

The Great War

**Harry Russell's 1916 diary
& the story of his extended family**



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By

[Glenn McIntosh](#) 2021

1. Introduction

2657 L/CPL Harry Milton

Russell

1st Infantry Battalion

Gallipoli, Egypt, France and Belgium
1915-16

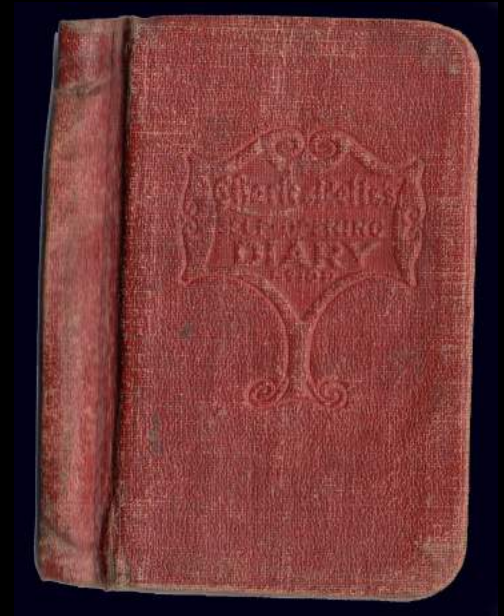
3rd Machine Gun Battalion

France

1918

About 1995 when I first became interested in the diary, written by my grandfather during 1916, I decided to buy a book on Australia's involvement in WW1, as my knowledge of the subject was very limited. Like most Australians I was brought up with the legend of Gallipoli, but knew very little about the role of our soldiers at the Western Front. I bought **'Australians at War'** by Peter Cochrane and first became aware of the name Pozieres ? *'In seven weeks of fighting at Pozieres, the AIF lost 6842 dead and 17,513 wounded or gassed'*. This was powerful stuff. This was almost as many Australian dead in 7 weeks as in the entire Gallipoli campaign! The Australian's first charged the German lines at Pozieres on July 23rd 1916. I wondered what my grandfather Harry was up to on July 23th and quickly thumbed through the diary.

[Glenn McIntosh](#)



1915

There is a brief paragraph on 1915 in his 1916 diary which provides a wealth of information on Harry's movements from the time he departed Australia on 9th August 1915 until his evacuation from Gallipoli on 15th December 1915.
(see p 8)

1916

Jan 2 - Mar 25

Hospital in Cairo to the troopship Ivernia en route to France (see p 15)

Mar 26 - May 20

Arrival in France to French Flanders (see p 27)

May 21 - Jul 15

Flanders on to the Somme (see p 35)

Jul 16 - Sep 9

Somme then on to Belgium (see p 46)

Sep 10 - Nov 4

Belgium then back to the Somme (see p 58)

Nov 5 - Dec 31

Somme then London (see p 67)



REMEMBRANCE DAY
LEST WE FORGET



Harry's 1st Battalion were in that first charge on the German lines at Pozieres on his 20th birthday.

And so began my interest in the Great War.

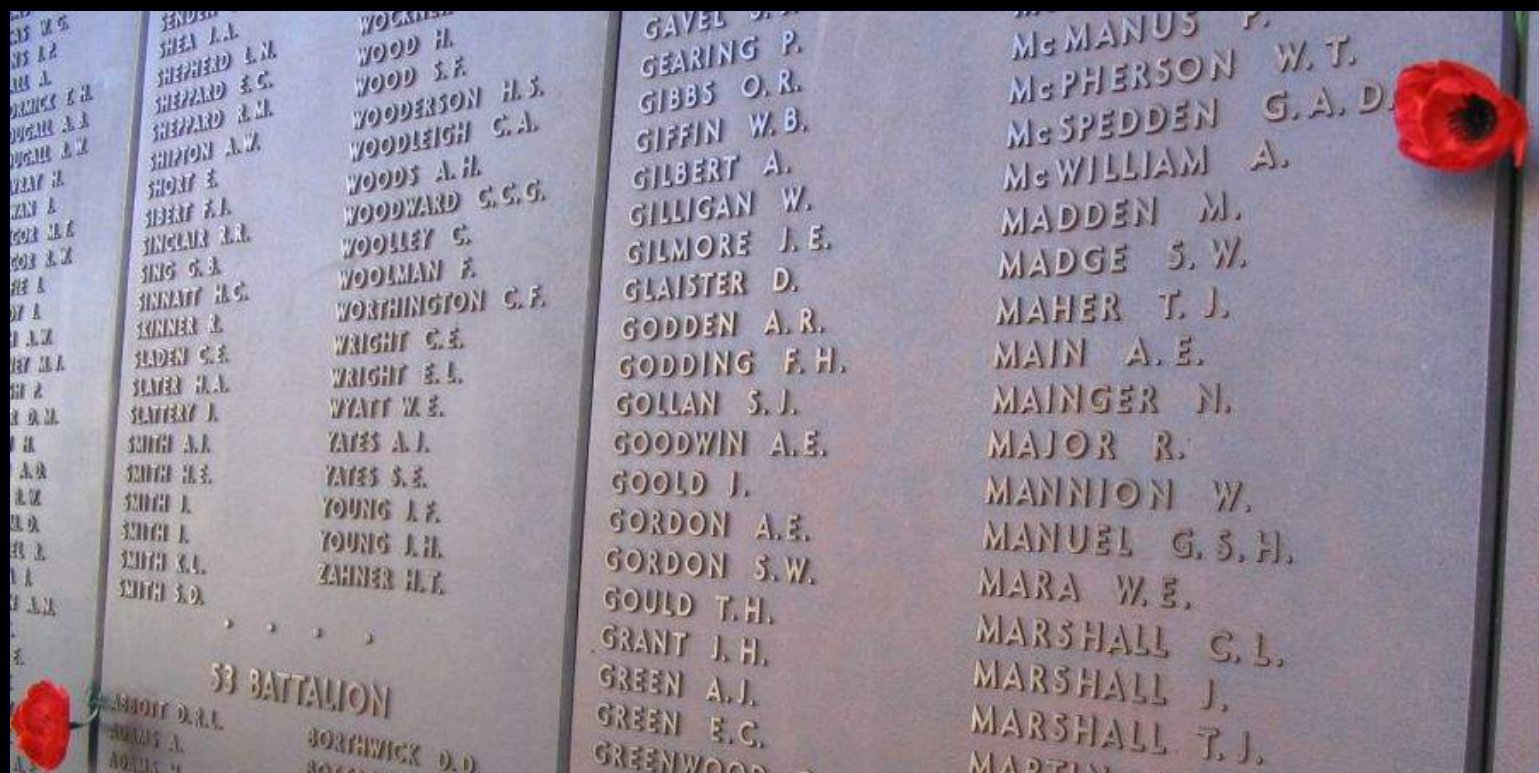
My mother, Harry Russell's daughter, had named me after her Uncle Glen who she never knew. A lost AIF soldier among the 60,000 or so who never returned to Australia. How did he fit in? What was the link?

And so began my journey.

This journey took me first to the AWM at Canberra in 2004, then on to Gallipoli in 2005. Then a self guided tour by hire car of the AIF WW1 battlefields in France and Belgium in 2005. I visited many of the places mentioned in Harry's diary including a walk from the Lochnagar Crater, following the path taken by the AIF to the township of Pozieres, which was for many a one way trip.

The Beginning

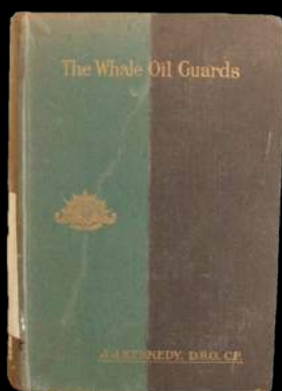
In 2004 I stood and looked along the wall of the Commemorative Courtyard known as the 'WW1 Roll of Honour' at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. On this wall, inscribed in bronze, are the names of the 60,000 or so Australians, all of them volunteers, who perished in the Great War. The supposed war to end all wars. The two soldiers of principal interest to me, served in the 53rd Infantry Battalion, whose memorial was situated almost at the opposite end of the wall from where I stood. This meant a sombre walk, firstly past the fallen from the 1st Battalion, (of special interest to me) then past the names of the thousands of Australian dead from Battalions 2 to 52 to get there. Then luck was with me - I could fit the names of my two soldiers, along with the 53 Battalion header, in the one photo.



'The 53rd Battalion was raised in Egypt on 14 February 1916 as part of the 'doubling' of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 1st Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia.' (AWM)

The two soldiers of interest to me were 'fresh reinforcements from Australia'. **Gibbs O.R.** and **Manuel G.S.H.** had both enlisted on the same day, July 14th 1915 at Liverpool, Sydney and were assigned to the 11th reinforcements to the 1st Battalion AIF. The 1st Battalion, along with all the other Australian military units at Gallipoli, had suffered heavy losses, and a steady flow of replacements from Australia was required.

Harry Russell had enlisted 2 weeks before his first cousin Roy Gibbs on Jun 30 1915 and had been assigned to the 8th reinforcements to the 1st Battalion.



53rd Battalion

The 53rd Battalion had the same colour patch as the 1st Battalion - only worn vertically. They became known later in the war as the Whale Oil Guards. In 1916 faced with freezing conditions and mud and slush, the AIF were issued with whale oil to rub into their feet, supposedly to protect against trench foot. The 53rd used some of the oil to shine their metal helmets for a parade.



Oliver Roy Gibbs (Roy) from Branxton, near Maitland, NSW, was a collier training to be a mine surveyor, and almost 22 when he enlisted. He is referred to in military terms as **3326 Corporal Oliver Roy Gibbs MM.** (the MM. meaning Military Medal which is awarded for bravery). The war proper for Roy Gibbs started at the now infamous Battle of Fromelles on July 19th 1916 when his 53rd Battalion had been decimated.

'The 53rd was part of the initial assault and suffered grievously, incurring 625 casualties, including its commanding officer, amounting to over three-quarters of its attacking strength'. (AWM)

Roy escaped with a 'G.S.W. Thigh', (gunshot wound in the thigh). After surviving many major battles including Bullecourt, Ypres and the Menin Road, Roy's luck finally ran out on Sept 30th 1918 just 2 days before his 53rd Battalion was withdrawn from hostilities in the war, when he was killed in action at Bellicourt while pursuing the Germans to the Hindenburg Line. (during the Battle of St Quentin Canal)



Military Medal awarded to Roy Gibbs.



Glen Selby Harold Manuel (Glen) came from a small family farm 'Kia Ora', near Kootingal via Tamworth in the New England district of NSW. Both of Glen's maternal grandparents, Schmids and Dorings, were German immigrants. (The family name Manuel is almost certainly of Portuguese origin). Glen was 19 when he enlisted, his occupation given as labourer. The war proper for 3411 Sergeant Glen Selby Harold Manuel also began in earnest at the Battle of Fromelles, and according to a newspaper report was 'the only one left out of his Section'. (see 'Soldiers of the North' article)

Glen survived gunshot wounds, some severe, to both legs, an arm, and his neck, at the Second Battle of Bullecourt in May 1917, but his war ended on April 15th 1918 when he died of shrapnel wounds in the back at Villers-Bretonneux, during fierce fighting when the AIF retook the town and halted the German advance on Amiens.



Memorabilia and medals of Glen Manuel boxed by his brother Russell

Somewhere in France
April. 24th 1918.

Mr Manuel.

