and he climbed under an old dray. That dray was riddled with holes, where the pieces of bomb had gone through. He was unhurt, but fearfully shaken up. One bomb burst about a dozen feet from him, but the cart and a tree saved him from that force.

There was nothing very exciting happened while here. It was only the usual life. Visiting the Estaminets and having a good time, etc. The Hun used to drop bombs on Aire and Hazebroque, where munitions were being made. I remember sitting up till well after two in the morning. Trying to pacify a little girl and get her to go to sleep. She and her mother were alone and Bill Coffey and I were passing the place on our way home when the bombing started. The woman asked us to come in, and while Bill ministered some comforting words to her, I nursed the nipper. She was a bonza-kid; but horribly frightened. The blessed walled were shaking some and I thought that at times, we would have been safer outside. Anyhow the wine was good, and I could not help wishing at times the kids would

not sleep. However, all good things come to an end. We used to get a good reception when we ever went in there again. We had the most beautiful weather while here.

The months of July and August were always decent. Excitement was reigning. Patterson and self at this time were due for Blighty leave. We had the most trying ordeal having to induce the leave clerk, that we wished to go together. However, we managed to get away about the 16<sup>th</sup>. The trip across was nothing much, because we were not traveling in comfort. Anyhow we arrived in London. Had to go to Horseferry Rd, which was the Headquarters of the A.I.P and get clothing, pay & c. I went to the Isle of Wight for three days. Happened to be the only Australian Soldier that had been there up to date. People did not know exactly what I was. Convict or Soldier. I spent a pleasant time with the English side of the family, and then went off the Scotland. We made the acquaintance of three fine old chaps, Hugh Barnett, John Crear, and another whose name I have forgotten. We called him Mac. They took us around to the various places of interest. One trio we went on was to Loch Lomond. This is absolutely one of the finest places of scenery one could wish to see. We happened to be lucky and had a fine day. We could see across the Loch to the mountain Ben Lomond. Afraid my description powers are not advances enough to attempt a description of it. But believe me it was good. We filled the empty whisky bottles up with water and brought them back to the hotel for the Barmaids to drink.

My birthday came round while here, and it was fittingly celebrated. The only mistake that occurred was the date; we held it a day too soon. However, we had another one the following day, to make up for it. My leave at this time was nearly expired, so I had to leave the boys and come south. I went to Acton, near London to see my Great Aunt. Had a dismal time trying to eat the food that she cooked for me. When I had eaten it, I felt about 186. I left there on the Monday morning, after saying goodbye to the old lady. I can see her now, standing at the gate; waving her handkerchief, and I felt a little gloomy. However, that wore off, when I found that I had missed the train and would now have to dodge M.P's until the next day.

I arrived in London about 9a.m and went around to Peel house. When I arrived they were in the middle of a raid. That is, the M.P's were making a raid in this place to catch men who were overdue with their leave. I noticed the chaps going in all directions, so I just told the driver of the taxi to keep on going. Went around to the station and told some tale, and my pass was extended for me.

Well all good things come to an end, and mine had to finish sooner or later. I myself preferred it to be later. I embarked for Folkestone the next morning, and after a rather rough passage arrived back at the camp. I forgot to mention that while in Glasgow, we stayed at Mackay's Hotel. We had everything we wanted, and as long as we did not make it too willing, were treated well. However, I enjoyed myself immensely, and was not long before I thought that I should be entitled to another leave.

When I arrived at the camp, I learned some rather sad news. One of the lads informed me that I was wanted at headquarters. I naturally thought that I had been up to something, and was not prepared for what I learnt. Simply in the usual official way, that father had died on the 26<sup>th</sup> May, it hurt for some considerable

time, because I loved my dad, and he was all I had left. It made it all the harder, because I had been in ignorance of it, and had been having a glorious time. Guess I really did not care much then whether I came back to Australia or not. I had counted so much on seeing him when I came back, that the joy was taken all out of the thoughts if it. Guess, it had to be, but it seemed very hard and cruel that it should come to me like that.

Bob arrived back a few days afterwards and we spent the time talking over what we had seen. Guess this Patterson is absolutely one of the whitest men I ever came in contact with. He and I joined up together in January this year. When one looks back on the comradeship, he cannot help feeling that he should be thankful that it came about. We had our ups and downs; but through them all, selfishness was a stranger. Being an older man than I, he helped himself. I take my hat off to that same old cross grained idiot, Paddy Patterson.

While on leave, there were several places that I had the luck to see, that interested me greatly. One was a trip down the river Clyde. On this trip; and by the way, the name of the boat we went on, was "Lord of the Isle", we saw the ship building industry at its full strength. Ships in every stage of construction. Both sides of the river was lined with them. We had the luck to be held up, while one was launched. The smoke and steam that issued from the bottom of it, made one think that there would be nothing left by the time the water was reached. Another sight was Dumbarton Castle. This was built on a rock situated in the middle of the river, and has a pretty effect, more so because you come, upon it gradually. Hugh Barnett was with us this time. The Isle of Wight is the main placer of England, thought at the time owing to the war; there were very few people there, exclusive of the inhabitation. Frank Cheesewright and I walked practically all around the blessed thing. Did most of the coast towns.

Shanklin, one of the old Roman villages, is still in its natural state. The houses have been standing since the Roman period, though of course some of them have modern additions. The old Church is still in use, and is in good repair. Another Roman village is at a place named Bembridge. Here I tasted some of the famous home made brew. Guess I had to say it was nice; but I would not like to offer any friends of mine. There is a monument here erected to the memory of the first man who built a steam boat. Have forgotten the joker's name; but any of the people over there will tell it to you. I also went to see a place called the Chine. This is something similar to the Bendigo Fernery, only that it is about one eighth as large, and is standing on the tip of strong poles. Peat or Keats, forgot the fellow's name, used to write that awful stuff the English people are pleased to call poetry in this Chine.

There are a great number of other things that I saw, but they are better told when asked, this is an awful strain on a chap's memory and as I have nothing to guide me, you will just have to make the best of a bad job.

The Naval base opposite the Island, Portsmouth, at this time was full of battleships. The Victory was here, and I guess I recognized her directly she came into the line of vision. All Nelson's canons too. I would not mind if they were the kind that had been used in this last stunt. Well I will have to try and come back to France again. One can have too much of a good thing. So here goes.

We left Stebbeccque to go to the Ypres front. Camped at a place name Dickibuich. Had very rough passages whilst in this camp. We had to take the rations to Hooze and it was no fun doing it. In the night one could not sleep for Fritz and his Aeroplanes. He used to come over about 9 in the evening and keep it up until daybreak. This is practically the worst bout we have had yet. There is nothing but dead men, horses and shells of all description. Some of the things I have seen up to date have not made me hanker after seeing more.

I had a rather lucky escape when going up to Anzac Ridge one morning. I was driving along the road when I heard a most dreadful noise. Like one great buzz. It seemed to be getting nearer to me every minute and I could not locate it. All of a sudden, there was a crash on the side of the road. It was an Aeroplane that had been hit, and the men and it had crashed. They fell about 8 or 9 feet from me. I did not see much of them, because my mules bolted; but when coming back, I saw how narrow an escape I had had from being crushed under the whole turnout. It was not long after this, that one of the drivers had the misfortune to be blown sky high. A shell fell right under his horse chests/ I do not think that he has come down yet. However, we managed to get over all our troubles, and came back to a rest camp, name Devonshire Camp. We stayed here until the 9/10/17 and then went up to practically the same front. We had the usual work to do. Packing rations; and I am afraid that it was not a very enviable job. It was just a case of get out or get killed. I had many an anxious moment, and more than my snare of trips. However, one had to do as he was told, and I was no exception to the rule. Bob and I stuck together through everything. I remember him one night putting the wind up the whole crowd, by refusing to budge until I had taken my load off. The Hun was shelling the dumb badly and I think that everyone was a little anxious to get away. I could not get my load off fast enough, and Bob told the Officer to go to the devil, in fact everyone around him, and waited until I was ready. We came out of it safely; but it was not the best of experiences.

About this time it become very cold and the trips to the line were much more frequent and worse. There always seemed to be a duel between the two forces with their Artillery whenever I had to go. And I seemed to be able to walk right into the middle of it. Bob and I with a chap named Lynch, had to go up to Brigade Headquarters one evening, say at 10 o'clock. Off we started; and it was good on until we got through Ypres. Then the run started. We had no idea where the headquarters were; but our instructions were to find them, and give the provisions to Brigadier Elliot himself. ....Right. Off we went up the couaroy road. Someone must have told the Hun I had some roast beef on board for the 5<sup>th</sup> brigadier. He pelted shells at me; I reckoned they were coming my way, until we got back to Ypres. We only had about five miles of this couaroy road to go up. It was the longest trip and the worst I had ever been up. Anyhow we were very glad to get out of it.

It would be a waster of time to try and describe all the things that happened whilst on thins front. We went in again, and our transport got knocked rotten in one night. We lost al, the Officers hacks, together with the men who were holding them. The pack of Officers riding out of the line when they could just have easily walked cost the lives of three men, and two wounded. Not to mention some of the bets horses in the Brigade. Col. Stewart condemned it straight away, and the

man who was responsible for it, Major Taylor, very nearly lost his rank. It was one of the many things this foolish fellow did, in our opinion only to curry favors with the Officers over him. I for one have experienced many of his fads. I have gone through hell, to take a bottle of whisky or a piece of roast beef to some Col or Major, and all because this idiot thought it was nothing to do. He very seldom tried a visit himself.

Up to this time, we had had only a couple of men wounded in our little lot. It came as rather a shock to hear of the little fellow's death. Emery we used to know him by, and he was a decent fellow. George Martin and Jack Anderson. I believe the latter, although thought to be dead, was only unconscious. He is now back in Australia, with the usual one arm and stir leg.

You may remember that I spoke, a few pages back, about us wishing that our officers might get it. Well all things come in time to those who deserve them. He got it in the neck a few days afterwards. Also the Sergeant. They were two, whom we had been wishing would get put out, and the camp was a happy one when we heard the news. We all prayed they would die on the way to the dressing station, but they didn't. The Officer never came back. The Sergeant did. But we could manage him. I suppose that it seems a callous thing to say about one another; but when who are placed in the position to be obeyed, abuse the power given them, they deserve all the unkind thoughts they get from others. We were a very happy crowd after this. An Officer, a light horse man named McDonald, took charge of the Transport. This chap was with us from then on, and we had the time of our lives. He was strict and frightened of the heads; but with all that, there was no dirty or underhand work with him. Guess every man who was in the Transport, will have a good word for the two Macs. McDonald and McCallum. Well we had a few days spell and went into it once more. One thing that seemed very peculiar to me; I always happened to be the last man out, as they say. Whenever the Battalion came out of action, you would be sure to see me, with my limber, dodging shells etc, to get a few old machine guns broken hot boxes. Then when was loaded up, away I would train after the crew. Guess they felt the same, if I could have done without them for some considerable time.

We stayed on this front until somewhere in November, when we arrived to Loos. I for one will never be able to forget Ypres. All the horrors of war were to be seen there. I could give a very good description of it; but I think that it would be best to pass over them because Ypres is not a place that can be boasted about. No feat of arms can ever wipe the memories of the thousands of men, who were destroyed there and seemingly with such brutal carelessness and want of consideration. Dead men became nothing to us, and if a man was in the way, the first thing that rose to your mind, was that he would be killed and rolled out of the way, for you to get past. That was all you could do. Roll them off the track to be trampled into the mud, and so buried. And the bitter irony of the whole thing was you did not know the moment you would be going through a similar process. I suppose that war will soon be forgotten, this one at any rate. I wonder if any man, who went through it will ever forget? I am afraid not. We forget to do or say any commonplace thing, because it is of not such interest that it can cause us to remember it; but you can never forget the sight of dead men, blood and confusion. To the Digger, they will always be remembered, and when folks hurl

imprecations at his head, they will be puzzled, as many of them are today, at the smile that flits across his face. He will not be laughing at them; just pitying them and why, because they do not understand, why he should so smile. The present day quarrels have done much to affect the Diggers position; but it is not his fault wholly. There are many people who are exploiting him to serve themselves, and it almost makes a man wish he were back again at Ypres taking his chance.

However, I am forgetting myself; this is a Diary not a script on Politics.

We stayed at Lochre a few days, (before coming to this camp we were at Poperhinge) and then moved up to Kemmel). Here we stayed until the 14<sup>th</sup> December. Nothing of much interest happened. Think I received a parcel or a letter. Anyhow I got something. The front was very quiet and was a decided change from Ypres. We had moving pictures and concert parties. The "kookaburras" or 5<sup>th</sup> Div Concert Party, kept us well amused. At Ypres, the "Anzac Coves" were the chief performers. It used to be funny to see a chap standing on a stage singing a song, while Fritz was busy dropping bombs outside. He, the chap, used to try and be awful brave. Anyhow they earned their fun. I know that many another did not feel too well listening, but the concert kept going just the same. I remember once at a picture hut at Ypres. We were all intently looking at some Cowboy affair, when there was an awful row, Seemed as if someone was trying to throw a tone of bricks on the roof. A Hun plane had come over, and was dropping bombs and must have seen the light from the flics. He could not have had any eggs left, and it was just as well he didn't. However, he kept things moving with his machine gun. He pelted the devil out of the roof of the hut. You never saw such a stampede. Bob and I were standing near the door and were the first out. The most remarkable thing about it, is that no one was hurt. It seems impossible to believe that bullets could come through that hut and not hit anybody. We had to laugh, because of the antics of some of the chaps. Needless to say, the flic theatre was in a different place the next night. Wonderful how quick they can shift a place when necessity urges.