Dear Sir,

By the time you receive this note, you should have been notified by the Military Authorities of your Son (Glenie's) death in action on the 15th of this month at or about 10 O'clock in the forenoon. His mates, friends and comrades of this Battalion with ^{family} is sympathizing with you in your sad bereavement and loss, and as a mate of his, who was there when it happened you would like to know that he died rather suddenly from the effect of a body wound caused by a shell which wounded five others in his platoon at the same time. He died as he lived a soldier and a man, his last words being MOTHER - MOTHER POOR MOTHER - POOR MUM. I was in his platoon, and know that

he would like his Mother to take this sad loss as a lot of Australian Mothers have had to, standing up. Hoping this rough note will be excused as it is being written in the firing line, and that it is received in the same spirit that prompted the undersigned to send it.

S. Am. His Mate & Friend.

Yours Faithfully,

Walter Scott Reid. Pte. M.M.
No. 4848.

Dear Mr Manuel,

Private Reid just handed me this letter to post as they were taking him away on the stretcher. Pte Reid was badly wounded 24/4/18 just as he finished writing this letter. We hear he is doing well and will recover, though he may lose an eye.

As soon as we are relieved I will make enquiries as to where your son was buried. Reid died shortly after being wounded and was not in pain. I am a Sergt in the same Coy and was with him where he was wounded. I handed all his belongings to the Commanding Officer to be forwarded on to you.

'As soon as we are relieved I will make enquiries as to where your son was buried. Glen died shortly after being wounded and was not in pain. I am a Sergt in the same Coy and was with him where he was wounded. I handed all his belongings to the Commanding Officer to be forwarded on to you.'

Walter Scott Reid apparently recovered from the gunshot wound to his face and rejoined the 53rd Battalion after they were withdrawn from hostilities on Oct 2 1918. (see p 106)

Sgt Frank McGrath received a severe gunshot wound to the head on Sept 30 1918 - the very same day that Roy Gibbs was killed! He returned to Australia.

I hope you receive them safely. The whole Company were very grieved to hear of his death, as he was a very ~~popular~~ great favourite with all the boys. We all sympathize with you and your family in their great loss. I will write again giving full particulars as to his belongings.

Yours sincerely
Frank McGrath

No. 2573. Sgt McGrath. F.
6 Coy 53rd Bn. A.I.F.

SOLDIERS OF THE NORTH

At Home and Abroad

Mrs. J. Manuel of Hyman-street, Tamworth, received the sad news last week that her late son, Sergt. Glen Manuel's best pal, Corp. Roy Gibbs, of Branxton, had been killed in action. They had been bosom friends for nearly three years and had never been parted till the first big push in France on the Somme when Corp. Gibbs was wounded; but Sergt. Manuel escaped without a scratch. In fact, he was the only one left out of his section. The following is a letter Corp. Gibbs wrote when his friend died:

Dear Mrs. Manuel,—These few lines are for sympathy with yourself and all concerned. I feel lost to the world in this battalion since Glen has gone. I can't realise it yet. God knows this war is hard for a man at any time, but to think a pal that has covered miles and miles in Egypt side by side, fought side by side in France, and whom he had learned to love as a brother, is now sleeping in peace. You think it hard, no doubt, and so do I, but Mrs. Manuel, take it in the broad light. He may be better off. That is the only way we can satisfy our minds. Glen died easy. He has a nice grave in Villers-Bretonneux. I was not there when he passed away, but Mr. Hastings told me all about it. I gave your address to one of our lieutenants, and I think he wrote to you. I am putting a wreath and some flower seeds on and around his grave first opportunity I get, so that the spot will always be conspicuous. I cannot say any more tonight, but Mrs. Manuel, do believe me—Glen died a soldier and a man, and you should be proud of that.

Tamworth Daily Observer Oct 26 1918



The original graves of the fallen were eventually exhumed and replaced in the many official war cemeteries that dot the countryside.



In 2005 I visited the grave of Glen Manuel at Crucifix Corner Cemetery, Villers Bretonneux, next to the busy A29/E44 Autoroute. I also visited the grave of Roy Gibbs at the Tincourt British Cemetery situated in a not so busy area near the village of Tincourt, some 50 kilometres to the East. This was 50 kilometers closer to the Hindenburg Line, the last ditch defense of the Germans, and the loss of which was their ultimate defeat.

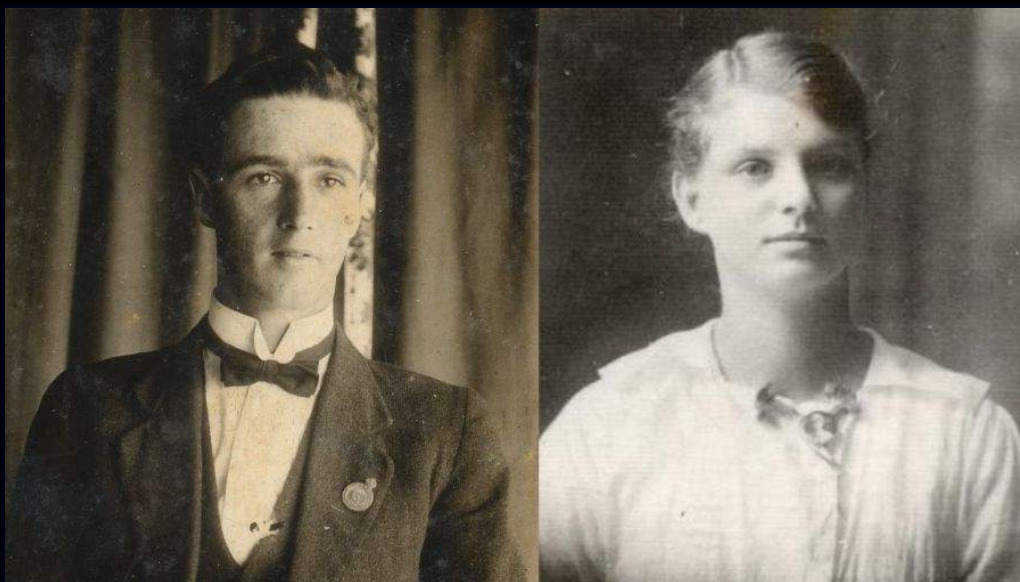
Winnie Manuel and Molly Gibbs



Mary Ann 'Molly' Gibbs, (later Mary Ann Russell), mother of Roy Gibbs, and Winnie Manuel mother of Glen Manuel also became friends, no doubt united in shared grief for their lost sons. Harry Russell was related 'twice over' to 'Molly'. Roy Gibb's father Thomas, was brother to Harry's mother Eliza. 'Molly' became a widow in 1896 and subsequently married Alfred Russell in 1900, brother to Harry's father George. During a visit to 'Molly' at Branxton from her home near Tamworth sometime in 1919, Winnie Manuel's accompanying daughter Clarice met 'Molly' Gibb's nephew Harry Milton Russell, also from Branxton.

Harry Russell and Clarice Manuel

My maternal grandparents, Harry Russell and Clarice Manuel, married at Tamworth, NSW in August 1921. They had three daughters. Renee, Betty (who died in 1933 aged 7 from pneumonia), and Jean (my mother). Harry died in 1959 aged 62, so I only have fairly vague memories of him. I was born in 1952. Mum remembers him as quiet and withdrawn most of the time. Probably he had seen and experienced too many horrors as a young man. Harry was never a member of an R.S.L. He never attended ANZAC day celebrations. Apparently he just wanted to forget. This was not unusual.



2. Australia to Gallipoli



Harry enlisted on June 23 1915 and embarked for the front on August 9. This photo was taken shortly before Harry's departure from his family.

On July 30 1915 it was decided an Australia Day would be celebrated across the country and funds would be raised to help the Australia Division of the Red Cross continue to provide their services. Ribbons were sold as part of the fundraising. Examples of these ribbons can be seen in this photo of Harry with his family.

On Harry's immediate left is his brother in law Herbert Leslie Prior.

Herbert Leslie Prior didn't survive the war. (see p 98)



1st Australian Infantry Battalion

(AWM)

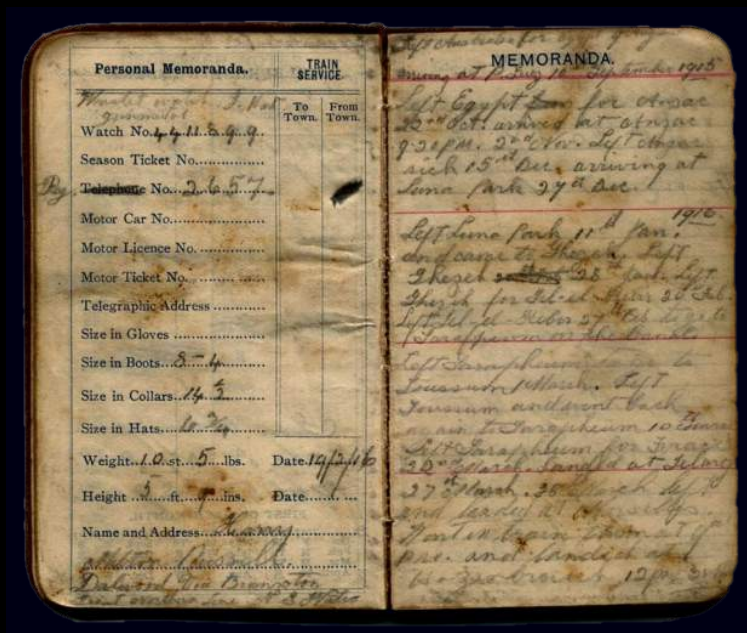
The 1st Battalion was the first infantry unit recruited for the AIF in New South Wales during the First World War. The battalion was raised within a fortnight of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked just two months later. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving on 2 December. The battalion took part in the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 as part of the second and third waves, and served there until the evacuation in December. Its most notable engagement at Gallipoli was the battle of Lone Pine in August.



Roll call of D Company 1st Battalion at Hell Spit after the fighting at the landing.



The bodies of fallen Australian soldiers lie on the ground over which the 1st Battalion advanced in its attack on Lone Pine.



Left Australia for Egypt 9 August 1915
 Arrived at Pt Suez 10 September 1915
 Left Egypt for Anzac 22 October - arrived at 9.20 pm 2 November
 Left Anzac sick 15 December arriving at Luna Park 27 December

This brief paragraph on 1915 in his 1916 diary provides a wealth of information on Harry's movements from the time he departed Australia on 9th August 1915 until his evacuation from Gallipoli on 15th December 1915.

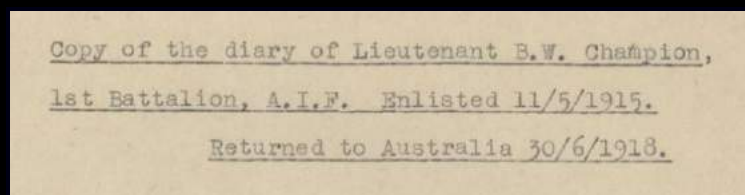


Left Australia for Egypt 9 August 1915

Unbeknownst to Harry and any other soldiers on board the Runic as she departed Australia, the Battle of Lone Pine had been raging on the ANZAC Peninsula for several days, ending on AUG 9. This was the last major battle at Gallipoli and resulted in the stalemate that ultimately saw the Allied withdrawal.

Arrived at Pt Suez 10 September 1915

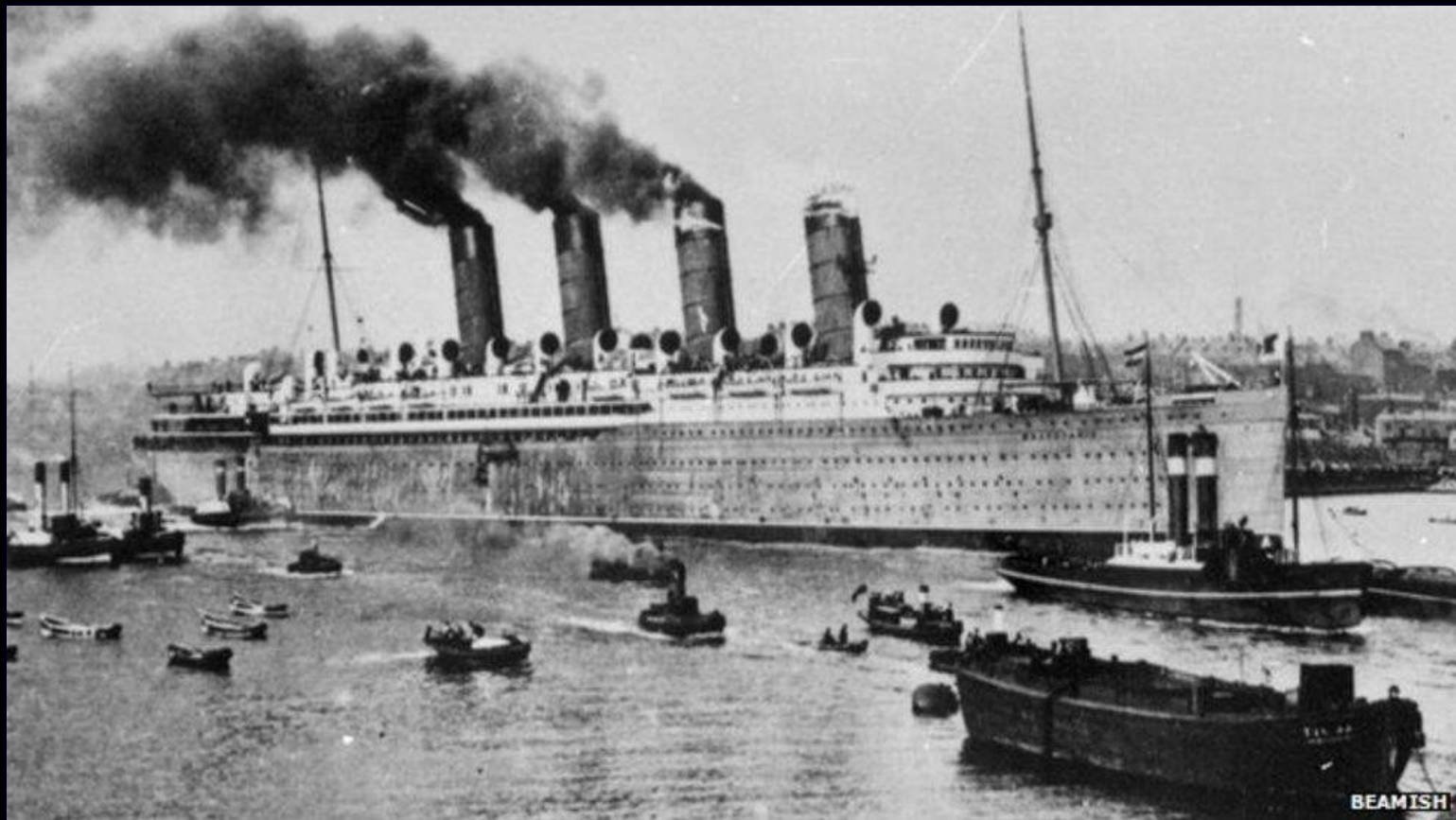
Also unbeknownst to Harry and any other reinforcements to the 1st Battalion on board the Runic, their 1st battalion had left Anzac the day before their arrival at Pt. Suez for a rest on the island of Lemnos. They were not to return to Anzac until September 29th. Shortly after on November 2nd, Harry Russell finally joined his battalion.



The diary of Lieutenant B.W. Champion is a very detailed record of his part in The Great War. It also gives us a much more detailed account of daily activities in the 1st Battalion than Harry's brief entries in his diary.

Left Egypt for Anzac 22 October - arrived at 9.20 pm 2 November

Lieutenant Champion also left Egypt for Anzac on 22 October, arriving at the same time as Harry. The excerpts below detail the time they left the island of Lemnos, until they joined their Battalion at Gallipoli.



Mauretania

'1/11/15. Today the 1st November, we disembarked into lighters, and then into a fast turbine boat, the "Osmania". We waited until the huge "Mauretania" steamed into harbour; she was a hospital boat and the biggest ship I have ever seen. Soon we were out to sea on our biggest adventure - off to Gallipoli, and creepy feelings started to trickle up and down my spine. We were packed like sardines, and if the boat had been torpedoed, not 1/4 would have been saved. We passed a monitor, slowly creeping along, escorted by two destroyers. These monitors are funny-looking boats, more like flat barges only with a huge gun in front. They draw very little water and can stand in close to shore where the warships cannot go, and bombard the shore defences, etc. At dusk we passed Embros, the island on which HeadQuarters is situated and at 7.30 p.m. came close to a large tongue of land covered with tiny twinkling lights. Out of shell-fire, we anchored, and small iron lighters came alongside and took us off. These lighters were like flat tanks and we were shut below like rats in a trap. Anywhere in the open it wouldn't have been so bad, but down below it was terrible.'



'Soon a steam pinnace came along (how I admired the Snotties in charge!) and towed us to a pier, where we disembarked in a heap on a narrow beach, smothered in walls of provisions. Tiers on tiers of cases of biscuits, ammunition, etc., so that the beach was walled across time and time again. So here we were on the Peninsula at last! In the distance could be heard rifle fire, and very occasionally a shell came in our direction.'



'Struggling along in the dark, loaded like camels, over rough unknown land, passing holes in the ground from which one caught a glimpse of light as the waterproof sheet covering the entrance moved in the breeze, we came to realise that at last we were on the mysterious Peninsula.'

'We had the impression that everywhere were men with muffled voices, and that we had come to a place peopled by voices, for we could see no living people but ourselves. For about 1 1/2 miles we stumbled on in communication trenches which seemed as wide as lanes and about 12' deep, until we reached a fairly level piece of land under the lee of a large hill. This we were told was the edge of Shrapnel Gully and we were warned not to go away from the edges as enemy gun-fire swept the middle area. This was very cheerful, as only a few minutes before, we had rested in a heap right in the centre of the Gully. We were intrigued with our quarters for the night; they were oblong holes cut in the side of the hill and partly covered with waterproof sheets, but anywhere was better than being out in the Scotch mist which was forming.'

'Next morning, the 3rd November, we were out at daylight as it was too cold and cramped to sleep, exploring. What a wilderness caught the eye! Nowhere could we see any green grass or trees or shrubs, all had been torn up or trampled underfoot, leaving the bare gravelly soil exposed.'



'Here and there were small breast-works in front of dugouts, and men gradually appeared and commenced to make breakfast. Soon we were the centre of an animated group. New arrivals meeting old friends and making new ones. Surely these men were not the spic and span soldiers we had seen leaving Australia a year before! Nearly all had beards or had not shaved for weeks; all were dirty, their breeches hacked off at the knees, and few were wearing puttees. But they were happy, cheerful and full of jokes, and they had developed a jargon of their own, which took us new arrivals some time to understand. New words for everyday things and new words for war terms. Grouped together, they had a same-ness which I had never realised before. There was a definite Australian character, which is hard to explain, but which was present in every one of them.'

Leane's Trench

The 1st Battalion had returned to ANZAC from their rest on Lemnos on Oct 29 and took over their position at Leane's Trench on Oct 30.

Official Diary 1st Battalion

1700 3.11.15

Reinforcements arrived. 2 Officers and 187 other ranks. Lieut E.U.I. Scott (7th Reifs) and Lieut A.S. Mackenzie (8th Reifs). Good stamp of men and they had done 13 weeks training and finished their musketry course.

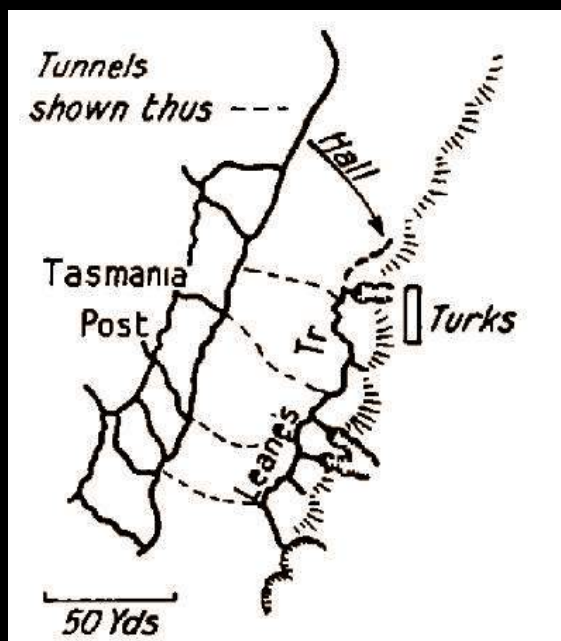
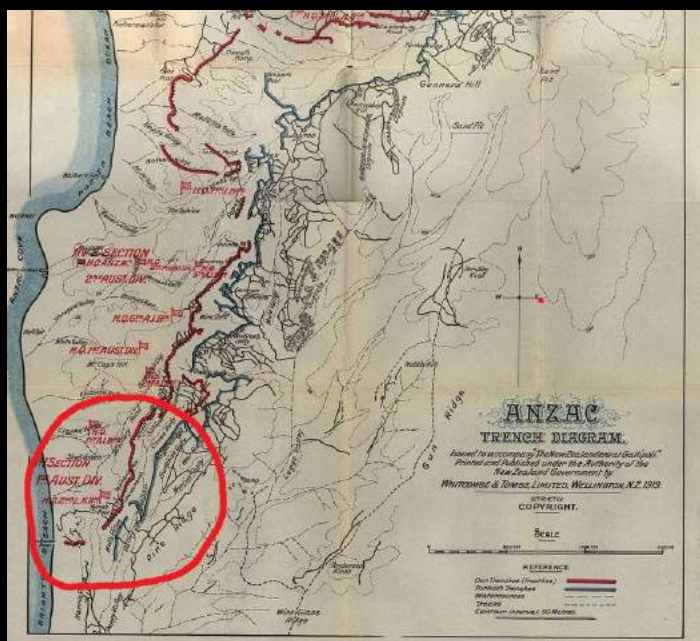
2100

A patrol of 2 men from B Coy to reconnoitre ground in front of position. Nothing observed.

1300 4.11.15

Reifs posted to Coys. Lieut Scott to C Coy and Lieut. Mackenzie to C Coy. D Company left Tasmania Post and occupied reserve trenches on Bolton's Hill.

Sgt Champion was assigned to A Company and Harry Russell to D Company. Harry was to remain with D Company during his stay at Gallipoli and in 1916 at France and Belgium.



During Harry's six weeks on Gallipoli there were no major battles fought. The area around and including Leane's Trench was subject to constant shelling and occasional skirmishes with the Turks.

Official Diary 1st Battalion

2100 - 2200 4.11.15

Firing on right flank by enemy. Fairly heavy. Quiet in front. Lieut. G.A. Street appointed ADJUTANT Wooten relinquished appointment.

1200 5.11.15

Poppy Valley Shelled. One man killed; two wounded. Very quiet otherwise all day.

0900 6.11.15 ANZAC

New telephone put in T4 tunnel close to B Coy. Std Q no.

2030

A patrol of 1 and 2 went out from advanced bomb port of A Coy. Found and searched two dead bodies but did not observe any movement of enemy.

1100 7.11.15

Lieut C.B. Withy to hospital with suspected diptheria.

9.11.15

Telegram received from War Office to the effect that advice has been received that gas would most probably be used on the Peninsular.

1000 11.11.15

Gas alarm practise.

1700-1800 12.11.15

Poppy Valley shelled. No casualties.

2400

Patrol of two men went out from No. 18 post intending to remain out for 24hrs and to stay in old Turkish dugout on W side of Valley of Despair. Signals were exchanged by a piece of string.