While at Kemmel, we had the pleasure of receiving a message from Fritz; but as we could not read it, we did not know whether he had given in or not. Some balloons were seen floating over the line. Suddenly they were seen to burst and pamphlets with printed matter on them came fluttering down. As they were written in Chinese or German or some other language unknown to us, we did not know what they were about. Fritz had made a bloomer. The Aussies were the only ones on the front and they as a rule cannot read Chinese. We did not bother to answer it.

After being here about one month, we left for a place near Boulougne, name Doudaville. This move occurred on the 14<sup>th</sup> December. Doudaville is supposed to be 15 or 14 miles from Boulougne. We had the time of our lives at this place. Ice skating and Tobogganing were all the fashion, that is until someone managed to land on the ice, on his head instead of his feet, then the fashion would wear off. We were snowed in here for a couple of weeks, and things were getting serious. No one could get to us. However, they cleared the roads of snow, and as fast as they did this, they were snowed up again, eventually it thawed and the supply wagons came in. The snow was three feet in depth in places, so you can imagine what it would be like. A rather amazing thing happened while here. Will Davey

had been with us all the time, and as usual was camped with us. He sometimes used to walk in his sleep. One night I awoke and as usual put my hand to see if he was there and he was missing. I hopped out and called Paddy, when we got outside, there was our friend sitting in about 3 feet of snow. He had just wakened up apparently. His teeth were going about 40 to the dozen; however, I have not heard of his doing the trick again. This is a cure to remember. When a person walks in his or her sleep, lead them to the snow and instantaneous cure is guaranteed.

While at Doudaville we held sports of every description. Our Brigade beat all comers in football. In fact, you only had to mention something and the 15<sup>th</sup> would pull it off I used to write to you Min, and tell you what a credit this particular Brigade was to the A.I.F but you could not be made to realize it. Of course you do now. We had one of the most gorgeous feasts you could set your eyes on while here. Christmas dinner, also New Year. We all put in 5 francs each to the cook and he did the rest. His was the best feed for some time, and we were not slow in coming forward a second time. There is no doubt about it, the chap who cooked the dinner, deserved credit for the way in which he turned it out. I am sure you would not have had a better in Aussie, and some of the dishes, I had never seen before. It all ended in most of us being gloriously happy, for there was plenty of wine and Champagne to be had. I suppose that many a father and mother if they could have seen their sons would have held up their hands in horror; but when one comes to think about it now, we were hardly to be blamed. Our lot was pretty hard, and this came once in a year. For the next one, not one of us could tell whether or not we would see it. However, this jollification came to an end. We enjoyed it and so also did we enjoy the New Year Spread. Carried out on the same lines as Christmas. It was decidedly better than 2lbs of pudding between two men; that we had the previous year at Ribemont, and then end up with stew. I received some photos from home. Alan, Ella, Win and Edna all sent me their portraits. Must say that they looked a dead beat lot. However, it was nice of them to remember me. Afraid that it was never meant to last very long though, I mean the remembrance part of it. We had an inspection by General Hobbs. As usual when we had anything like this happen, it was a sure sign that we were going to shift, and a furphy was not long in circulating, that they had us already shifting on the 30<sup>th</sup> January.

I must speak about the way in which we used to get wood for our fire. At the back of our tent there was a fence, this fence was made of thin lath-like wood. It was all interwoven and laced. Being very old and dry; it naturally burnt well. We started by taking a couple of pieces, just to start the fire you know, until we got some wood from the store. We did not get the wood from the store, so had to take a few more pieces from the fence. Bob and I kept taking that fence to pieces systematically, piece by piece, until there was nothing left but the posts. Then when the Froggle put in a bill for £15/-, they had the audacity to suggest we pay it. Fancy that, fighting for them, and just because through a little oversight we burnt his fence, he wanted us to pay £15/-,. A trip to Blighty done stone cold on a blessed fence. We were not having any. Got a severe wiggling and the bill was paid out of the Battalion funds. That is one good cause I can speak confidently

about, in which the Battalion Fund did some good. Good old Canteen Bill, we got a little of our money back that time, in place of your rotten biscuits and chocolate. We used to have what is known as a "jinney". That is a fire bucket. It was the jinney that was responsible for that fence disappearing. Hungry things jinnies. Worse than all the cows, horses, men and other things. However, when that jinney used to be busy eating the fence, it used to get quite hot about the job. Seemed to make hard work of it. Its sides used to get to such heat that you could see through them, and the lid. Oh, that was a perfect white; White with rage. One day, a poor little soldier, who had been taking something in his coffee, came to our hut. He crawled down off his horse, and said to Bob Patterson; "Put me to bed". Alright Chilla, Bob answered. He took hold of this poor fellow and helped him inside the hut. The poor chap was so knocked up exhausted, that the first thing that entered his head was to sit down. Being slightly fatigued, he did not trouble to look around for a seat. He just simply sank down on the jinney. I suppose you expect that he got up in a hurry. Not a bit of it. The fence at that time was all burnt up, and Bob had not gone for coal. The jinney was quiet and in good temper. Nice and cool. But if it had have been white with rage, well, I guess this chap would have been half way through Europe before you could say swish. I have had some narrow escapes; but none so thrilling and dangerous as that. Fancy reading in the paper, my obituary notice, to the following effect: Shot, in action, or rather in the pants, by a jinney. He died a soldier. I was fascinated with that beastly thing for quite a long time afterward. Just about this time I received word to the effect that Uncle Frank had fallen off his bicycle. Well, he is lucky to have one to fall off. I, however, hope that he will get much better. The rumor that had spread about, that we were leaving on the 30<sup>th</sup> was correct. We prepared for it on the following manner.

### **JANUARY 19<sup>th</sup>**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> of this month, Bob Patterson and my good self, wended our way to Boulougne. We had instructions from Mac (our officer) to stay as long as we liked; but to be sure and turn up by the 31<sup>st</sup>, not to let the M.P's put it over us, and if they did, to break jail if possible, so as to be back here on time. Off we went, and arrived in Boulougne about 12 noon on the 28<sup>th</sup>. The first thing that we did was to make ourselves known to the Sergeant of Police, both mounted & foot. We explained our position to him. Gave him to understand, that we were going to have those few days in Boulougne; but were not out for trouble. After a little persuasion, he came to see things in the light we wanted him to see them. That man took us to the barracks and introduced us to all the other M.P's in M.P. land. We were perfectly safe. Whenever we went abroad, they used to ask us how we were getting on. Mac and the Sergeant during our absence had been having about 10 fits, thinking that we had been grabbed. The Sergeant no doubt, praying that we would be. We had a right royal time, and came back to the fold, with the well wishes of our M.P. friends still ringing through our ears. Bob was the one who thought of going to the Sergeant, and he carried the while thing through. I was there to help if anything went wrong. I am thankful to say it didn't. While in



Boulougne, we had our photo's taken, exactly two years since we had left Australia.

We came back to Doudaville, and the following morning shifted. Had a four days march back to Kemmel. When we arrived there, we found that our billets had been confiscated by some of the other Aussie Batts, so we had to come back a few kilos to a place name Neuve Eglise. This was something similar to the Kemmel front. Nothing doing. Concerts were held regularly, and one almost forgot at times that there was a war on. All through February we stayed on. Our chief amusement used to be the concert or drinking tea. It was something like nine months or seven since I had been in Blighty, so I made myself known to the guy in charge of such matters, told him the tale and Bob and self were issued with our passes. Away we went on the 9<sup>th</sup> March, for our second trip.

Scotty Delglish went with us, and we had a bonny time going down. Went to Ballieu and from there to Calais. Were delayed somewhat at Calais. There was a rumor that all leave had been cancelled. We thought that we were all done. I believe a few days after we left this camp, the leave was stopped. However, we crossed the channel and arrived at Horseferry Road at 6 o'clock. Had the usual change and caught the 11.30 train to Glasgow. Arrived there about 9.30 the next morning. That is good traveling from France to Glasgow in less than 24 hrs and stops between. We of course stayed at our Hotel (Mackays). Went straight around to see Hugh and found he had to go to Manchester on business. He wanted us to go with him; but had had enough of traveling for a while, and just wished to rest. He came back on the Thursday and invited us to dine at his place. We went for dinner. His eldest daughter Maggie presided. Owing to his wife being dead, this girl does all that kind of thing, and by joves she does it well. On this trip, I was not very well. The atmosphere seemed to affect me. When we had a few fine days I became much better. I met a girl here named Miss Harvey. She was very nice, and I spent some pleasant times with her.

Our visit included much the same as before. We had made friends and they gave us every description of amusement they could possibly think of. I remember on the Sunday, we decided to take Miss Harvey and her friend to Rookin Glen. Right. We had to do the thing in style, so I hired a Taxi. It came around to the hotel for us. By joves we did look well getting into it. There seems to be a sense of stolen pleasure in having anything you jolly well know that you cannot afford. We drove in turn to Miss Harvey's place and then to her friends, and away we all went to Rookin Glen. The Glen was nice. Oh I enjoyed it thoroughly, and was in the seventh heaven of delight, when we entered the taxi to come back. I noticed one thing about Patterson. He always seems to know when danger is about. Seems like second nature with him. I notice that when we arrived back at our Hotel, that he seemed panic stricken. He acted in a strange manner. Not strange now when I have had time to think about it. When the Taxi stopped in front of the Hotel, he immediately hopped out and vanished indoors. I took no notice of that, thinking perhaps he was ill or something. But when I heard a voice whisper in my ear mystic words, Four Pounds fifteen please, I knew then why he had vanished so quickly. He had read the meter and guessed that it would cost a tidy sum to square the man. I fell in. Eventually we left our friends and came south, not West my lad. Went straight through London and down to Portsmouth. From there we

went in on of the coastal boats across the Isle of Wight. Frank Cheesewright made us very welcome, and we spent a few days with him. Played Billiards at the Club etc. in fact we were some goers. While on the previous visit to Ryde, Frank and I were out walking, and as could only be expected, we got very thirsty. He asked me what would I have to drink. I said "A glass of Milk, please" and could have cut my tongue out directly I said it. He called for a whisky and I had to watch him drink the darned stuff, while I said how nice and fresh the milk was. That is a good moral for you. Do not try to be a hypocrite, because you are sure to fall in. I always say what I think now and lose very little by it.

We came from Ryde to Clevedon. This place is about 10 miles from Bristol. Arrived there and was welcomed by Arthur and the girl Vicki. This kid is one of the nicest I have ever met. Arthur is a carpenter and with our aid, I think that he must have remodeled all Clevedon during our stay. One of the amusing things, that happened whilst there, at least I thought it was, of the trip, was a game of billiards. We went into the Cub that Arthur belonged to, and sat down watching the folks play. Of course there was great excitement when we came in, because they did not know whether we were Zulus or what we were. However, one old crony, aged 90, asked me to oblige him. I, being such an obliging fellow, hopped up and prepared to do my best. This old fellow used the rest all the time, and by the powers I could not beat him. He was putting it all over me. Bob was laughing at me and Arthur the same. Later I learned that the old chap was no harm at the game. However, I started to grow cautious, and to make sure of my shots. The result was that I got going on a brake and hanged if I could stop. The game was 100 up and when I started my brake I was 45. The old chap somewhere in the vicinity of 70. I beat him, and if you could have seen the look of disgust on the old mans face. He called me everything he could lay his tongue to. I made it worse by laughing at him; but I could not help it. I tried to pacify the old devil afterwards, but he would not have any of me. So in the remembrance of one Englishman, there is an Aussie soldier who is the biggest rogue that ever left Australia. I do not think that I offended anyone else.

From Clevedon we went to Acton. Had a nice time there. Stayed all day Sunday. In the afternoon, we went for a stroll. There was some guy speaking in the street about the Prime Minister of England. He called him everything, and I was a little comforted, in the knowledge that I was not the only rogue on this earth. Bob insulted him and we had to get for our lives. He had half Acton on his side. The other half were doubtful, so we did not stop to argue. Came to London, or rather left Acton to come to London 6.pm. As London is about say 5 miles, we have been trying ever since to fathom why it was we did not arrive at Victoria Station until 9 o'clock. Anyhow we had a good ride on the Tubes. Guess we just kept going round and round. Once we came out on to a black siding. They must have needed the train again, so off we went on another tour. The next morning, we embarked for France. We had heard disquieting news when in England, to the effect that Fritz had been making it mighty uncomfortable for our chaps. When we arrived at Calais, we found everything on big move. Needless to say, we were not detained very long at the camp. We were soon in the train, and arrived up at Caestre, about 9 kilos from Meteren. We walked those nice kilos looking for the crowd, and found them. But they were a sad looking lot. They told us tales that

made one feel glad that he was or had been in Blighty. A few days after we had gone Fritz had started to blow things about. He blew our fellows out of the mine was one of great joy, when I thought that I had at last missed something. Well, the next morning, we went back to Caestre and entrained for Doullens. Arrived in this place 11 o'clock. We had about two hours sleep and then had to move up into reserves. Fritz, I may as well mention, had broken through the line. This occurred in the great push of his in March, 18. We kept marching on and took up another position. Were relieved by the Scotch and we then came on to Bonnay. While on this trip up from Caestre to Doullens, Fritz shelled the train. We were fortunate to be missed; but the 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> Transport Drivers were cut about. He put two shells through a truck. The chaps were sitting around playing cards, their horses on either side. They did not come out of that. Much the same thing happened to the 59<sup>th</sup> Drivers. I say again we were fortunate. Our march to Bonnay was about 23 kilos. I guess I will not forget that in a hurry. The chaps were taking it in turns to ride the dinks. I would ride a certain distance say, and then one of the others would get up. I swear that I must have waked miles and asleep. We had only had about 3 hours sleep in as many days. We arrived at Bonnay and found that our services were not required. They had stopped the Hun for the time-being. Well we threw ourselves down anywhere and got as much sleep as we could. I slept good part of the next day.