2100 13.11.15

Patrol sent out at 2400 12.11.15 returned. Reported movement of enemy on SW face of Knife Edge. There does not appear to be any serious work there.

0900 14.11.15

The Bn took over 2 Bn frontage. D Co coming into the line. The trenches in the firing line were very shallow and loopholes required resetting. This was proceeded with immediately. Lieut G.A. Street promoted temporary Captain. Captain Jackson invalided.

16.11.15 ANZAC

During night of 15/16 enemy put out wire entanglements along knife edge to S end.

1815 17.11.15

Patrol left D Co lines from Q1 post and encountered enemy patrol and were fired upon but got back safely.

1840

Patrol left B Co lines from L2 post. Returned having observed nothing at 2140.

Wet weather during the night made trenches very muddy and slippery.



The storm showed just how vulnerable the troops were as most of the piers that were used to dock supply vessels were either destroyed or damaged. Fresh water was in short supply and warm clothing for the approaching winter had not yet been provided. Their morale also took a hit as the storm sank the boats carrying both the outgoing and incoming Christmas mail. And of course the 'muddy and slippery' trenches added to their woes.

0930 19.11.15

Enemy observed bringing large quantities of timber to a point on the S end of Snipers Ridge and earthworks seem to be increasing. The timber appeared to be very plentiful and was rough unsawn timber.

1730 20.11.15

Patrol left Q1 returning at 1915. No signs of enemy seen.

1300 21.11.15

About 50 Turks were seen to move through communications trench to line on Snipers Ridge. Work by the enemy is in progress on Pine Ridge.

Silent Stunts

On Nov 13 Field Marshal Lord Kitchener visited ANZAC to assess the situation. A decision was made to withdraw the troops as soon as possible. A plan was devised to trick the Turks to hopefully minimize casualties during the withdrawal. Starting Nov 25 the troops were ordered to cease fire. The Turks were perplexed and tried all means available to them to work out what was happening.

1000 25.11.15

Enemy noted to be observing thoroughly through periscopes.

Ruse by ANZAC. No firing to be done by us at all. Intended to try to draw enemy to attack.

0300 26.11.15

About 20 Turks attacked 3 & 4 posts but did no damage. The enemy threw bombs into No 4 post and were driven off. One Turkish body dragged in. About 100 or more of enemy observed in valley working up Holly Ridge. They were fired upon and retired, apparently in disorder in small parties.

0415

Battalion stood to arms from 0300 to 0415. All quiet.

2400 27-28.11.15 ANZAC

Silent ruse ceased and sniping resumed as usual. There is no doubt this ruse puzzled the Turks and made them restless. They had many reconnoitring patrols out in front of our lines evidently with the object of finding out to what extent our trenches were occupied.

0900 29.11.15

The Brigade lines and all 1/Bn near communications trenches were heavily shelled.

0950

Two red flags, evidently artillery marks observed on 3 points of Sniper's Ridge.

1113

One big 6in howitzer fell at W end of Centre Communications trench killing one man and wounding ten. A 7.5in burst at E end of Centre Communications trench, killing one man & 8 needing a stretcher. All quiet at night.

30.11.15

Barbed wire on our right flank. This was linked up and placed about two yards from point where ground drops suddenly. All quiet during day and night.

There were no official 1st Battalion Diaries for Dec 1915.

Also on Nov 30 Sgt Champion was injured by a bomb and was evacuated, so we cannot learn anything about Dec at Leane's Trench from his diary.

Evacuation

The decision was made to evacuate by Dec 20. All evacuations were made at night. The fittest men were to be in the final evacuation which was to take place on the nights of Dec 18/19 and 19/20. The sickest men were to be evacuated prior to this to keep the operation as smooth as possible.

Harry Russell left ANZAC sick on Dec 15. His service records state he was admitted to hospital in Cairo with 'debility'. Debility is a very generalised term but in all probability Harry had dysentery and was in poor physical state from living in wet, freezing conditions and eating an inadequate diet. He was admitted to hospital in Cairo on Dec 27 and discharged on Jan 10 with no apparent ongoing health issues.



The 'ANZAC Commemorative Medallion' was instituted in 1967. 'It was awarded to surviving members of the Australian forces who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula.' Harry Russell died in 1959, so his Medallion went to his family.



In 2005 with the help of an elderly and legendary local Turkish guide, Huseyin Uluaslan, from nearby Cannakkale, I looked around the area at the very south end of the battlefield, where the 1st Battalion had been stationed during Harry's time at Gallipoli. An area that still holds very recognisable physical landmarks such as 'Knife Edge', 'Valley of Despair' and 'Sniper's Ridge'. A short climb from the cemetery at Shell Green takes you to the old front line. All that remains of the trench systems Tasmania Post and Leane's Trench, the trenches Harry's 1st battalion lived and fought in during November and December 1915, are just crisscrossing depressions in the soil.

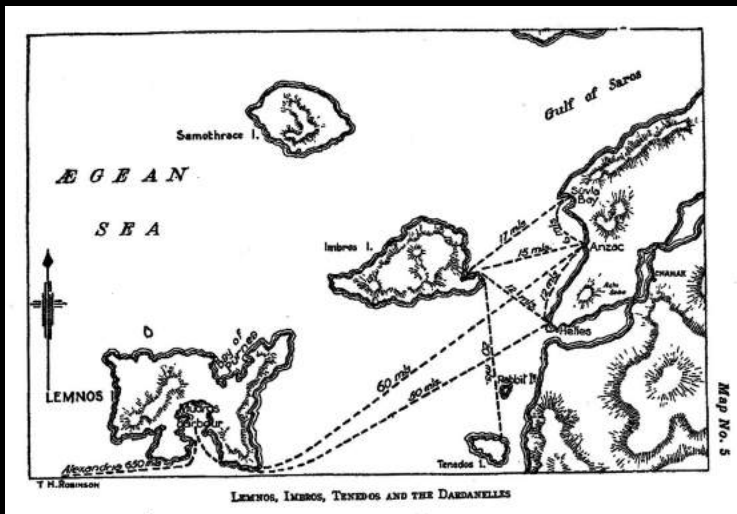
3. Egypt

Left Anzac sick 15 December arriving at Luna Park 27 December

Sickness on Gallipoli

'The scale of sickness was incredible, and only twice during the campaign (early May and mid-August) did the numbers of men being evacuated from Gallipoli due to wounds sustained in fighting outstrip the numbers being taken off with some form of illness'. The main illness was dysentery.

In all probability Harry was first evacuated to Lemnos on Dec 15 1915. Travel time by ship from Gallipoli to Alexandria near Cairo was three and a half days, so he may have spent a week or so on Lemnos as he didn't arrive at Luna Park until Dec 27. *'Lemnos after the evacuation was indeed a mighty camp. Long lines of bell-tents sheltered thousands of Allied soldiers; big Red Cross marquees, where the needs of the sick and wounded were tended'. Upon arrival at Alexandria special hospital trains transported the sick and wounded on to Cairo.*



3rd Australian General Hospital Lemnos 1915



Hospital train running between Alexandria & Cairo drawn up alongside of hospital ship just arrived from the Peninsula at Alexandria Jan 1916

Map on left showing Lemnos and Alexandria approx three and a half days travel by ship

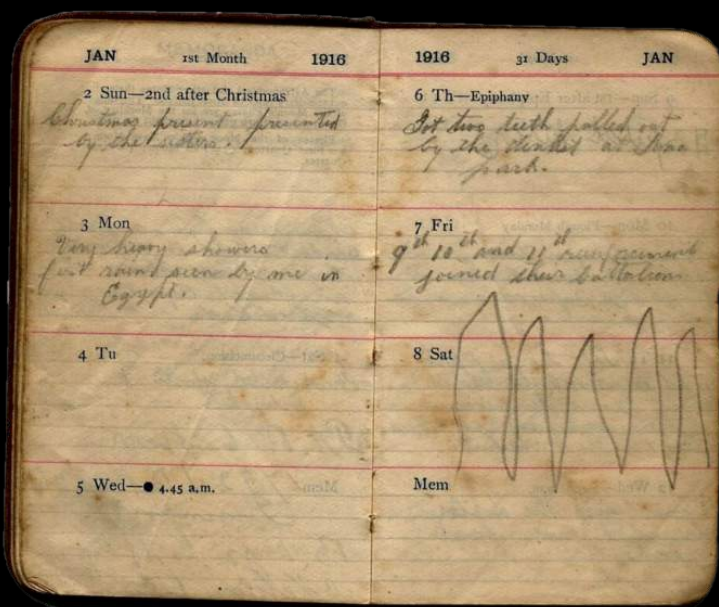


Unloading the Hospital Train Heliopolis Siding



Luna Park Hospital

Harry arrived at Luna Park hospital on Dec 27 1915 after leaving Gallipoli on Dec 15. Luna Park was a converted amusement park at Heliopoli to the NW of Cairo, established shortly after the Gallipoli landing. By August 1915 the number of sick and wounded was 1400. Heliopolis was built during the first decade of the 1900's as an entertainment zone for Cairo and as well as the amusement park, it had a hippodrome, polo field, cricket field, aerodrome, golf course and restaurants. Luna Park was converted to a hospital after the Australian General Hospital in the nearby Heliopolis Palace Hotel ran out of beds.



2 Sun Christmas present presented by the sisters.

3 Mon Very heavy showers - first rain seen by me in Egypt.

6 Th Got two teeth pulled out by the dentist at Luna Park

7 Fri 9th 10th & 11th reinforcements joined their battalion.

Glen Manuel and Roy Gibbs were in the 11th reinforcements, joining the 1st Battalion at Tel el Kebir



Jan 10 Mon Paraded before the doctor at Luna Park, discharged from hospital.

11 Tu Left Luna Park and went out to Giza about four miles from Cairo. Tents very scarce - slept in the mess hut.

12 Wed Went before the doctor, classed A. Leave first opportunity.

13 Th Went on picket up to Giza, a lovely little spot.

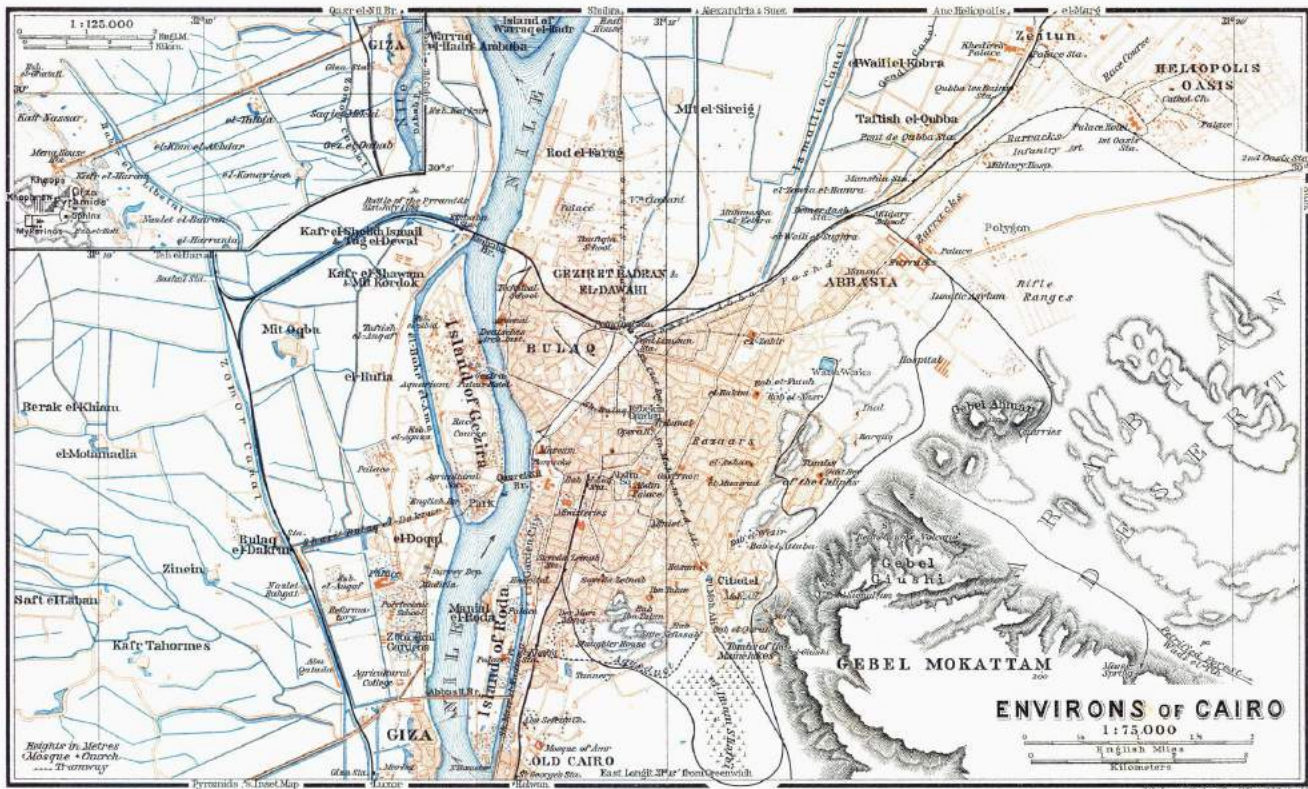
14 Fri Went on picket up to the brewery, plenty of buckshee beer there.

15 Sat Went into Cairo and had a good night sports returning home very late.

Mem: Cairo too lively for me, you are pushed down one side of the street and shoved up the other.

Picket - guard duty

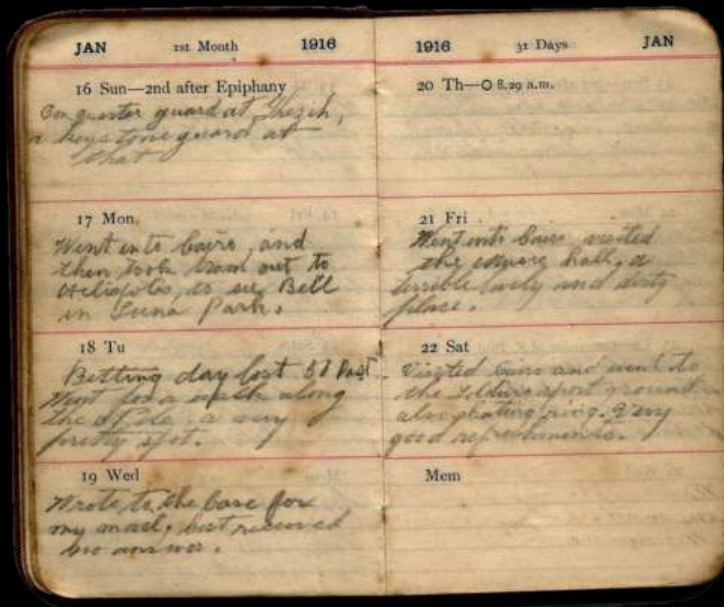
Buckshee - off the record



Giza bottom left - Helopolis top right

Electric Trams

'Training was six days a week and when leave came, the soldiers had rich opportunities to explore. Even at the start of the 1900s the pyramids were a global tourist attraction served by electric trams from Cairo. Soldiers could quickly travel into the city, with its bazaars, brothels and cafes.'



Jan 16 Sun On quarter guard at Giza, a keystone guard at that.

17 Mon Went into Cairo and then took tram out to Heliopolis to see Bill in Luna Park.

18 Tu Betting day lost 51 Piastre. Went for a walk along the Nile, a very pretty spot.

19 Wed Wrote to the base for my mail, but received no answer.

21 Fri Went into Cairo, visited the Music Hall, a terrible lively and dirty place.

22 Sat Visited Cairo and went to the soldier's sports ground, also skating rink. Very good refreshments.

Quarter guard - Ceremonial guard

Keystone guard - ?

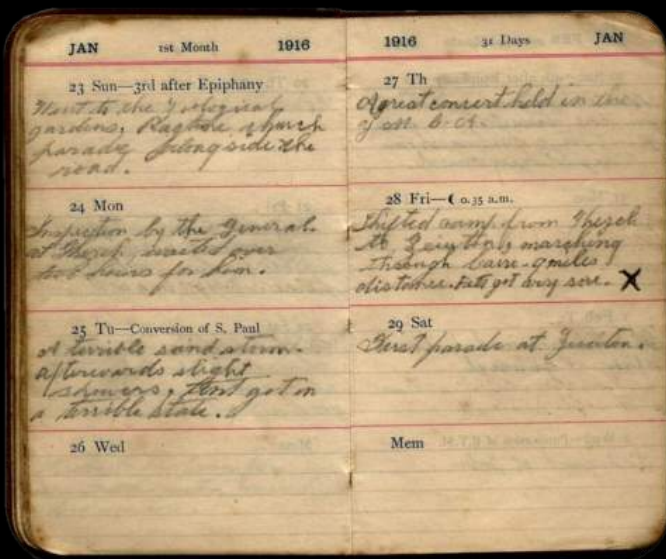
51 Piastre - about 10 shillings or 2 days pay



Mena Camp at Giza



Cairo tram



Jan 23 Sun Went to the Zoological gardens. Ragtime church parade alongside the road.

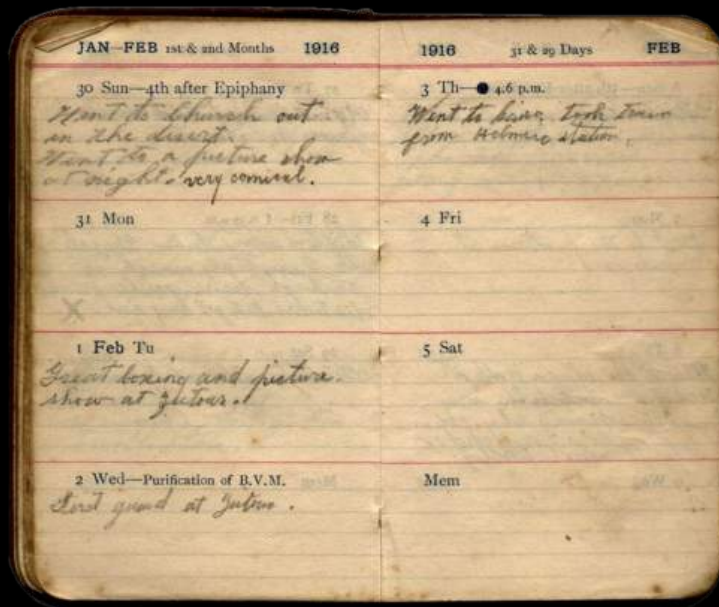
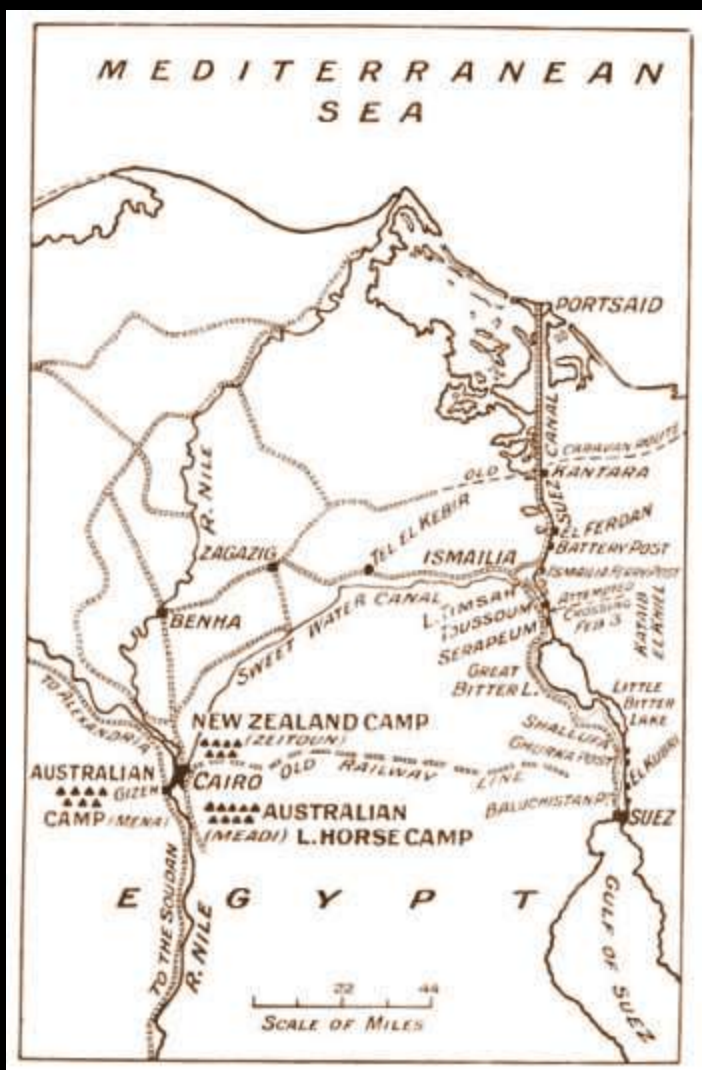
24 Mon Inspection by the General at Giza, waited over two hours for him.

25 Tu A terrible sandstorm afterwards slight showers, gent got in a terrible state.

27 Th A great concert held in the YMCA.

28 Fri Shifted camp from Giza to Zeitoun, marching through Cairo, 9 miles distance. Feet got very sore.

29 Sat First parade at Zeitoun.



Jan 30 Sun Went to church out in the desert. Went to a picture show at night, very comical.
Feb 1 Tu Great boxing and picture show at Zeitoun.
2 Wed First guard at Zeitoun.
3 Thu Went to Cairo, took tram from Helmeic st.

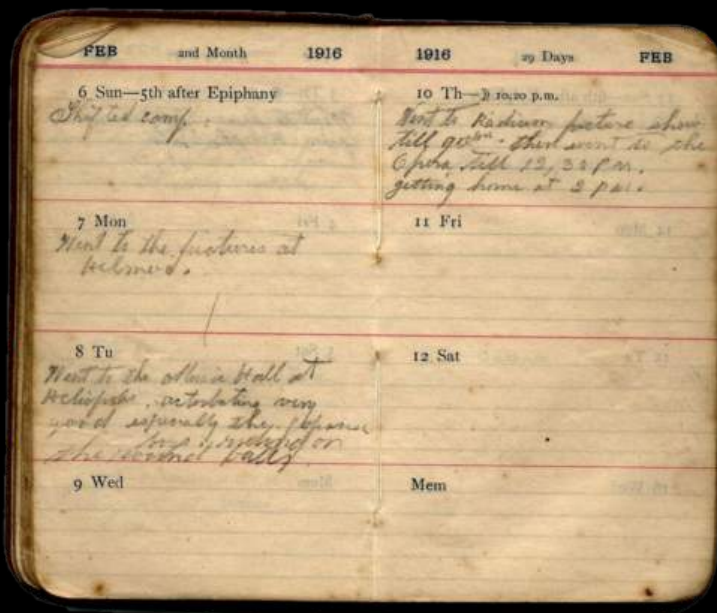


AIF kitchen at Zeitoun

AIF standard ration issue

Bread 1 1/4 lb (570 gm) Per man per day
Fresh meat 1 1/2 lb (680 gm) Per man per day
Coffee 3/4 oz (21 gm) Per man per day
Pepper 1/32 oz (0.89 gm) Per man per day
Mixed vegetables 8 oz (275 gm) Per man per day (fresh)
Cheese 3 oz (85.05 gm) Per man per day
Potatoes 1 lb (450 gm) Per man per day
Sugar 3 oz (85.05 gm) Per man per day
Salt 1/2 oz (15 gm) Per man per day
Tea 1/4 oz (7 gm) Per man per day
Jam 1/4 lb (113 gm) Per man per day
Flour 1/2 lb (275 gm) Per man per week
Rice 1/2 lb (275 gm) Per man per week
Curry 1 oz Per man per week

Of course the standard rations listed above were dependent on availability, which was certainly not the case at ANZAC. Now in Egypt food was much more freely available and the soldiers' health improved accordingly.