Our next move was to Corbie. This place had been evacuated by the civil population. They had gone and left everything as if they were still living there. I was filled with disgust the way some of the men behaved themselves whilst in this town. I cannot describe it. Sufficient to say, that they seemed to lose all sense of manhood. Nothing was too bad for them to do. Bob and I camped by ourselves, and kept to ourselves during the time we were in this town. It is bad enough to have to remember it.

While here I saw a magnificent sight. I suppose there must have been fully 150 Aero planes in the air at one time. They were like a flock of large birds. Fritz was putting up a barrage; but whether that was preventing them from going across, I do not know. I think now, that they were there, solely to inspire the Hun, and cause him to think of what he could expect if he broke through. Even among our planes, you would see the Iron cross or the Hun. I will say this for the German Aviators at the time. They were either brave men or foolhardily. They would come over flying low, in fact so low you could have hit them with a stone by throwing it. Then one of the crew would stand up in his plane, and bow to you, at the same time waving his hand. You could see them smile and felt like killing somebody. We stayed here about one week and then moved on to Aubigny. Here we used to get quite a lot of practice shooting at Fritz's Aero planes. I remember two that were flying towards Amiens. They must have lost their bearings and kept flying backwards and forwards across the lines. We fired about 3000 tracer bullets at them and the Coys camped around kept firing at them too. This went on for about a half-hour but no one seemed to be able to hit them. Someone those Fritzies' seemed to have the laugh on us. I do not quite know why.

From this place we moved to Daours, about 2 kilos away. We were only gone from Aubigny a couple of days when Fritz let gas over, and gassed nearly all

the transport and their horses. These chaps had taken over from us. We had a look at our camp some time afterwards, and it was nothing but shell holes. During our stay at Daours nothing happened until the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> April. The Hun made an attack and advanced to the foot of Villers-Bretnor. He was right down in the Valley. One could not see anything for gas, and the country that we had been in the habit of going over previously in perfect safety, was suddenly turned into one of deadliest peril. However, on the 28<sup>th</sup> the lads took back all ground that had been lost. Many prisoners were taken. We lost four horses and two men from our little lot. After this matters were rather warm on both sides; but eventually they seemed to get tired of banging away at each other. We stayed on here until July and then went down to Amiens. Were here about one week, when we had to hasten off again. We went back to the same front, and then got things ready for the well to be remembered 8<sup>th</sup> Aug stunt. We did nothing but cart ammunition up to the railway bridge at Villers-Bretnor. On the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> everything was silent. One could hardly hear a sound, when all of a sudden there was a mighty roar. Guns were speaking everywhere & the noise was frightful. We were already mounted and waiting the word when we could go. At last we were off. We went as far as Villers-Bretnor. Stayed there about one hour and then right on through the town. You would hardly credit the amount of traffic that had gone on before us. Right on the heels of the Infantry. When we got out on the other side, the sight was wonderful. When I say wonderful, that is from our point of view. We only knew that the push was to start, that morning, and it was very hard to credit that our boys were going for their lives about 9 kilos further on.

There was one ungodly mass of prisoners. Some of them were too scared to speak. You could see that they had had the very wits frightened out of them. Others seemed arrogant still. One young fellow I was talking to, he was about 18 years of age, seemed very confident that Germany would win. I tried to explain that the game was all over bar shouting; but he would not have it. He was plucky. Along the road came one lone string of these unfortunate men. Perhaps I had better not say that, because these fellows were what I call the parasites of the Army. Men of all units taking their watches, money, and everything they could possibly get. The M.P's were up bright and early that morning, and they were doing their best to put a stop to it all; but with poor results. There was hardly any shell fire at this particular part.

We went along this road until we came to a village name Gillecourt. Camp was made on the outskirts of this place. I and another chap were detailed off to go back to Daours in order to bring some goods that had been left behind. While we were away, the Transport got into difficulties. Fritz shelled their camp, wounding men. One was shot through the breast, while the other had a bad wound in the arm. A Tommy driving a wagon past the camp site had his arm blown off. When we arrived back everything was in chaos. Limbers upturned and men in a very nervous state. However, the camp was made and we stayed in it until the following day. We then went up to Gillecourt. The troops at this time were at the next village. Harbonniers. An incident occurred here that was full on interest while in progress. One of our Balloons was advancing rapidly, and seemed to be getting ahead of the troops. An Airplane coming from the direction of the line swooped of a sudden and shot the balloon through. The result was it came down

in flames. It appeared that it was one of our own machines that did the trick. The aviators apparently did not recognize the balloons as one of ours, it being so far advanced. You could have heard the cries from the troops for miles when they saw what happened. A few minutes after, the air was full of Taubes. Machine Gun bullets were flying everywhere. They flew back to their side and then came the shells. We were halted alongside the sugar factory and by the powers we soon got out of that. Bob and self had the tucker-box out and were busy eating, when there was a thump and our poor box and food was smashed to atoms. A piece of shell about 9 inches long had passed between us and crashed into the box. What it would have done to one of us if it had crashed into us, we do not like to think of.

We moved away about 500 yards out of the line of fire, and the Hun must have got tired of shooting for he stopped. In the evening our job was to find the Company. Guess it was some job. They were all over the darned country. However, we got their food to them. At Gillecourt there was an immense train. This armored car and all its fittings was taken by the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade. It was just as the Hun left it, ready to be used, and looked as if it had been in use when the boys came up to it. There were a few dead Germans laying about it and I suppose they had a pretty rough spin. Guns of every description were scattered about. There were thousands of rounds of ammunition, mostly shells. These were in small underground places and made us think that our planes must have been rather a nuisance at times.

At the side of the railway Fritz had an ammunition dump this had been set on fire, whether by him or our fellows it was hard to say; but every now and again there would be an awful roar and a great cloud of smoke would fly into the air. That was one place that everyone left well alone. We had to be so very careful what we touched, because of the tricks he was reputed to have played on other troops. Guess one was strung up to as nice a state of nervousness as you could wish to see.

A few days passed and the Battalion came out. They went to Daours again and left me behind to gather some guns &c. When I say &c, that embraces quite a number of things. I was up in this part of the globe for two days. My collection included, Cookers, Books, Typewrites, Machine-Guns, Rifles, Revolvers, Telephones, Gramophones, a Piano and a number of boxes of cartridges. In fact it was a traveling shop for all kinds of souvenirs. I had to cart them out and on each one place a ticket, with the Battalions name on it. Lieut. Staley was with me and a chap named Dockerty. Staley went back to the Batt the first day and left us to collect more souvenirs for the war Museum. The second night, my friend and self slept in three different places. The Hun was making his presence felt by dropping bombs and firing bullets all over the dashed place. Our first resting place was a hole in the ground, over which had been placed a sheet of roofing iron. As we could hear the bullets hitting all around this, we thought it would be much safer to look for a better hole. Accordingly we started. Me in the lead on my stomach and friend Doc following. I led the way down another hole and it struck me then that I must have looked like some gigantic worm going into that hole. This particular hole was bullet-proof, but after we had been in it a while we reckoned that a good sized bomb would just about fix it and us. As Fritz seemed

determined to hit the only two living beings in a space of about a mile square, we decided that another little journey would not do us any harm. Off we went again, and this time secured a bonza dugout. Here we went to sleep and slept so soundly that it was well after nine the next morning when we awoke. The first thing I went out to have a look at was the poor mules. The poor wretches had got loose in the nighttime and the souvenirs were in an awful state. We did not mind that so much, but one of the beasts had eaten dash near a bad of bread. Bombs and Bullets do not trouble them. The Battalion clerk had picked out a Typewriter for his own use. He did not get it. The mule put his foot on it. Well Doc and I stacked all the things we had collected in a corner f the sugar factory yard. I put a great piece of cardboard on the top f the while lot telling people that they were all taken by doc and myself. Have often wondered what the guy who came up and had a look at the 57<sup>th</sup> Battalions captures thought when he read that card. After this we got going and came into the camp at Deours about three o'clock. My, but they were glad to see us. Reckoned that I and Doc, mules and limber had gone west. Guess it was not the heads fault that we didn't. Cut of the whole blessed lot of souvenirs, I did not get one for myself. I did think of taking a typewriter; but it would have been too much to have looked after.

We camped alongside the canal and had a really decent time swimming and getting ready for the next stunt. It bears out the old saying, that all the Australian needed to refresh them selves for the next fight, was one bottle of beer and a good feed, we got the one bottle of beer and a good feed and it was not many days before we were on the road again. I do not know where we went to, because it was pitch dark when we started and I did not reach the place. That is, it was dark when we arrived; but Chas had to go and look for the Battalion. I found them the next morning and the Transport in the afternoon. They had shifted from the place we had been to. I think it was named Ceresy; but as I said before, it was dark and there was nothing but trenches and shell-holes and no name. I was mighty glad to get away from it, even if only to look for the Batt, because it smelt if dead men and al other evil smells only too common to the Battlefield. Bob told me I had not missed much and he should know.

The transport moved along the Canal and made camp; but Bob and I when taking the rations up had to camp at Battalion Headquarters. This was about one mile in front of Maricourt and about 500 yards from the line. There were stables built into the side of the hill and supports were just around the corner. You can that by tell, we had not been given a very nice job. We were picked to take it on simply because MacDonald knew that if anything were to happen, we would not leave one another. The Cookers were brought up and place in a position. They looked like large field guns, because they were place under large camouflage screens that had been Fritzs'.

This camp was made at the foot of a very high hill which faced the line. A road led around the bottom of it up through a valley. About three hundred yards along the valley and to the side was a large mine crater. That is, an enormous hole where some unfortunates had been blown up. We had some trips through the valley to get to this crater with the rations. The Transport used to bring food to the cookers. They on the cookers in turn would cook it and pace it in hot boxes.

Then it would be placed on the limbers and the rest left to Bob and I. we left it to Providence to see that we got there with it for the lads.

Three weeks we put in here and every day was full of danger. Through the day there would be a little shell fire. The shells would come over the top of the hill and drop in front of our camp. Directly dusk set in, we used to get it properly. There were three trips to be done. Eight o'clock in the morning, again at twelve and six at night. Then perhaps supper would be made and that would have to go up. The day trips were quite nice, but after dark it was not much.

It seems out of all reasoning; but that large hill was between us and Fritz and yet machine-gun bullets used to come over it by the hundred, and it was no joke trying to get out with your limber. The cooks used to watch us go and wonder whether we would get round the corner into the valley. The distance was about one hundred yards to that corner and we had to run the gauntlet the whole length. It does not seem very far; but when the bullets are whizzing all round you those yards seem miles.

It became so dangerous that Bob and I decided to make a dugout. We were sleeping in a hut that had been built against the side of the hill, so the boards were pulled out of the back and we started to dig. I do not think that I ever worked so hard. We made our dugout about 10ft deep and lined it with heavy uprights. Bob who had had experience in mining engineered the business and I worked under his directions. We had this completed by night. We were in it about two hours when Fritz opened up for his usual night's entertainment. One could hear nothing but a dull moaning and whining. This is made when the shells are following each other through the air. It used to be very nice to have to get up and harness your mules and go through this with rations.

This night we could hear the shells falling and bursting in the space in front of us. Of a sudden there was a crash. The breath was taken right out of me and we heard the front of our hut falling in. A shell had lobbed alongside the door. A few seconds and I thought that the top of my head was coming off. Another landed right on top of our little hole. When we got out the next morning our hut was in ruins and there was a great gaping hole over the top of the dugout. I think that we were mighty thankful that we built that dugout. If we had been sleeping in the hut that night, well there would have been two more notices "Killed in Action".

The next day we cleared away the debris and patched up the hut. It was Bob's turn to do the day work. He had a very decent time of it, because as I said before, we only had a few shells and machine gun bullets to contend with through the day. The night was the worst and we took it turn about to go up. It seemed as if we were never meant to be let alone. I harnessed up this evening and everything was quiet. Dick Reed had come down to go up with me. He was Acting Quarter Master for D Company. We started for the corner and nothing happened. Reckoning on this as a good omen we entered the valley with easy minds. Guess they were soon dispelled. I do not think I have ever seen so many shells bursting at the one time. They were all round us and it seems a marvel how I was not smashed to atoms. The one bad faulty with a Drivers job is that he is so exposed to this kind of fighting. He is right up in the air as it were and cannot get under cover. Dick got between the limber and stood the chance of stray pieces hitting him or a shell falling on the top of the lot. I had to sit there and

think and I tell you I did a power of it. I don't think that I was frightened. I just simply had to go on and chance my luck to get through. So I kept on driving. The mules were plunging all over the place; but I managed to keep them as near the track as possible. Guess I did it but the perspiration was running from me like water. It was awful going up and then I had to come back by myself. I do not know how I got back. When I came to my senses I was in front of the dugout unharnessing the mules and a more scared man you would not have met in France. This was a sample of the many nights and days we had in store. I do believe the boys were really sorry for us. They could get down on the ground and lie flat if anything was doing but we could not, and it made us look so helpless. I have often thought after it all, that a Driver in a Battalion Transport had one of the worst jobs in the Army.