Feb 6 Sun Shifted camp.

7 Mon Went to the pictures at Helmeic st

8 Tue Went to the music hall at Heliopolis, Acrobating very good especially the boys riding on the round balls.

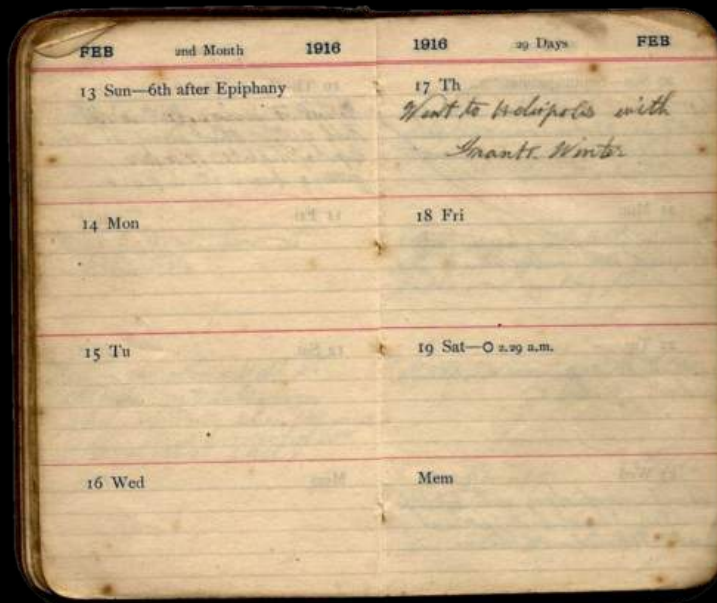
10 Th Went to the Radium picture show till 9 o'clock then went to the opera till 12.30 getting home at 2am.

Structure of the AIF

A Battalion consisted of about 1,000 men divided into 4 Companies - A, B, C and D.

A Brigade consisted of 4 Battalions

A Division consisted of 3 Brigades



Feb 17 Th Went to Heliopolis with Frank Winter.

Doubling of the AIF

As casualty numbers from Gallipoli reached Australia, enlistments increased and the numbers in training camps increased from 16,000 in June to 74,000 in October. By mid January 1916 there were 30,000 Australian reinforcements yet to be assigned to battalions, 'swarming' in the streets and hotels of Cairo. Two new Divisions were formed on Feb 13, battalions consisting where possible of half Gallipoli veterans and half new recruits. Half of the veterans of the 1st Battalion were transferred to the newly formed 53rd Battalion and thereafter were known as Sister Battalions.

The new structure of the Battalions brought on the need for many promotions.

Fear of Turkish Invasion of the Suez Canal

The British withdrawal from Gallipoli freed up many Turkish troops, and it was feared they would use these to seize control of the strategic Suez Canal. A defensive line was established eight miles east of the Canal. The Turks had attempted to take control of the Suez Canal in Jan/Feb 1915 with the help of German leadership, but had been repulsed.

For this reason the British brought many troops to the area. These were located at Tel el-Kebir and Moascar near Ismailia. For this reason Harry's 1st Battalion left Zeitoun and trained for Tel el-Kebir on Feb 20.



Feb 20 Sun Left Zeitoun and took train to Tel el-Kebir on the Suez line. Met a lot of mates there.

21 Mon First march on the stoney desert, very tired at night.

22 Tu Went to a concert at the YMCA.

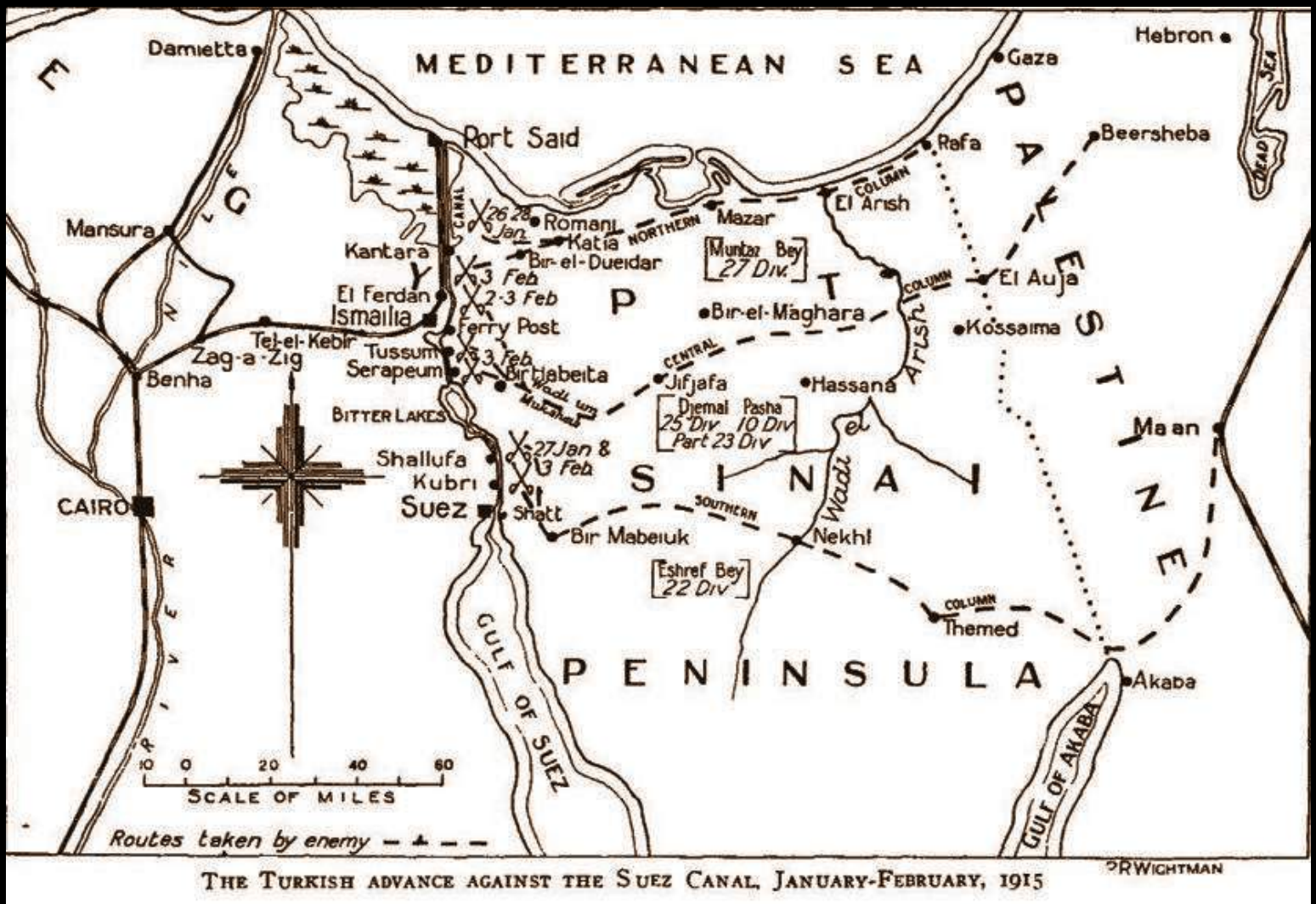
23 Wed Half holiday at camp, visited the old trenches at Tel el-Kebir.

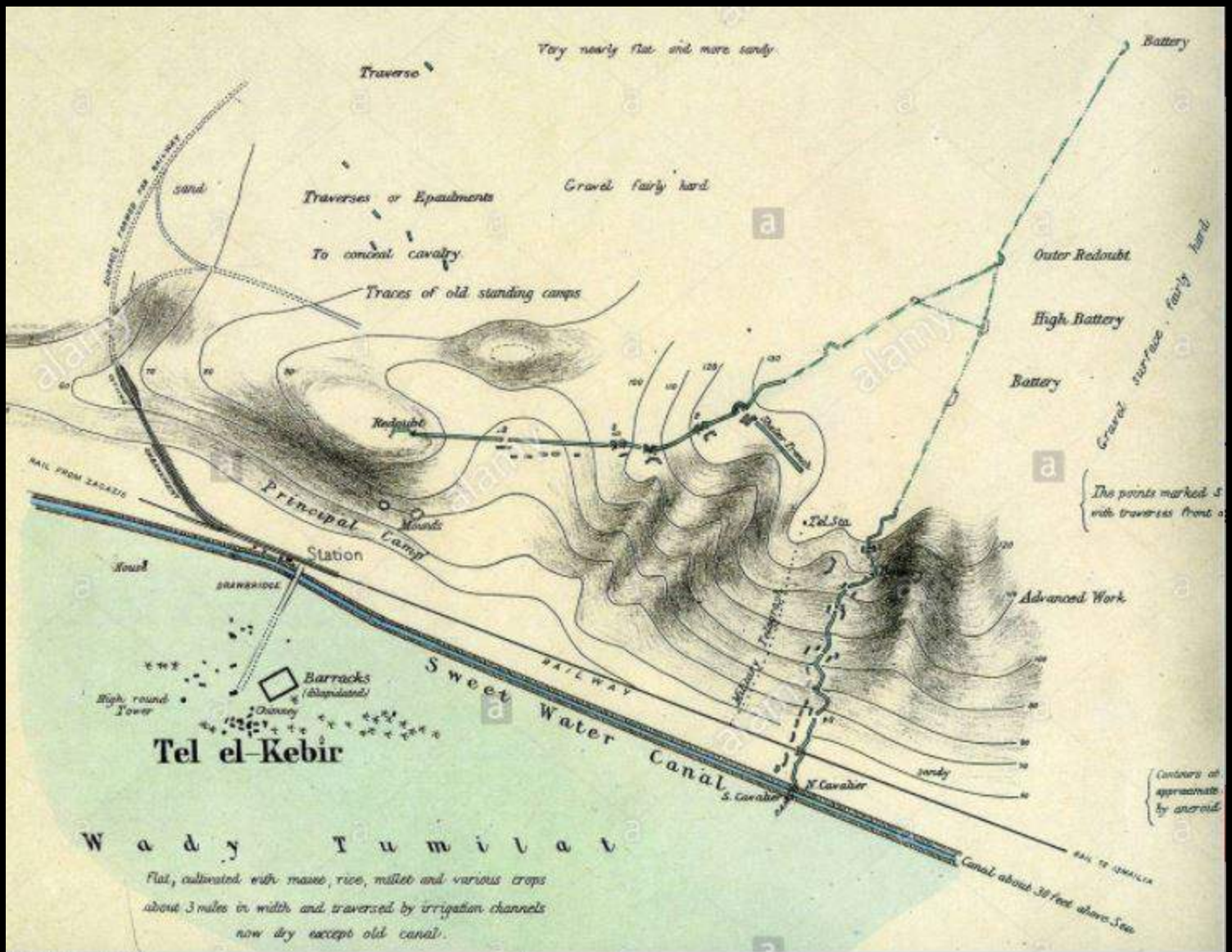
24 Th Went for a march out to the rifle range, passing through the village of Tel el-Kebir.