We buried about 10 Huns here. They were lying about and the stench was becoming rather unpleasant so we dug them in. I had a laugh at the Padre. He, poor man, built a dugout on his own plans. One he said that would stop any shell the Hun had. It was a massive structure, but while away one evening he came home and found to his surprise that Fritz had made small work of his famous place of abode. It frightened the wits out of us. The shell landed fair on top of his dugout and slabs of timber flew everywhere. We were under the impression that he was in it at the time. Guess we hunted for him, but as we could find no trace gave him up for lost. We were rather surprised to see him come strolling home late that night. He was more than surprised when he saw his little home all busted up.

Another scene happened one night, which filled us with disgust. Bob was on the night shift and busy in the stable with the mules. Fritz opened up per usual. He was lucky this time. There were about 30 Tommies going up to help our chaps and he got right in amongst them. They came running and yelling as they came, for the stable. When they sighted Bob they implored him for God's sake to show them where a dugout was. The lad was so disgusted at the way in which they behaved that he cursed them for what they really were. It was this argument and their cries that brought me out. I have never seen men so panic stricken and I guess a braver man than Patterson, he stood there and told them what he thought of them and the worse they became, the less inclined he seemed to aid them. I could see that it would not be of much benefit to him to stand and revile them, because he was exposing himself unnecessarily. I told them to go down into where the cooks were sleeping. There was one wild rush to get into that dugout, and they fought like savages one with the other to get in first. Guess after it was all over, we had to laugh, but I reckon before an Australian would so far forget himself to show fear like that, he would sooner take his chance.

Perhaps if they had have acted decently and in a quiet manner, things would have been alright. As it was several were wounded badly and one killed. Bob said afterwards, he did not know what made him swear at them, but the thought that he was doing this job under the conditions they met with, every night made him angry. You can boost the Tommy as much as you like, but for downright bravery and coolness give me my own countrymen. We used to see these chaps quite a lot afterwards and I think that most of them had the decency to feel ashamed.



I think that this was one of the roughest times we had had up to date. However, news came that the Battn was to be relieved by the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. The Division relieved them but Bob and I were left behind just to help their Drivers you know. We had nobody to help us; but I suppose that they wanted to try and kill us. The 1<sup>st</sup> Divvy Transport Officer was a better man than we at first imagined him. He told us in plain language to get out, that we had done enough. You can bet we did not linger any longer than to thank him. He said get out. That was the question. It was about one in the morning when we started and it took us nearly two hours to do it. Bombs, gas and shells seemed to like us, but we did it. We arrived back at the camp about six in the morning. After our past experiences we were not sorry to be able to say that we had arrived. Guess there was many a time when I thought that I would go out in quite a different manner. I felt very tired and had a bad attack of the jumps. We went down to the outskirts of Corbie for a spell. Bob and I made more enemies through camping as far away from the crowd as possible. The truth was we wanted to be quiet, as both of us were somewhat run down. The crowd called us everything for parade; but as we had Mac's permission to stay where we were, we politely told them to go the Devil. While we were out here, the first Division had taken Proyart and were well on the way to Peronne. It was during this stunt that Major R.O. Henderson was killed and his death was learnt with regret by all who knew him. He was simply idolized by his men and it seemed a great pity that he was taken.

The Heads must have come to the conclusion that we would be wanted so off we went. Up past Hamel and out on the Peronne-Amniens road. We pulled up on the side of this road and made camp. Hardly there two minutes when there was a cry of "Patterson & Moore" yoke up. Bob looked at me and I said that we were in for it again. The Sergeant or rather not him, for he was too frightened to embark on any risky stunts; but the Corporal, Frew by name wanted us. We knew then that there was something doing. This man was a daredevil of the worst kind and seemed to always like our company when he had anything extra special on. So we went to him. He was pretty brief and to the point. We had to go with him somewhere. He had no idea where it was that we had to go to, but as he said we all would be going together, it satisfied us. We yoked up. Got out on to the main road and started off. Guess it was beautiful traveling too. Guns' were laying all over the place. Dead horses and men everywhere. I remember one place we went through. You go down the hill and at the bottom is a stream running across the road. Just above it was a large crater. I looked into the hole. Guess I saw a sight fit for the Gods. In the bottom were two or three Fritzle wagons. Horses and drivers were mixed up together and it frightened the wits out of me. It looked so gruesome in the light and made one feel quite sick. Here and there along the side of the road you would see a wagon standing. The horses would be lying on the side of the road dead. Perhaps a dead man would be lying on the top of the wagon. Rather a nice scene to be viewing on a moonlight night and especially when you had no idea of what lay ahead of you.

We must have passed a hundred of these wagons. It seemed as if they had been trying to get away with them and had been caught. I put it down to Airplanes after a while and I think it was the work of our Airmen. Guess they did some amount of slaughter with their bombs and machine-guns. We must have traveled about two

hours when Darkie (the Corporal) stopped. He said that he reckoned this must be the place. It was. That man had found his way to the Battalion by following the directions given to him by a runner. The Batt were dug in on the side of the road. Where we halted was plumb in the centre of a crossroad. I looked around and not fancying the position, spoke to Bob and we pulled further up the road. It was just as well that we did so. A few seconds later we heard the Hun or a plane, and knew that it was one of our own. How we knew this was by the sound the engines made. The taube makes a peculiar droning noise that is interrupted by a jerking every now and then; but our planes seem to have the regular running engine in them.

This boy must have had a few bombs and bullets to spare. However, I am sure that he thought that he was over the Hun territory. The way he pelted that cross road was a shame. He seemed to have a particular fancy for it. He would circle round and round and get the aim then let go. You would hear a whirring noise and then see a cloud of smoke. The bomb would then go off. So did we, up the road a little further and let him have corner to himself cried Bob. As I did not want it I decided to let him play with it. The lads would not come and take the ration we had for them, so we dumped them down on the side of the road, told them where they were and started off back.

I have been cursing that Airman ever since. He did not seem to be able to get enough. When he ran out of bombs he used bullets. Gee, there is nothing that will put the wind up you quicker than a plane flying round you, and trying to tickle you with bullets. I had a similar experience as Villers-Bretnor. I was the only unfortunate on the road and a Fritz pelted the dickens out of me. He had me doing Catherine wheels of every description with a pair of dinks and a limber. But he was a rotten shot. He kept looking over the side of his plane and seemed to be saying "Do it again, I did not see you that time" Then he flew away. I was mighty glad he did. That is the kind of joke I do not believe in. This plane and its occupant tried the same game, but with the same result,

We managed to get back to where the Corporal had instructions to wait for the Transport. Found a few of them had turned up. We turned into bunk & awoke the next morning to see some beautiful sights. I have never seen so many dead men and we had been keeping them company through the night.

The Transport did not stay in this place, Assevillers I think, but moved across to Barleux. The night before we moved, Bob and I went up with rations. We had a very lively time. Sid MacDonohue from the Square was wounded badly and two or three fellows we did not know. We pulled up for a few minutes, and an Officer rushed out of a dugout to tell us not to stop but to keep going. Fritz started to snipe us with nine-ders, and this chap got smacked for his trouble.

I saw one of the finest sights I has seen for many a day just before this. We could see a cloud of dust away on our right. Presently it shaped into teams of artillery. I suppose there must have been six or more. They were (the riders) all low down in the saddle and were riding for their lives. Fritz was pelting them with shells, and the way he followed them all along the road was nothing short of jolly good shooting on his part. The teams presented a sorry sight when they came past us. Luckily none of the horse had been hit but we could see some of the riders lying

along the saddles, and they were not moving, so we reckoned that somebody had got it.

It was just after that the Hun turned his attention to us and Sid MacDonohue was wounded. Guess we were very glad to get away from it. T'was just a little too warm to be nice. However, we came back to the camp and after a tot of tea and something to eat felt ready for the next bout. Up to date since coming from Proyard, we had not had any casualties. Of course we were all looking for trouble and it was not long on coming. We shifted across to Barleux safely enough, and as usual when we arrived; were shelled out of our camp. Rather a pleasant start. In the evening I and old Con Curtis went up to Peronne with rations. He was driving the A.M.C cart. We had a decent trip, only a few thousand rounds of machine-gun bullets were fired at us. We arrived back at the camp safely but very scared. The next night, we went up in time to see the 15th Brigade take a great hill that was in front of Peronne. It was a wonderful sight. You could see the whole thing and by the powers they were moving. We had a very quiet night. Suppose they were too busy us in front to worry about us. After a while we started to take rations a few hundred yards past Barleux. One night one of the drivers was filling his water tins at a pump in this town. He had filled all the tins and went over to a dugout where the Y.M.C.A chap was living; and he just happened to hear a few shells coming. The next thing he saw was two mules coming down the road hell for leather & no limber. It appears that Fritz had put a small whizz-bang into the back of the limber, the mules had broken the harness in their freight, and were making for home as fast as possible. I cursed, because I had to go up and get that limber. Nothing further of any event happened while at Barleux save the usual bombs and shells, and we were getting quite expert enough to dodge them.

We shifted camp further towards the line and then had to go right into Peronne. The lads had shifted Fritz a little although parts into Peronne were still help by him. I remember one night in particular. I was waiting for old Con Curtis and as Fritz was shelling rather too much to be pleasant, I pulled down the road a little. He quietned down after a while, and I went back to see what the dickens Con was doing. Imagine my surprise when I could not find any trace of him. It was so dark that I did not notice the horse stretched out in the middle of the yard where he had pulled in. when the shelling had started, Con had got whizzy on it, and left his horse and cart while he took shelter down one of the dugouts. Fritz put a shell fair into the yard and by the look of the cart and horse, on top of them. Result was, when Con saw his cart going skywards he was too funky to come out and have a look to see what the best thing was to do. After some persuasion I got him out, and he jumped for my limber. I jumped got him then and told him to sit in the dashed thing, that I was quite capable of driving my own team. I scared the wits out of his coming through Peronne on our way back. He was sitting on the top of some rubbish and must have touched one of my mules with his foot. Anyhow, they bolted and I could not stop them so just had to sit there and let them go. They did not break my neck but came jolly near doing it. I felt like breaking that old fools head when I did eventually pull them up.

The next day we were able to go up to Peronne in the daylight. Even then it was not too pleasant; but we only had an odd shell or two to contend with. From

Earleux we went across to Le Mesnil. Here the troops rested for a few days. It was then decided to withdraw from the line for a few weeks. Had rather fine times playing football and other games. These did not last very long. Up to that time we had been in the line something like 12 months without a spell. It was reported that they were going to make Australians take another part of the line. They had just done in three days what Foch gave them to do in that number of weeks, namely the taking of Peronne. This feat earned for them the desired spell of two weeks. When you came to think that some of the Pommy regiments had not seen any fighting and others had been spelling for six months or more, it was a little hard to give the Australians two weeks.

Eventually things became so serious and everyone so discontented, that matters came to a climax. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division went on strike. They disowned all their Officers, elected men in their places chosen from among them selves. Everything was carried on as usual. They held their parades etc, as if nothing had happened; but absolutely refused to go into the line, until they had had a decent spell. The result was that their rations were cut off and the heads tried to make them give in that way. By way or answer the other Divisions around started to supply them with rations. Picquets were formed and runners used to travel between each Division carrying news of their progress.

This may seem all wrong and not in any way toward helping win the war, but as mentioned above, we had had no rest for 12 months. We started off with Ypres. After that Messinnes, then a months spell at Doudaville. Entered the line in February at Warneton. Our next bout was around Corbie further south. Then Villers-Bretnor, Proyart, Peronne. This occupied the best part of 10 months. We could hardly see any rhyme or reason in the fact, that while we got cut to pieces, other troops who were reported to be as good at the game as ourselves rested, a few days after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division went on strike I think the 1<sup>st</sup> Division followed. In the end they were all practically out. Our Brigade was dug in. The 60<sup>th</sup> Battalion had their machine guns mounted and was ready for anything. We had a runner at the Transport asking for mules to go and fill the water-tanks. I yoked mine up and went off with him. When we got to the 60<sup>th</sup> Battalion, they wanted to string me up. After a lot of persuasion I satisfied them I was on their side. They allowed me to fill the tank; but I was escorted on either side by a couple of the worst looking ruffians I had ever seen. They told me straight, that all eyes were on me also two or three machine-guns trained my way, and perhaps it would pay me to be good. At the time there was somewhat of a tension between the troops and us. It all arose out of the fact that when we would take rations to the line, we could not get anybody half the time to take them from us. Result, friction between both sides and many unnecessary hard words said. That is why my two pals followed me.

The Battalions held out so long, that things were beginning to get rather serious. They would not have anything to do with their Battalion Commanders. In the end Pompey Elliott lined them up. They would do anything for this man; but even then although lined up, they refused to listen or heed any commands other than those given by him. After a good deal of coaxing and argument he managed to put it to them in such a light that an agreement was come to, that our Brigade were ready to follow Pompey, if others were going to fight. These men held to their ideas for

about one week and I think would have been there yet, only that Elliott being the man among men, came forward and saved the situation from perhaps turning into a more serious dispute. It shows the kind of man he must be. The other men in positions of trust and charge bullied and threatened. Elliot did nothing like that. He talked with the men, made their complaint his own, until it became common property. Then debates were held on all sides of Pompey and he had to decide them. In about a half hour from when we had come to speak to the men, the air was ringing with cheers for him. He was sitting on his horse and tears streaming down his face. At last he waved his hat and galloped off. One thing that was noticeable, he did not pack a gun. You would as a rule always see this man with his revolver buckled to his side. It ended up by the Heads being talked over by Pompey into giving us a little longer time than was first proposed.