25 Fri Fatigue, digging wells to drain the water from the shower baths and washing places.

26 Sat Half holiday - got 15 letters.

27 Sun Serapeum motor trains and motor lorries running from canal to trenches 8 miles distance.





Sweet Water Canal

The Sweet Water Canal was dug by thousands of Egyptian labourers from 1861/63 to facilitate the construction of the Suez Canal by bringing fresh water from the Nile to the areas adjacent to the under construction canal. Not only did it provide fresh water for Suez and Port Said but it facilitated the growth of agriculture settlements along the Suez Canal.

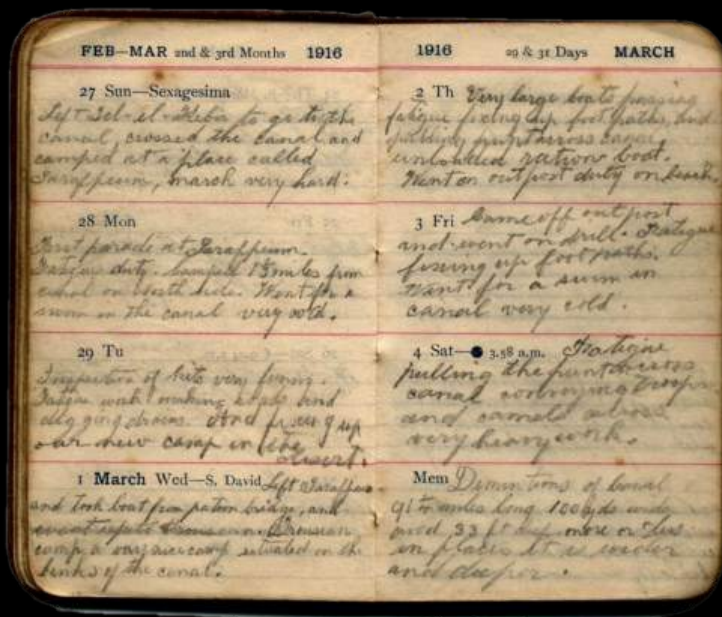
Suez Canal



The Suez Canal was constructed by the Suez Canal Co. between 1859 and 1869. The idea to build a canal linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean had been considered by the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

When opened in 1869 the canal had a depth of 8 metres and a width of 22 metres at the bottom and 60 to 90 metres at the surface. Major improvements began in 1876 involving successive widenings and deepenings.

There are no locks so it is tidal and seawater in its entire length.



Feb 27 Sun Left Tel-el-Kebir to go to the canal and camped at a place called Serapeum, march very hard.

28 Mon First parade at Serapeum. Fatigue duty. Camped 1.5 miles from canal on north side. Went for a swim in the canal - very cold

29 Tu Inspection of kits very funny. Fatigue work making roads and digging drains, and fixing up our new camp in the desert.

March 1 Wed Left Serapeum and took boat from pontoon bridge and went up to Toussum. Toussum camp a very nice camp situated on the banks of the canal.

2 Th Very large boats passing. Fatigue fixing up footpaths and pulling punt across canal, unloaded ration boat. Went on outpost duty on beach.

3 Fri Came off outpost and went on drill. Fatigue fixing up footpaths. Went for a swim in canal, very cold.

4 Sat Fatigue pulling the punt across canal conveying troops and camels across. Very heavy work.

Mem Dimensions of canal - 91 1/4 miles long, 100 yards wide and 33 feet deep, more or less. In places it is wider and deeper.

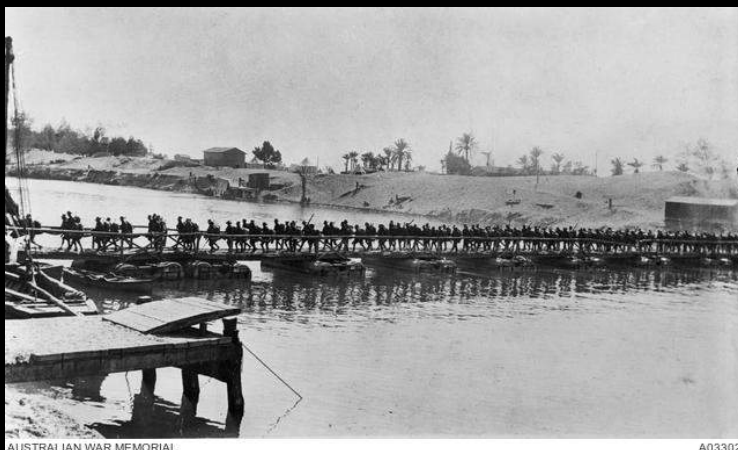


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Serapeum

Three different photos of the same canal crossing at Serapeum showing both the barge and pontoon bridge in use.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

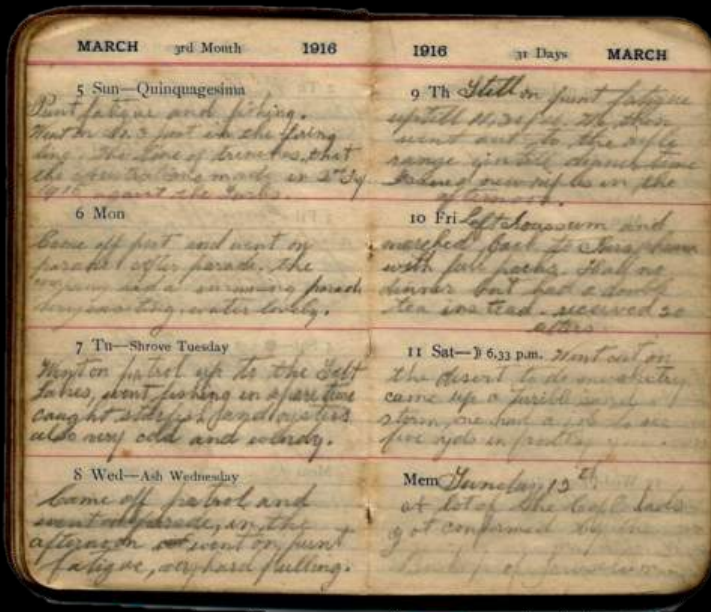
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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Entraining to move to the trenches Serapeum



Mar 5 Sun Punt fatigue and fishing. Went on No 3 post in the firing line. The line of trenches that the Australians made in 2nd Feb? 1915 against the Turks.

6 Mon Came off post and went on parade. After parade the company had a swimming parade. Very exciting, water lovely.

7 Tu Went on patrol up to the Salt Lakes, went fishing in spare time, caught starfish and oysters, also very cold and windy.

8 Wed Came off patrol and went in parade, in the afternoon went on punt fatigue, very hard pulling.

9 Th Still on punt fatigue up till 11.30am. We then went out to the rifle range until dinner time. Issued new rifles in the afternoon.

10 Fri Left Toussum and marched back to Serapeum with full packs. Had no dinner but had a double tea instead. Received 20 letters.

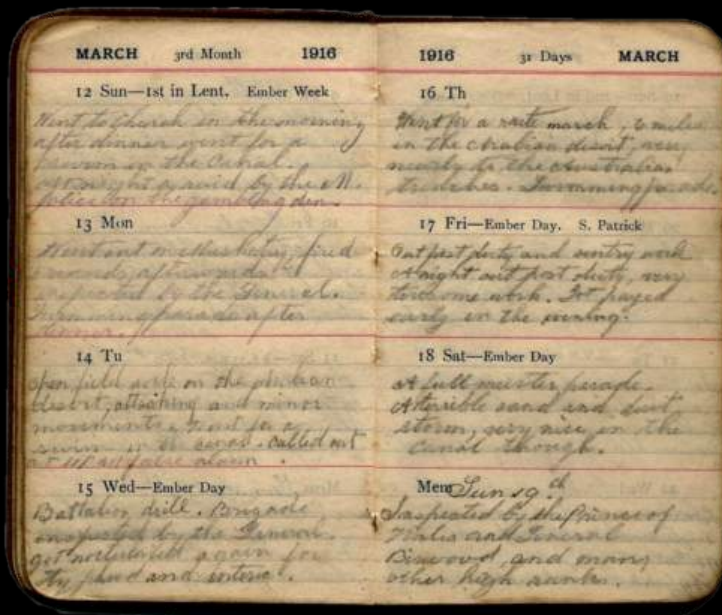
11 Sat Went out on the desert to the musketry. Came up a terrible sand storm, one had a job to see five yards in front of you.

Mem 12 Sun A lot of C of E lads got confirmed by the Bishop of Jerusalem.



Decision to Move Troops to Western Front

Since the amassing of Allied troops near the Suez Canal, the threat from Turkish attack dwindled. On Feb 21 the Germans had launched a major offensive at Verdun which had put great pressure on the French defences. The immediate need was to reinforce the French on the Western Front, so it was decided to send the majority of the AIF there.



Mar 12 Sun Went to church in the morning. After dinner went for a swim in the canal. At night a raid by the M. police on the gambling den.

13 Mon Went out on musketry, fired 5 rounds, afterwards inspected by the General. Swimming parade after dinner.

14 Tu Open field work on the Arabian desert, attacking and minor movements. Went for a swim in the canal. Called out at 11pm - false alarm.

15 Wed Battalion drill. Brigade inspected by the General. Got inoculated again for typhoid and enteric.

16 Th Went for a route march, 6 miles in the Arabian desert, very nearly to the Australian trenches. Swimming parade.

17 Fri Out post duty and sentry work. A night out post duty very tiresome work. Got paid early in the evening.

18 Sat A full muster parade. A terrible sand and dust storm, very nice in the canal though.

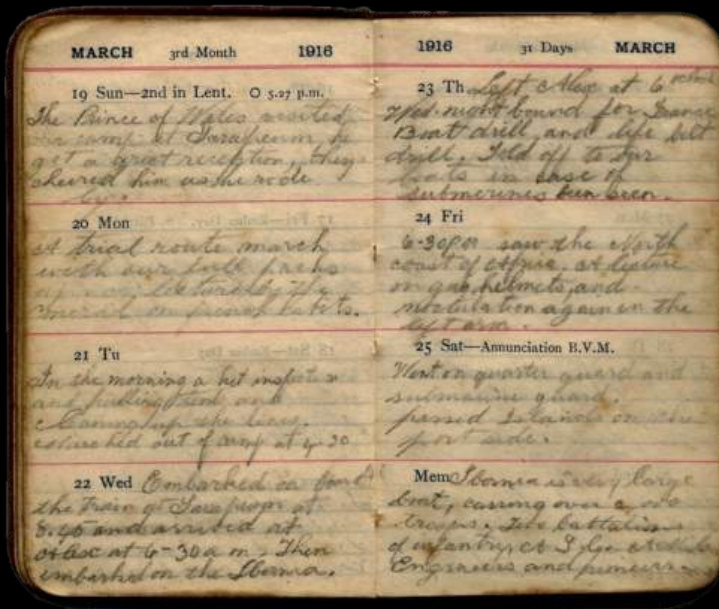
Mem 19 Sun Inspected by the Prince of Wales and General Birdwood and many other high ranks.



OUR SOLDIER PRINCE IN EGYPT.—An interesting snapshot of the Prince of Wales in Egypt taken during the inspection of a hospital. Next to the Prince is General Sir William Birdwood. [Exclusive "Daily Mail" Photograph.]



Postcards courtesy of Gwen Ladner



Mar 19 Sun The Prince of Wales visited our camp at Serapeum, he got a great reception, they cheered him as he rode.

20 Mon A trial route march with our full packs up. A lecture by the General on French habits.

21 Tu In the morning a kit inspection and pulling tents and cleaning up the lines. Marched out of camp at 4.30.

22 Wed Embarked on board the train at Serapeum at 8.45 and arrived at Alex at 6.30am. Then embarked on the 'Ivernia'.

23 Th Left Alex at 6 o'clock Wed night (22nd) bound for France. Boat drill and life belt drill. Told off to our boats in case of submarines being seen.