We used to see some great sights when it would get dark. Our Aviators had a new stunt going. When a Hun plane would come over bombing expeditions, they would get him in a searchlight, then one of our men who would be flying about waiting for this to happen, would open out on him. Fritz being in the light in was explained could not see anything. Our plane would blaze away at him until something happened. It generally ended in Fritz coming down with a crash. The place would burst into flames. Then all his lights would burst and a better set of fireworks you could not wish to see. Blue, pink, green, red, yellow, in fact all colors would come out of that plane. It would then start to drop coming faster and faster, with a long tail of flame behind. When it would reach the ground, you would hear an awful explosion. That would be the bombs going off, that the Hun had perhaps meant for us. The men as a rule went up the way they had come, because you could not find any trace of them. The nurses in the Hospital used to amuse us. They would come out and watch this scene. When the Fritz would catch on fire, you could hear those girls for miles, shouting their Hurrahs. The chaps would hold bets on how many lights would come out of this one, how long it would take to reach the ground, how big a noise or load a one it would make when it had crashed. I have often wondered how they did not hear us all yelling on the other side of the channel. There would be thousands watching these nightly performances and all yelling at the top of their voices.

While here the first batched of men going on leave to Australia, left. We had one chap staying with us. A Graham Radnell from Tarnagulla. I gave him a wallet to give to Ella. He posted it on his arrival. I have since met him and asked him several questions about a certain night he was crawling about our hut. Bob and I had stolen a case of whisky. It fell against Bob & I seeing it fall, had to help him carry it. Instead of carrying it into the canteen, we carried it to my limber, threw it in, and away I went. We gave this chap Radnell an extra large dose for his cold, and he was seeing all kinds of things. I WAS QUITE SOBER MIN. Anyhow he will tell you all about it if you ever meet him.

Three of four of our fellows left us here. We gave them a good send off except the Sergeant...I do not think that there was one man amongst us who was sorry to see the end of him. He was a rotter. Most of these chaps came home via Italy. Some I have met told me that they were very disappointed in Italy. Thought that they would see something extra special; but it was as bad as Gypo land. We had letters from Graham advising us not to come home that way if we could get a say

in it. Well it was becoming time that we did a bit. Out promise to the heads still held good off we started to Roisel. On the way to this place we had a rather nasty accident. It was very dark & when crossing a Railway line, the train crashed into the back of one of the wagons, the driver was seriously hurt. The man behind escaped, how he does not know. There is generally a man follows a wagon as brakeman. The brakes on these limbers being screwed on. However, we arrived at Roisel and made camp on a flat. We stayed there about a half day and then shifted further up the hill.

From this place we used to cart rations to Templeux. Bob and I as usual were floundering around these nice parts. I will not forget our first trip to that place in a hurry. We had a load of Iron on for the men to make dugouts with. When we came in sight of Templeux it looked anything but inviting. Fritz was shelling the road where we had to go through the village. We decided that it would be much better and safer to try our luck on the stubble, so off we went. We had not gone very far when we became bogged. We could not get out, so unhooked half of the limber and took that up. Then came back and got the other. We had to do two trips instead of one; but it was better than only doing the. Get me? It was raining and Fritz was making us feeling anything but comfortable with his infernal shelling. He seemed to have a mad idea of shooting at this stage of the game. Would shoot for hours at nothing. You perhaps would be watching this little lot, and as if in rage at the fact he had hit nothing for all his shots, or as id he were angry with you for daring to watch them, he would switch round where you were, and by joves you would have to go. I have gone down a road something similar to the way in which a dog once went, to whose tail I had helped tie a jam tin. However, we arrived back in time to have tea and shift up to Templeux. This was about the 28<sup>th</sup> September. We fixed the horse lines up and had something to eat. I was picked to take rations up. Somehow I could not help feeling that something was going to happen. I had received a letter from Scotland. From Hugh, and spoke to Bob about it. He told me to answer it when we came back from our trip with rations. I remarked that I did not feel too sure whether I was coming back or not. Bob of course began to get angry; but it was no use, I could not get the fact out of my thoughts that something was going to happen. I had that thought fixed in my mind all the evening and try as I would, it would not leave me.

Guess it is hard to explain a thing like that; but I knew that I was going to get it as usual we loaded up our limbers and started off. It was very dark and I got in the lead. Bob generally took the lead on dark nights as he could see better than I. We went past Templeux and through the next village, Hariecourt. We then came out on a coudrey road. This ran straight to Bellecourt. We must have gone along this road for about 5 kilos and were then met by one of the runners. The man who was supposed to meet us, we learnt was drunk and well down a dugout. That was our brave Major Q.M. we met Cheq Hughes and he told us that he was going to come with us and show us where to take the rations to.

We went along for a few hundred yards, then had to get down, as he was making it too warm. Before this Cheq Hughes met us, I must say, that we stood waiting for the drunken sot who was supposed to take charge of the rations, for something like two hours. It was no joke standing there and expecting to go up in the air around you. However, as he did not seem to be coming, we started off

with Hughes. Where we had pulled up there was a Tommy battery. The chums told us that they had eight guns when they came in the morning, but only two were left. As they kept firing away with those, they could not tell how long it would take Fritz to knock them out.

We seemed to be surrounded by Blighters. The shells seemed to come from all directions and bullets from front and back. We stood in this place for about a half hour then Darkie summed up the Major and said we had better take our chance and get rid of the rations. Off we went, past the Army Medical first aid post, down over a hill and up a little rise, which brought us to the beginning of the village, Bellecourt. We entered this place as quietly as it was possible to go with mules and limbers. Up through the main street, or at least we took it to be that, turned off and went around behind some old buildings. Here we met some of the boys; they were having a pretty rough spin and seemed glad to see us. They did not know where the Hun was; but at this particular part he was anywhere. That was nice for a lead up.

We managed to get the rations off and collected a lot of different materials and started for home. It makes me laugh now when I think how we tried to creep away from that place and not make a noise. We got away from the lads and they were quite safe. The next part had us tricked. We had to go through the village and back up that coudrey. When we came to the corner on the town and turned down the straight road for the country, I knew then that I was in for it. All of a sudden there was a roar, shells came from everywhere. We were powerless to do anything. They were bursting right in front and behind us, and seemed to be connected on the coudrey up which we had to go. I said to Darkie that I thought the best thing to do was stop and wait until they loaded their guns again. We agreed upon that. Fritz stopped firing and off we went at a gallop. Came on to the coudrey and were going up a slight incline, when I saw a cloud of smoke in front of me. I cannot remember how a chap named Drummond got in front of me this day. But his team was in front when the shells fell. One shell fell at the side of the coudrey, just in front of Drummond and almost on top of Darkie. Drummond's two mules went down, one shot through the head and the other had its legs broken. I saw Drummond fall off his horses and at the same time Darkie fell off his hack. Its legs had been broken two. Of course the limber in front when the mules were knocked, stopped.

Drummond was not hurt, but badly shaken. I jumped down off my team, and ran to him. Darkie and I got him out of the tangle he was in. He took his mule out a little further up the road and shot it. Frew and I pushed the limber over the side of the Coudrey, so as to make room for myself, Bob and a chap named Fletcher to pass. While this was going on he kept putting them all round us. I ran to my mules, placed my foot in the stirrup and raised myself. I thought all the prizefighters in France had hit me. I got such a whack in the face, that it knocked me over the side of the coudrey. I got up and made a dive for the saddle and found it. Off I went. I got up the road a few hundred yards and found that yet another Driver had passed me somehow. This chap's name was Schultz. By this time my eyes were full of blood. I got off the team, gave them to Dan Drummond to mind. One of the runners bound my face for me. I looked about then and found that Bob, Darkie or Fletcher had not turned up. Guess all sorts of horrible things

ran through my mind. I could hardly see, so I asked Wattie Schultz if he would go back and see what was wrong. No he said that he was not going to risk his life and go back there. I asked Dockerty and got the same reply. I called them all the hard names I could think of, told them to go to the Devil, and started off myself. I am afraid that I will never forget that attempt to go back along that coudrey. Fritz was shelling frightfully. I got about halfway and my nerve failed me. I came back and as I walked along started to cry. I don't think that it was because I was hurt; but I seemed so helpless to do anything. There were two men there who could have gone back and given a hand; but they preferred to let me take another chance. So I turned back and this time met a couple of chaps who where going into the line. I walked along with them for a few yards. They turned off saying that the coudrey was no good to them.

However, I managed to stick it and got down to where Bob was. Directly he heard me speak, he called me all the cowards under the sun for running away. Guess I felt rotten; but the poor old man did not know that I could hardly see him. He told me afterwards that he thought that I had got funky and left him. I did not say anything to him. They had got a wire twisted around the wheels. Fletcher had been wounded badly and by the time I had got there Bob and Darkie had put him in the Limber.

Everything was practically fixed up when I got there. I asked Darkie could I drive one of the teams out. Drummond had mine so I got on Paddy's they being the quieter and Darkie stopped in the limber with Bert Fletcher. Guess it was awful. I could see nothing and just had to let the mules pick their way through the coudrey. Even then Darkie or Bob did not know that anything had happened to me. We came out to the First Aid Post. There a chap injected some stuff into Fletched and myself. When Bob saw me in the dugout with my head bandaged and blood running down my face you could have knocked him over.

I got on the mules again and drove on down to Hargiecourt. There we left Fletcher. He was so badly wounded that he could hardly speak. However, he plucked up courage to smile at us all. I was beginning to feel ill and had to get one of the chaps to drive the mules. We came back to camp. The A.M.C. chap had a look at me and that was the end of it. I was packed off to the Field Ambulance. Bob came over with me and after they had had a look at me, washed me and again punctured me with a needle declared me ready for Peronne. I said that I did not want to go. The old quack said I had to. Bob argued the point with him and finally he said that if we were sure that I would get good attendance at the camp I could go back.

We arrived back and I went to sleep. The next morning I was a sight. I could not see anything, and the A.M.C guy started me for the Hospital at the run. I lobbed there and was sent on down to Perronne, from there to Proyart and then by train journey down to Abeville. I stayed in this infernal Hospital, the 3<sup>rd</sup> General I think and fretted and fumed, until they told me I could join my Batt. Found out that they were going to come out to this very place. However, I had another trip back and met them at Peronne. They were on their way to Abbeville. Someone told me we were in for a six months spell. H'm I thought, we may get it.

We entrained at Peronne and had a bonny ride down. Went b y way of Amiens, through Picquigny and disembarked at a place name Eaucourt near Abbeville.



We then had a road journey to Caumont. I remember the night we landed at this place. I had to go up to the Q.M Store & was back rather late. You had to come through a long avenue of trees to get to the spot chosen for the camp. I started off and it was as dark as pitch. I could see nothing. I think that I kicked up the devils own row to try and make them hear me. Nobody did. I had some tucker in the box, so I un- harnessed my mules and fed them, had something to eat myself. Unloaded the limber of what I had still left in it. Made my bunk and got into it. I reckoned that it would be better to wait until daylight to find the crowd. The night passed well. When I awoke in the morning I crawled out of bed. Imagine my surprise when I looked through the trees, to see the Transport. They were camped about 100 yards from me and the foliage was so thick that I had not been able to see their fire the night before.

Guess they laughed at me some when I did turn up. The Corp informed me that when I did not come in through the night he came to the conclusion that I was not very far away and would be alright. I would have been alright, if for instance that tucker box had been empty. However I was very glad to see them, we soon made ourselves comfy, because we had been given to understand we would be here a month. Bob and I made a dinky little hut on the side of the hill overlooking the camp. We were here about one week when it was thought necessary that the drivers should be sent to school to learn driving/ the school was held in the A.S.C. lines. Bob and I were given a new rig-out and sent down to it. Guess we did not mind, especially when we had the new clothes out of it. We had to learn how to feed a mule first. Then there were the different ailments that this particular kind of beast suffers from. We knew about as much when we had left the school as when we started. I had an argument with one of the officers about hitching a team up/ he wanted me to yoke my mules up with the pole on the ground. Evidently that guy knew nothing about horses and I guess he did not know the gentle ways of mules. I refused to do it the way he wanted it done. He said that was the way it was laid down in the book to do it. O guessed he and the book could go to the devil and before I would risk getting that pole rammed into my tummy, I would help send him there.

After a lot of argument one of the Red Caps happened along. In fact he had been a silent spectator of the whole thing for sometime, unknown to us. Guess I could have kissed him, when I heard him say, "Do not be so foolish Mr..., the driver is quite right". I had a very rough spin at the school for the remainder of our stay. Wally Jackson was one of the Corporals in charge of the turn out. Guess he used to do a bit of a grin at me. However, we were quite handy to Abbeville and used to get passes in of an evening. When the passes ran out we went just the same. We were very glad when we did come away from there though. The billet was not of the cleanest and Bob and I had been used to a nice tent and fresh air. It was about this time, November that rumors started to fly about, that the Hun was giving in. we bought a Daily Mail one evening. The first for some time. On the top was a beautiful heading. "Germany Surrenders. End of War in Sight". Joves, we kept turning that old paper round and round and I felt like hugging the dirty kid who sold it to me, I mean Bob. The next night we bought another paper. It had a big heading to. Something like "10000 killed and wounded". Somewhere the night before. We felt like burying the Editor of the Daily Mail.

However, the rumor that the war was ending would not go away. Talk was of nothing else. At last we bought a paper that gave us some inkling as to what was really doing. Austria had asked for an Armistice. She got it. A couple of days afterwards Bulgaria wanted one. She got it. A few days and Turkey wanted it. She got it. On November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11 o'clock Germany wanted it. She got it. Guess we went mad. I just sat down and said nothing. Bob went straight to the Canteen and came back with a bottle of Whisky and some wine. We then proceeded to drink Foch's Health and everyone of the General we could think. The whisky ran out. We then went up to the Q.M store and had a nip at the rum. That did not taste too nice, so we went and saw some of our Officer Friends. Billy Williams and Mac Mackie. They had some whisky. We stopped and took care of it for them. I can remember Bob and me coming home. We always used to argue the point about anything when we were a little upset. This news had upset is terribly. He had a bottle of whisky in his hand. The cork had been taken out of it. The stupid blighter started to walk backwards, a trick he was fond of doing when partly inebriated, simply because he could not help himself. He got going and could not stop. I could not run fast enough to get hold of him. He just simply backed into the village pond. I could have killed him when he came out. I danced all round the edge of the pond on rage. Fancy a bottle three-quarters full of whisky going to waste. Well I took him home. Billy Williams and Mac did nothing but laugh at us. That kind of man would laugh at his great grandmother's funeral. Well we did not mind getting wet; at least I did not mind Bob doing it. As it was Armistice celebrations and one had to excuse him. He was going some chattering about the guy that pushed him into the dam and what he would do to him in the morning.

Eventually we got to bed. Had not been in long when we had visitors in the shape of the cook. Bally Lambert was this individual's name. He came crawling up the side of the hill on his hands and knees, saying that he had tried to walk up but as he overturned each time he thought it would be much safer for himself and the whisk he had, if he crawled. When I heard him talking about whisky, I put the boot down that I had picked up to welcome him with. I received him with open arms instead. Woke Patterson up and he wanted to fight him. I calmed him by telling him that it was a good fairy come to light with the bottle out of the dam. He called me some choice names but sat up and took his medicine. I was frightened he would get a cold. Specs I thought I might get one watching him, so I had some of the medicine. That ended Armistice night. A lot of chaps will tell you that they did not know what to do or what they did. They were all like us, every mother's son of them, only they won't admit it. However, it was grand and I am favor of Armistice Day being held everyday in the week. Suppose that would not do.

While here we played a round of football. The Battalion team was captained by Cheq Hughes. They had a pretty fair tem. Bob as always in demand; but unfortunately for them he hurt his knee and had to leave off playing. It became very bitter towards the end and there were many standup fights. I forget who won; but I think that we came very near the prize.

We had an inspection by General Hobbs. He thanked us for the way we had behaved while under his command. I might state that there was still discontent about the rest that had been allowed us. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division refused to go and relieve anyone until that had had a decent spell. He mentioned this and said that he was very sorry that we had to go up again. He could not give us any definite idea of when we would be going but hoped that when the time came, we would turn out to be the men we had always been and go. Hear, hear and a lot of other things that the General did not hear were said, and we marched off the ground. I forgot to mention that Bob had his leggings stolen and I had my pants taken. We could not find them. When this parade came on, he had a good pair of trousers and no leggings. I had good leggings, and no pants. I put on an old pair of leggings. No, I think that he wore an old pair of puttees. We looked the hardest pair in the Brigade. Old Pompey stopped right in front of us. Had a screw at me, then his eyes fell on Bob. He stood there and called us everything that is not to be found in the Bible. Well we did not mind. Our names were taken and new clothing was issued to us the next day. When I say new, my trousers were still full of holes, but some had a patch put on them. We found out who had taken out leggings. It was the following evening, and I happened to be away in the bush at the back of the hut shooting squirrels. I came home and strolled around to the front of the tent. I thought that I could see someone inside. I pulled the gun I had to the front and walked in. there was a yell that frightened the wits out of me, and it was a wonder I did not pull the trigger. A French nipper, aged about 15 was in there helping himself. He had everything tipped out on the floor of the hut, and was putting things into a bag. Well I jumped at him and got a good hold. Felt like killing him. I called George Jinks. This chap had lost a Safety Razor. It was dark by this time, and presently an old woman came into sight. She marched right up to the tent and grabbed the kid. Guess I have not had a hiding in my life and I would not like to have had the one he got.

When she had finished with him, Jinks took him in hand something like this. "Where is my ??????...." "Razor, you French ????,,,". Tell me quick or I go for the Gendarmee". When the old lady heard him say Gendarmee she must have taken a tumble that he was going to do something. She let out a yell and grabbed the kid and trying to tell us not to do that. In the end he found the Razor for us and we escorted him home. He turned Kings Evidence on one of his cobbers. We then visited the cobber. He was a little older and rather big for his age. Bob accused him of taking his leggings; by this time we had got one of his lads who was some interpreter. We could get nothing out of this second highwayman, so had to let him go. We gave them both a kick in the neck and came home. Ever afterwards while in this camp, if a French kid came near the tent Bob would rush out with his gun, and frighten the wits out of him. We used to have an old fellow come regularly for tobacco. He even got turned down the following morning, but we relented and called him back. He did not take persuading.

At this time we were getting very low, that is financially. I had sent to Australia for money and it had not turned up. One day I happened to have a penny. I was standing in the middle of the road yarning away and started tossing it in the air. Bill Coffey handed me another one. I immediately said that I would toss him for it.

Right. I won it. Then I tossed him for the two. I won; well I had 3 in hand then so I started a two up ring. Do you think I could tell them? No, not if I had been there a thousand years. I kept on heading them and all the shrewdies came in with their fifty franc notes and soon my ring keeper had an awful job to stack them away. I can remember one miserable fellow whom we used to call Scotty. He was that miserable that once when tobacco and cigarettes were short and no one had any to smoke, he had a pack full and refused to give any to the others. I thought of that and when I saw him dive into his belt for his roll, I said my prayers and wished that I could get back on him.

Well I had him stripped in no time. Somehow I could not tail them. The luck was wonderful. Chaps would come running up with their money. How many has he done, I heard one chap say. 15 heads, said the ring keeper. Oh, he must break now, here is 25 towards the centre, I did not break, that is not my run of heads; but I broke those swindling devils before we pulled for home. My spin was for 25 heads and I did not spin out. I started in with the large sum of one penny and came out of the ring with something like 600 francs. I did not hear anybody saying God Bless Charlie. I was a sport and gave a fellow a chance to win some back. The fellow in question was the goat that refused to give me a cigarette. He won something like fifty francs of his own money. Then Robert got hold of me, called him everything he could lay his tongue to, and that ended the afternoons work. Not bad for an afternoons work. I think that when we counted up we had something like £23/17/-,. Strange to say I had a lit of friends calling around to see me; but as I had not any money; Bob had taken it in the meantime, they did not stay long.

Well all good things have an ending and our good time came to an end for a while. We had orders to pack up and be ready for the road. We obeyed them and got out on to the road one afternoon. You would have smiled to see paddy and I putting our wares in the limber. Guess I had a half limber full before we had finished. The most peculiar part of it all was that when we shifted we would dumb stuff, and when we had been in camp a while we would have collected just as much as we had before. However, we got out alright and found out that our journey was to be as far as Abbeville. We arrived there about three in the evening. Put the mules and horses aboard and climbed on ourselves.

There was one thing that stuck us as very peculiar when waiting for the train. There was quite a number of German prisoners camped on the side of the road. At the side of their camp was a huge garbage tin. I noticed the Tommies would pull up to this with their wagons and empty the refuse from the camp into it. Then along would come, the Hun. He would dip into this with his hands and pull out great pieces of fat. These would be put into their mess tins for future use. Guess they just have been hungry to come to that. Well we bought some bread and cakes. Then we got on board. There we disembarked and went by the road to Landrecies. We stayed in this place about a fortnight. There was great speculation whilst here about Blighty leave. Out turn for it was coming near, and we were doing our best to get it. One chap used to make me angry. Whenever the question of this would crop up, he would always say that we were not entitled to it. This chap was one of those who let me go back along the Coudrey at Bellecourt, and I had not for given him for it. It got so unbearable that I wanted to

have him; but the crowd would not stand it. He was miles bigger than I; but doubt that he could have given me much.

He got his leave and we were glad to see the end of him. The only harm I wished him was that the boat would sink; and he would have to get out and do something at last. I kept up my work here and used to spend many a night studying. The chaps used to laugh at me; but old Darkie the Corporal gave me every assistance he could. Many a night I have been in his billet and he had been that drunk he would be abusing everyone around him; but he would never say anything to me. And if anyone did there would be trouble. I was the baby of the Transport. The youngest chap in it, and as they were all men practically in their thirties, most of them used to Father me. Guess I used to get mad at them; but one could not feel glad at times, he had someone to turn to.

While here the Education Scheme was put forward. A meeting was held in our billet; but unfortunately I was away. However, I got a good account of it from Darkie. It resulted in my name being put down for the classes that were being formed. We had a very decent time here. There was a particular sight to be seen in front of one of the houses. A couple of trees were growing on each side of the path leading to this house. One tree had been shaped to represent a bear and the other, a woman carrying a basket. It was really well done; but whether by the Huns or the former occupier of the place, we could not tell.

Nothing much occurred here. We did the usual stunt of going for rations, playing cards, drinking rum and tea etc. It was rumored that we were to go further up towards the present line. One day Bob received orders that he had to go away to the next camp to be. We were told that it was a small town. Bob was glad of the trip, because it gave him a chance to pick out a decent spot for us to camp in. Off he went and came back a couple of day's time. He told me that we could secure a billet if I cared to have it, or make our camp in the usual way. I preferred to camp in the old style.

We left Landrecies and came to this place. St. Aubin by name. There was very few people living in the place; and what were here had very little to offer. The Germans had played havoc with what they had had, and most of them were very old. However, they did their best to make us comfortable. Many of the lads had good beds; but most of them were billeted. Paddy and I went up to the camp. This was a large house and the stables were joined on to it. At the side was a large buggy shed. This was the place that Paddy had picked for us. Guess we soon made ourselves at home. Had the place swept and clean straw out in our tarpaulins to make a mattress of. We hung one of these tarpaulins down the centre of the room, thus making a living room and a bedroom. Sound well does it not? The next thing was to make a table. This was knocked up in no time. Then we had our old jinny to lock after. Well we placed that in front of the table and out a while through the door. Through this we put the funnel. We then had one of the best camps around the place. I have some very good times while there.

We had been here about two days, when I was sent for and had to report to the School. I handed my team of mules over to Ted Girvin and went down to see what was doing. I may say that I never took that team back again. However, I arrived at the School and found a number of the chaps gathered there. We had an opening lecture and a kind of debate as to the best method of running the

joint. Classes were fixed at different time for each subject and we hopped off. I attended the school for about two weeks. Guess I did very well, because when I came back here, I was not slowest at my game.

Football was all the rage, and many a match was played in the snow and rain. I remember having one game myself. Standing out in the wind and the rain just for the satisfaction of a lot of goats to laugh at me. That was the first and only time I ever played in the rain. After that I always agitated that if it rained the match should be postponed. If an agreement could not be arrived at I used to go home to the jinny. Guess Bob used to get as mad as two bats with me. He had to continue with his team. It would be snowing or raining and I would be sitting inside by the jinny and he would come home. He would sing out for me to come and get something, and I would not take any notice of him; but let him yell. At last I would poke my head around the door with, "were you calling me?" By joves he would go sour. He used to say I was a schemer and a lot more things as well; but it was no use two of us getting wet if it could be avoided. He did not seem to be able to see it in that light.

An incident happened while here that made us look rather sick. We sued to let the horses loose in one of the paddocks near the house, everyday they would be let go there and I used to help bring them in. that is when I was not at school. Well this had been going on for about one month. There came a day, when we noticed a Froggle drive up in a sleigh. He stopped in front of the gate leading into this paddock. Then he got out and took a shovel and pick with him into it. We gathered around the gate wondering what on earth he was going to do. He did not deign so much as to look at us; but went into the centre of the paddock and started to step this way and that. Bats, we reckoned. Mad as a hatter. After a while at this war dance he chose a spot and started to dig. By this time we had all or most of us got over to where he was.

"Bon Jour Messier" one of the boys said. A grunt in reply. As he did not seem a very communicative kind of cuss and our French was limited, we did not say anything more; but just watched him. He went on digging. In a little while he hit something hard. Ah, we thought, something decent. He pulled it up. Twas a barrel and rull too mind you of Jamaica Rum. We stood there and still kept watching the guy. He started in to dig again with more than his usual energy. There was another thud. "Another" somebody whispered. It was "another" this one was full of "French notes". Say, we just looked at one another and then at those notes and rum. To think that we had been walking all over a gold mine; and not know it. We became very respectful quite suddenly; but the old chap did not want our aid. In fact, I think he called us everything he could lay his tongue to. That did not frighten us. I for one was determined that he should pay toll. What right had he to bury a cask of rum and then another of notes? He turned out a very decent sort. Gave us half that cask of rum in the end. I do not remember whether he was forced to do so, or whether he gave it of his own free will. Anyhow it made bonza toddies.

A few days after this the Prince of Wales came to see one of our football matched. It was a beautiful game. Guess there was nothing to be seen but mud and dirty men. They gave a great exhibition of the Australian game. Guess if that Prince was satisfied he was very easily pleased. Anyhow he seemed quite

satisfied to let them go on playing, because he only had a look at them for a few minutes and was off. Our band had their day out. They had learnt to play a tune after a hard struggle of about 18 months. They played it this day. Suppose the Prince reckoned that it was too much to expect of him. They should have drowned the members of that Band long before that time.

Well we had some great news. Bob and I were picked to go and draw the rum and beer for the Xmas dinner. We did not need much urging. Darkie went with us. This was on Xmas Eve. The next day being Xmas Day, everyone who could possibly have a holiday had it. School was closed for the time being, so I had mine. In the morning we all helped the cook get what was left over ready for dinner. He had been preparing for days. This was the same old chap we had at Doudaville. Barry Lambert; so called on account of the scarcity of the hairs on his head. Bob and I got tired of peeling spuds so we wandered down to the Q.M store to see if anyone loved us. Most peculiar thing. If we ever became lonely, that was the first place we would make for. We came in time to witness a man whom e knew well, trying to drink a bottle of rum by himself. As we could not stand by and see the poor fellow in trouble, we helped him get rid of it.

Well Bob said it was time we went back to the lines if we were to have any Xmas dinner. Off we started. We arrived there and Bob immediately detailed me to go and get the dinner for the two of us. I did not care a hang what he wanted so off I went. I think that I must have been about two hours getting that dinner. By the time I drank everyone's health and wished them a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year, it must have been well on two o'clock when I came back to Bob. I had his dinner and my own, the first course, heaven knows how many courses I had had while getting this. He was asleep and I could not wake him up. I came to the conclusion that he was either drunk or I was. I threatened to eat his dinner. That had no effect so I started in to eat the lot and I did. You would have thought that man would have been savage when he awoke and found that his dinner was all gone. Not him. He seemed glad. His first enquiry was for his medicine. I gave him that and he had my own. Then I went to sleep. Bob recovered somewhat and then our old friend Mr. Lambert came in to see us. By the powers he was gone.

Well we sat and talked about our enemies, the one we loved and those we did not, what we were going to do when we got home etc. Then Bob suddenly discovered that Mr. Lambert wanted a wash. We washed him. Bob bathed his face with water and I kept putting on the only powder we had, mud and ashes. We turned him out looking like a Red Indian who has lost his cobbles and lobbed in a foreign land. He cursed us and we cursed him. He flew at us. We jumped on the top of him and rubbed some more dirt on his face. Then we told him that id he came to see us next Xmas without washing himself and not bringing a drink with him, he would get far worse treatment than what he had. We then went over to the Companies to see our friends. Xmas only comes once a year they say.

Well I guess that I had the best time I will ever have, at Xmas 1917 and '18.

The Colonel (Deheney) came down to see how the Transport was getting on. We loved this man. He was worse than all the shells and bullets we ever had to face. Well he struck a nice crowd, and one that was always known for it's under contempt for his kind. He could not have got them in a better humor for making fun of him. Guess directly he hit the place there was a yell. Mr. Lambert grabbed

a carving knife and escorted him up the stairs. We all heard a loud shun and looked around to see Mr. Lambert standing there with the knife present. Then mostly everybody bowed to him. Then the one that was the most intoxicated of the bunch welcomed him with a plate of jelly. Guess that man was scared and jolly glad to get away. He went back and told the Officers that he had been the jolliest crowd in the whole Battn. We know that if it had been any other time than Xmas who would have been the jolly crowd.

### JANUARY 1919

We managed to get over our stunt at Xmas time. Our next occupation was roller or ice skating. We made skates out of pieces of board and tin. Some of the chaps were very good at it. I went on two or three times; but did not like it as well as the rollers. Things were humming as regards the leave to England. We had been worrying the life out of the Corporal at Headquarters, until one day he informed us we could depart.

We got out passes and off we went. Had to ride to Charleroi in a motor lorry. We arrived there on New Years Eve. We were very disappointed because we had been trying to get New Years Eve in Scotland with Hugh. However, we heard that our train was to go at 9.30. We went down town and had some tea. Then went to a picture show until about 8.30. So that we would be sure and catch the train we hurried up to the Station about 9 o'clock.

At half past nine there was no sign of the train. To make a long story short we waited on that platform until 8.30 the next morning. I cannot describe the torture we went through trying to keep ourselves warm. There were about 800 waiting for it. I for one would lie on the platform and then get up and start walking about. I kept this up all night and Bob did the same. Well we got in the dashed thing eventually. We started off for Calais. It took us three days to get there. I may say that the trip was an everlasting disgrace to the Authorities in charge. All we had to eat in that time was two tins of bully and some biscuits. When we arrived at Calais, I guess I have not seen men look worse in the line than some of the chaps did. One poor little fellow died in the Camp. It was talked about so much that the papers got hold of it and very soon the whole thing was in print. I reckon the man who was responsible for that journey should have been made to suffer. We were delayed at Arras for about two hours on account of an accident ahead of us; but that was the only stop that could have been excusable on the trip. The train would weave a few miles and then stop. T'was a bonza start for our leave. Anyhow we arrived at Horseferry road and had a clean up. That evening we went to Scotland. Guess the time spent here was something like our usual trips. We went everywhere again with Hughie. Can remember the old fellow saying goodbye to us. He would not come to the Station; but he and the girls came as far as St. George's Square. He was dreadfully out of it, and I guess we were not much better. It had become such a home for us, and Hugh not having anyone at the War looked upon our coming to Glasgow as coming home to them. Well we eventually got away from them and had an idea that it would be the last time we would ever see them. We came on down to London. There I met one of the



Sailors' from the Australia. I was informed by him that she was berthed at Portsmouth. Off we went down on the Sunday. Went to the docks and inquired for Fred Kedge. Was shown on board. Very soon he came to light. Guess I very nearly fell down when he spoke to me. He seemed so different. However, that soon wore off and we were chatting about old times in a very short time. We spent a pleasant evening with him and then came away. Claude Jenkins was on leave at Portsmouth at the time. He was also down having a look at Fred. We came away and booked rooms at the large Hotel opposite the station. We intended going across to the Isle of Wight; but as I had not heard from Frank for some time, I thought that we would run up to Clevedon first. It was just as well that we did, because when we arrived there, we found the Franks Mother had died.

In the morning we arose ion time to catch the 10 o'clock train for Bristol. When walking up to the station, we were suddenly confronted by three Military Police men. They told us quietly not to make a row; but the Officer in charge of the Station had noticed us the day before, and not knowing whether we were from the Camps in Blighty or France wished to see us. We did not give a hand so off we went to see this important personage. He swore that we had no right to be in Portsmouth. We showed him our overseas pass; but he evidently had not seen one, because he still kept on going for us. It was only when we told him that we were from France on leave and that we were allowed to go where we damn well liked in the United Kingdom that he woke up. Guess he was nice to us. We got a pass to Clevedon from the old boy, whereas we would have had to pay half fare. Some Military Policemen are nice, at times.

We arrived at Salisbury and Bob hopped out of the train to get something to eat for us. While he was away the train started. I saw him come running out of the café; but he was too late to catch it. I was left with his dashed things to cart down to Clevedon with my own. He turned up about two hours afterward. We spent a pleasant time here; but Arthur was in London. Mr. Bryant kept us amused. Said goodbye to these kind folk and made for France again. We intended to go to Acton; but Aunt Elizabeth was very ill and that is why Arthur was in town. I remember when leaving Clevedon I was leaning out of the window waving my hat to the folk on the Platform. Of a sudden it struck a pole and was dashed from my hand. Guess the old train was just getting up some speed; but the Guard must have seen what happened. Whoever did I do not know or care. The old train was pulled up and my hat restored to me. This is what I call decent. Guards on a train are generally the reverse. I gave the boy a shilling for his trouble. He said God Bless you Sir.

We arrived in London and had a day or two there. Then we thought that we had better get in the train and come back to the camp. When in London I bought something for Vicky and when I went to register it at the Post office to go to Levedon, they gave me a farthing change. At the station, Victoria St the morning we went away, the usual crowd of M.P's was gathered. We put the asset on one to get us into a first class carriage. We always used to tip this kind of cattle for doing this. I placed my hand in my pocket to give him something, and pulled out a sixpence as I thought. He took it and it being rather dark did not bother to look at it. I wonder what he thought when he got in the light and had a look at his tip. I

had given him the farthing change that had been given to me at the Post Office. Guess I am a mean man.

We arrived at Folkstone and went across to Boulogne. Bob and I wondered whether we would have to undergo the same trip up. We had a decent trip. Evidently the paper talk had roused some of the heads to do business. We soon came to Charleroi. Took about a day and a half to get there. We arrived back at St. Aubins in the afternoon, just in nice time for a lunch. There was a great excitement going on when we got there. A lot of the chaps had been pit in drafts to come to Australia. H'm we thought when we had a look at them, "we cannot be very far away from that trip to Aussie". So we started to hustle about. We were informed that our names had been placed on the list; but that we were not die for another month. We took this in good part, glad to know that we stood a chance of coming back home again.

I have had some very trying times; but I but I do not remember anything like the waiting for our draft to leave for England. It was simply torture. I had nothing to do; but sit around the Camp Fire all through the day and play cards at night. It seemed years before March came. We had been going everyday for about a fortnight and it was getting unbeatable. At last we were informed that we were going to leave. Guess you could imagine what we were like. Bob and I had been for a tour of the Q.M. Store. We both had new clothes from our last leave and had stolen a pair of boots each. These we had been polishing until you could see your face, they shone that much. The day before we left was a very busy one for Bob and I. we gave everything we could away to those who had to stay. Guess when we came to dispose of our property; it seemed to be a great deal for two men to have carted all round France. However, we got rid of that, and the next morning about a dozen of Drivers left the Transport without a tear or sigh.

We went across to the village and assembled in front of Headquarters. Here our names were called out and the usual speech made by Pat. We then climbed into motor Lorries, not cars, and hit it for Charleroi. We journeyed as far as Beaumont the first night, and arrived in Charleroi the next day. This would be about the 8<sup>th</sup> of March. Bob and I slept over in the same place that we had stopped at when coming back on leave. There was a party for us. Bill Davey, Dick Read, Wally Symonds, Bob and little me. The next day saw us well on the way to Le Havre. The journey down was very pleasant, and nothing like the previous one that bob and I had undergone. We arrived at Le Havre with out mishap and went into Camp there.

I just give a description of that camp. It may not strike you as humorous; but it appeals to me. On arrival at this place, you are taken to what is known as the Menagerie. That is the "Dirty Camp". You sleep in this place for three days, they you are taken to the steam bath. Your clothes are put through some process and when they come out to you they are supposed to be clean. It is some way they have of putting them under a heating process. When you have had a steam bath, you go under a hot shower, then a cold one. After this you are handed out clean underclothes. Your uniform is brought back to you and you dress. During you absence, the things you have left in the Menagerie have been shifted to the clean camp. You are now classed as clean. You take up you abode in the clean camp & other people beside your own lot will now talk to you. This expense and trouble

is caused by the little "White Army". Commonly called chats. After what we had to go through, I do not think any of them have migrated to Australia. Of course I cannot answer for it. Some fellows seemed to be lonely without them and would if the chance presented itself, brought some home with them to keep as pets. I have not any thank heaven.

We stayed here about a week or more and after various examinations were passed for England. It seems strange but nevertheless true. When a chap is undergoing demobilization, he is with out doubt, classed as some animal. That is, for everything you get or have to do, there is a ticker or some other such thing tied on you. I had about 500 of these dash things, and perhaps I would have to find one for some interfering Sergeant Major. There would be a wild scramble to find it, swear words from the man and more from me. It would generally end up in, "are you sure you have it?" "Yes". And the dear man would then go on his way satisfied.

Guess I was very glad when we were pronounced "clean and desirable" persons to go across the sea to England. We left in the evening and it was blowing some. The band played "Good-bye" and we all sang it. I added a few adjectives. We did not seem sorry to leave France. When you come to think it over, during our stay there we had not been having the best of times. So we soon turned out thoughts to other things. The first thing we did was to look around for something to eat. Very soon we had nice sandwiches, sardine at that. They always seem to sell you thing on a boat that go to make you sick. However we son made short work of these. As we had a trip of about 8 hour's duration to put up with, we made a bed and got into it. We arrived at Weymouth early the next morning and disembarked. From there we went on to Sutton Veny, soon became established here. Used to go to the pictures about twice a day and the rest of the time was spent in gambling and drinking tea and cakes at the Y.M.C.A. we were here about a fortnight when we were granted our demob furlough. This was Bob's and my fourth leave since being abroad. All the party went to London and from there we five went on to Glasgow. We had kept the old chap well posted about our movements. He was not in Manchester this time. Guess he was wild with joy and son had us drinking our health is good Scotch Tea. We stayed at Jimmy Richardson's again. This time I am afraid we did not make a very good show of ourselves. When Bob and I were together we never went over the fence. It was rather a task to manage the others though. We did all kinds of things to try and keep them from making asses of themselves and us; but failed so we did the next best thing, joined in with them and let it rip.

After a good stay here and a good time, we all separated. That is the other's went on to different places. Bob and I came down to Clevedon and spent a few days there. They wanted is to stay over our leave; but as the boy said, we were on our way home and we did not want anything to happen to us, after going through with a clean sheet, as we toddled back to camp like good boys. All the others came back in dues time and we then settled down to wait for the going home part of the biz.

While in this camp I met Eddie and he looked it. There was quite a number of chaps who had been prisoners of war camped a few hundred yards from us. I heard that he was there and made tracks for it. Of course having little interest in

his sister made me go to see him several times. I remembered I had a photo of him and I shoved it to him. Guess if you had have seen the look on his face when I pulled it out well, he seemed to say all over himself "what the H' ' ' are you doing with her photo?" I just grinned to me little self and said "Very nice isn't it". H'm was all I got in reply. Brothers are unsympathetic beggars at times.

Well we learned that we were going to leave for Aussie on a boat named "Devanah". Guess there was some stir in the came when this became know. We soon had everything ready. Eddie had left on the "Kybar" if I remember rightly about a couple of weeks before us. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of May we marched to the Station and boarded the train for Plymouth. We stopped at a station names Essex for a while. Here I met Walter Pearce. He was helping the Railway Authorities to run their trains. At least that was the impression I gained from what he said.

We had a few buns and some tea that was provided by some war workers and started off for Bristol. We were anxious to see the boat that we were coming home in. guess when we pulled up alongside her, she seemed very small. However, we did not care what she was like, as long as she could be depended on to get to Aussie. We got a bit of shock though when we saw the crew. All nigs. Gee we did feel homesick.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> we set sail for Aussie. Or perhaps I should say we set steam. No, that does not seem right. However, we left Plymouth about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. A Tommy band came down to the pier to play to us. They could play too; but our boys made them look silly, by playing "Australia Will be There" and "Melbourne Town". Many other fine selections were played. However, off we went. The Fleet was being payed off at the time. We went right between lines of war vessels. The mast and sides were line with Sailors; Bands were playing on every boat. I have not heard such a row since Bretnor. When we were clear of the lot, one mighty roar was heard. It was one of the vessels saluting us. They fired a gun. Guess we nearly fell over board with fright. That was the last we saw of England.

I think that many of us even though we were coming back to our own and, at that time had some little tinge of regret steal over us. We had made some very good friends in that country. Bob and I had been exceptionally fortunate. We were very sorry to leave the Barnett Family. It seems a piece of foolish sentiment perhaps; but those people were very good to us. We were treated as members of the family and nothing was too much trouble for them to do. We received a telegram signed D.T. We knew whom that was from. Old Hugh sent it wishing us the best of luck and a safe journey. Good old Hugh. He was absolutely one of the best, and the only sincere person I met in Scotland.

I had received messages from all the Chessewrights and the various folks we knew and we had a silent fit for a few hours. What we thought about is hard to say; but I suppose it is something like when we left Australia.

We were leaving our friends behind and I suppose we did not know what to expect when we hit Aussie. We very soon lost our despondent feeling and set abut making ourselves comfortable. The boat was not as pleasant as the "Themistooles" but appeared to be a very good rough water boat. This we found our afterwards was the case. In smooth water she made everyone sick; but just the opposite in the rough.

I will not attempt to describe the journey out. Sufficient to say, that apart from the living, that is the food and conditions on board, the trip was excellent. We had ample time to go ashore when ever the boat would pull in; but as we had very little money, we could not go to many places. I am speaking of Bob and myself when I mention money. It either used to be a feat or famine with that man. When he had spent all his own cash he would spend mine.

There is one thing I would like mention. That is the treatment we received when at Adelaide. The people of this town provided us with the best welcome we had had for many a day. I would not like to discriminate between any welcome we received. I may say that none of us looked for this. But, Adelaide people stood right out in front with their generosity, they did not welcome us to their City, for instance as Melbourne would welcome a Sydney man. They treated as if we were their own boys and I guess we took our hats off to them. I am a sorry man all the same. The five of us wandered about seeing the sights. Eat? Good Lord. You would have thought that we had been without food all the time we were away. However, we had a clinker tea and found out that we could have got just as good a one for nothing. Well we were so disgusted tea cost us about 8/6a per man.

When leaving Adelaide cases and cases of fruit were sent on board to be distributed amongst us. So different from the West. They did not want us there. I believe though that they had very good reasons for not wanting to see us, as the last lot of men had turned the place inside out. We left Adelaide and started on the last lap. Have you ever wanted something very, very badly? Ever felt that way that what you want it there for the taking but you cannot get at it? Something like the fox and the grapes. It took us 10 weeks to come from Adelaide to Melbourne. I am sure that it was that long. Most people say it is only one and a half days trip. Don't you believe them. It takes the best part of 10 years. I know. What with the anxiety or keeping the boat together and looking for a sight of the heads, we were nearly frantic.

We sighted the Camels Hump before touching at Adelaide and I remembered Cheq Hughs words when we passed it on the way to war. Guess we had the throw on him. He saw it again and so did many of us. There were a big majority who did not though. Well, we arrived at Port-Sea. The next question was whether we were going to be quarantined. Guess there was a sigh of relief that must have been heard at St. Kilda when the word was sent round that the ship had been passed by the Doctor. It was about two in the morning when we dropped anchor at this place. I may say that no one slept the last night on the ship. We were all too busy looking for a sight of Melbourne.

The whole crowd had all their things ready to go off at 10 o'clock in the morning. We did not pull into the new pier until 3 in the afternoon. Guess everyone was so excited that they could do nothing but walk about. Dinner was a thing of the past. We had hardly anything to eat. I for one could not keep still. The last lap down the bay seemed as if it would never end. We could see St. Kilda, Luna Park. Williamstown, Sth Melbourne. We could pick out familiar landmarks all along the coast. At last the tug came out to us. They were the slowest crew on that tug we had ever had anything to do with. Guess the nigs could beat them hollow. It took them about two days to put the rope on and another three to tow us to the pier.

Then came the time. Handshaking and wishing each other good luck, at last we were off and on the pier. It is a little beyond me to describe how I felt. It seems peculiar thing to say; but the place seemed no different to any other. One might have just been waiting at Folkstone or Boulougne to go on leave. That is how it stuck me. We waited a while then an Officer told us what we had to do to facilitate our Finalizing.

The gates were opened at the end of the pier and one large stream of motor cars came racing up. We were in these in no time. Sprays of wattle and gum were thrown at us with a cry of "smell the gun leaves Aussie" Cigarettes, fruit and many other useful things came our way. At last we started for the Finalizing Depot.

It was great that ride to the Depot. The streets were lined with people. One would look at as many as he could. The first person whom I knew was Arthur Williams. He had come home in the draft before ours. We arrived at the depot. I heard someone sing out to me. Then I was poked at with an umbrella. I turned round and there was Cis. Gee, I could have picked her up and hugged her. Guess I am not one of the demonstrative kind. So I just hid my feelings and kissed her. If she only had known what I felt when I saw her and how I could have cried with sheer joy at the sight of her, we would both have been crying like kids. I had to leave her and go inside to get the finishing touches put on. This only took a few minutes. I had a cup of tea and a smoke and waited my turn to see the Doc. That did not take long and I was free to go. While in there I happened to look at a chap who was standing near a counter. I looked at that guy hard for several minutes. I thought that I had seen him somewhere. After a while I came to the conclusion it must be. I went over and asked him if his name was Alan Moore. See the kid jump. Guess it was a great day. Cis looking about 16 and Alan grown so that I did not know who the devil he was; but only had a faint idea I had seen him somewhere before.

Well I got out. As I was going through that crowd I hear a frantic cry of "Chilla". It was Florence NicholSEN. I got under the railing and shook hands with her. Afraid I was somewhat short and sharp. She pounced right on with me with, "come out and see us tomorrow". I said before I could stop myself, "Wait until I get home first". Always do put my foot in it somehow or other. Well I bolted over and found Ciss and off we came. Went home and the door was opened by Frank. Well I guess he had not changed a bit. I would have known him anywhere; but the other two, well I would have known Cis too. Alan I would easily have passed and not had any idea who he was.

I think that I was very quiet. You must understand that a chap had been through a while lot of ugly things and could not realize that he was safe and sound. We had a quiet evening and I went to bed. Guess I did more frightening and dodging shells that night, than I had done all the time I was away. The blessed things kept bursting all around me and I must have made Alan think I was dippy. I could not help it. Some say this is re-action. I am willing to go through it once more. That was the best night I ever put in.

There is very little to say now. I can only speak of my weeks leave. Six I think that were granted. I stayed about a week in town and then came on up to Bendigo. Went over and saw Will and then stayed at Aunt Mays. Bob Patterson

came in and we both went to Alan Weldhs welcome home. Those kind of things did not meet with my approval. Perhaps it may have seemed different to me if my own Mother and father had spared to welcome me. I responded that evening on behalf of the Returned men present. I would like to forget that. Patterson did not know what I felt when he and others urged me to do it. But that is all done with now.

There was one pleasant occurrence that evening. We all went over to the Station to meet him. I had Min and I reckon I was glad that I was spared to come back. I knew then that it was a case of get under boy, you are being bombarded. However, I kept my feelings to myself and I guess that she will own to it. She reckons now that I was mighty slow in coming forward.

After my leave was finished, I put in an application to attend the South Melbourne Technical School. Here I was a student for about six months. The whole of that time was not spent there though. There were many trips to Bendigo. I hate Bendigo; but I had to go. Who would have been ass enough to stay away? Cis used to Remark that I always remarked that I did not like the place; but I seemed willing to go there. Nuff said.

My last trip to Bendigo was Xmas 1919. I felt like many another fellows has done before me. I cannot help smiling when I recall some words that I heard had been said by Mrs. Welch. Mins cousin Amy "" was staying with them at the time. Sunday evening and Church. I had to go those days. Amy had no one to take her and Mrs. Welch, I believe, asked her why she did not go with Minnie and Charlie. She demurred. Mrs.W said, "Oh, it is quite alright, they are only pals". Pals? Guess she did not know how near the pals was being cut to tatters. I think that it was the following day I cut the Pals question right out of existence. Well, Pals are not bad things to be and Amy will never realize the awful time she would have had, if she had gone to Church with the "Pals".

Guess I can give any young fellow who wishes to become engaged some good advice. Select a fine day. That is the sun must be shining and rather a warm sun. One that you can safely reckon will be washing day. Put on your war paint and go forth the battle. I did. When you go in the gate, leave the latch unhooked. That provides a good getaway if things become lively. You stroll up to the house in the ordinary way of paying a visit. That is if you can do it. I did. Then you take your bearings. It is no good looking in the drawing room on a washing day. Make for the back of the premises. There was no dog to worry me; but in case there is, take a gun with you. You get down to the washing house. Then the fun begins. Good morning Mrs. " ". Oh good morning. Isn't it a perfectly lovely day for washing? Yes. You can talk about everything you do not wish to and leave the matter you have nerved yourself to speak about wait. Then you summon your courage and ask the girls parent to come out and speak to you. She wiped the soap suds off her hands and picks up a piece of wood. Puts this in the or under the copper. Sigh of relief here. You then commence in the following manner. "Mrs. " ", your daughter and I have come to the conclusion that we cannot live without one another. We have talked the matter over between ourselves for quite a long time. The only solution that we can arrive at is, that we would like to become engaged for an indefinite period, I must ask you to understand that I am not speaking about a supper or a box at the Theatre; but I can only want to

become engaged with a view to marriage. Your daughter does not know her own mind; but as I consider myself a capable young chap, you can safely leave the question of her mind to me. (Pause for breath). You then go on to enumerate (if you have any), (this is a secondary consideration, and is left to the applicant to please himself whether he thinks it necessary to mention it). As I did not have any I did make use of this to aid me in the great battle.

The lady in question is so flurried with the big wash that she readily consents, throws her arms around your neck and murmurs, "you will be good to my darling girl", and you have won the day. Once you get the mother on your side, do not bother or worry about the father. Just mention the matter to him the same as you would mention that your favorite team had one the football final.

P/S. How to make sure the day you choose is washing day. Ask the girl. I did. All young fellows who are ready to make this great plunge re advised to copy the above. And above all make sure the girl is present. It is a great stimulant and helps wonderfully.

After this battle I came back to the School with a do or die kind of feeling. Worked like a nigger. That is worse than the washing day experience. Passed a few tests and came again to Bendigo. It was high time I thought about getting something to do. I came back to town and secured a position with one of the leading firms, which I still hold and hope to do so for some considerable time.

I think that I can safely leave anything else to your imagination. What I have tried to picture I will admit is very poorly done; but as I am neither writer nor scholar enough to set things down, I beg to be excused. I may say that this has taken me about three months to do. If ever I am caught doing the same again, may my wife, when I get her, beat me.

I have tried to tell you things that happened, some of them pleasant and those are what I do not wish to forget. That is one reason why I attempted to do this. As for the sordid happenings, it would take a better mind than mine to tell them.

They are best left alone and I am doing my level best to forget them. Some things we all love to speak over and over again about and as long as they have been pleasant we do not tire of repeating them to our friends. When you have read this you will better understand I hope; the nature of the man that wrote it.

There is one thing that I think is the biggest curse of a man or woman's existence. The lack of expression in speech. I have it; but this effort in writing will help me out. All things have an ending and this is not different from others. Here's to land of milk and honey, "Australia".

Charles Moore