24 Fri 6.30 pm saw the north coast of Africa. A lecture on gas helmets and inoculation again in the left arm.

25 Sat Went on quarter guard and submarine guard. Passed islands on the port side.

Mem Ivernia is a very large boat carrying over 2000 troops. Two battalions of infantry and engineers and pioneers.

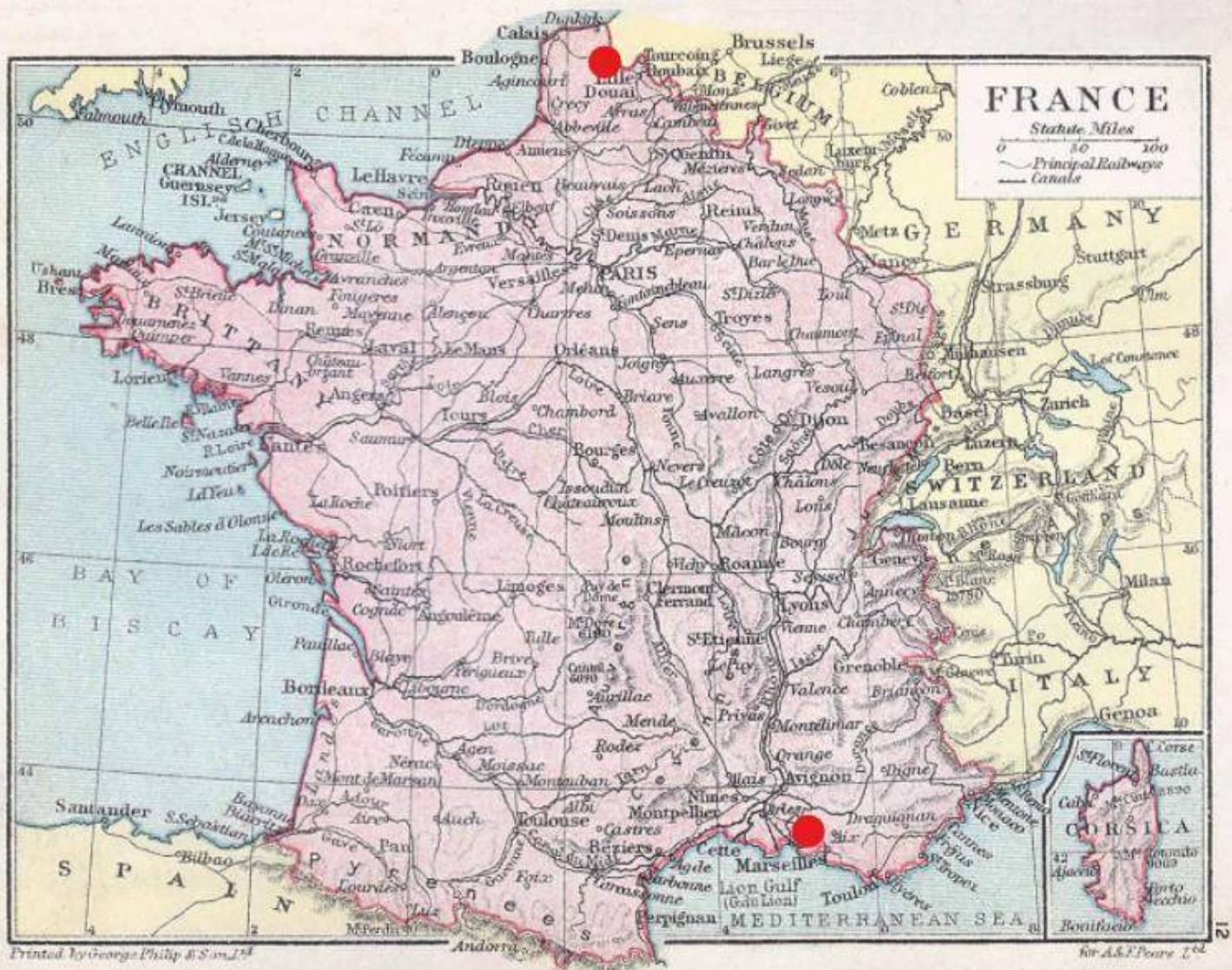


R.M.S. "IVERNIA."

DIMENSIONS: LENGTH, 600 FEET. BEAM, 64 FEET 6 INCHES. 14,066 TONS. 10,000 HORSE-POWER.



4. Western Front Marseilles to Laventie



Mar 26 Sun Came off guard passed Sardinia on the starboard side. Short arm inspection after dinner.

27 Mon Sailed into Toulon 4pm. Toulon is well fortified with plenty of submarines and mines.

28 Tu Left Toulon for Marseilles arriving 11pm. Disembarked and got on train. Left 12 pm.

29 Wed Scenery very pretty, snow clad mountains, very cold, passed Lyons 4.30pm, had breakfast and tea on the train.

30 Th Scenery lovely, grape vines, strawberries, wheat is the principal product, passed through the outskirts of Paris.

31 Fri Landed at Hazebrouck 12pm. We then marched to a little village not very far from the front line.

Apr 1 Sat Billeted in an old barn full of straw. The barn and house is under the same roof. Went for a short route march through the village.

Mem The weather is very cold of a night time but we can have a hot bath. You can hear firing on the front line.



April 2 Sun Went to church parade up in the village. (Wallon Cappel) Went for a long walk along the train line also through the fields into another village.

3 Mon Parade bomb throwing and rifle drill. We are in a good billet, pub, coffee palace joining our home.

4 Tu A very cold day, sleet started to fall. I thought myself it was going to snow. We had bomb practice in the afternoon.

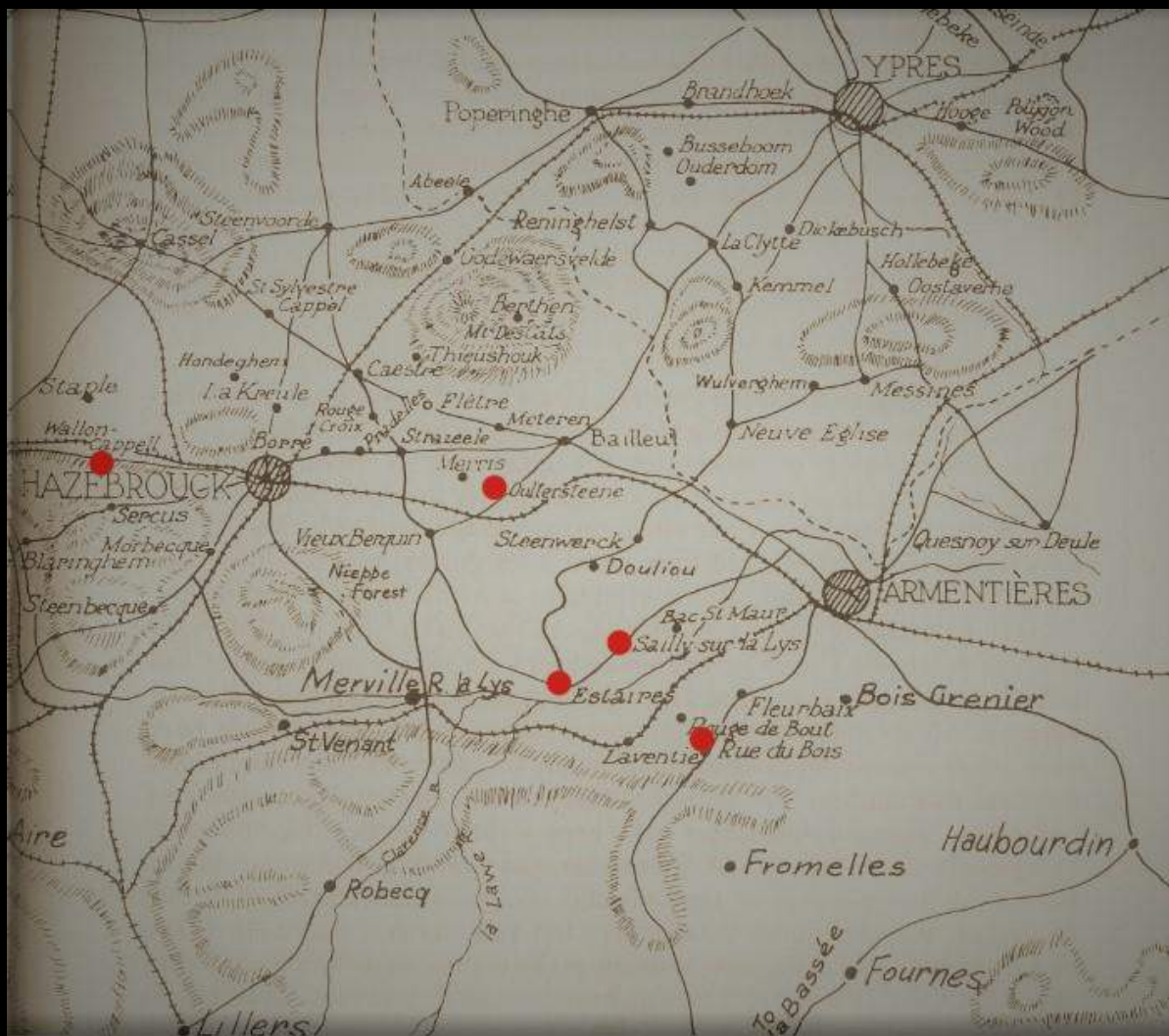
5 Wed Still very cold. Went for a long route march out into the forest, we then had a sham fight home.

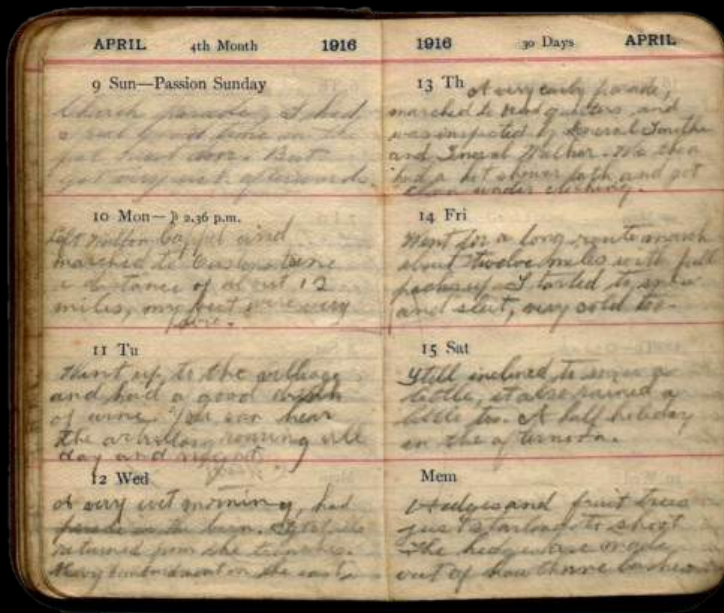
6 Th Very cold breeze blowing, but it was much warmer in the forest where we were skirmishing. Semaphore after dinner.

7 Fri Marched out to Brigade Headquarters today to dig gas trenches, got home 12.30pm. Sham fighting in the morning.

8 Sat Marched out to the trenches and went through two different kinds of gases. Got payed after dinner.

Mem We went through weeping gas without helmet. My word it did smart our eyes, also the other gas.





Apr 9 Sun Church parade. I had a real good time in the flat next door. But got very sick afterwards.

10 Mon Left Wallon Cappel and marched to Outtersteene, a distance of about 12 miles, my feet were very sore.

11 Tu Went up to the village and had a good drink of wine. You can hear the artillery roaring all day and night.

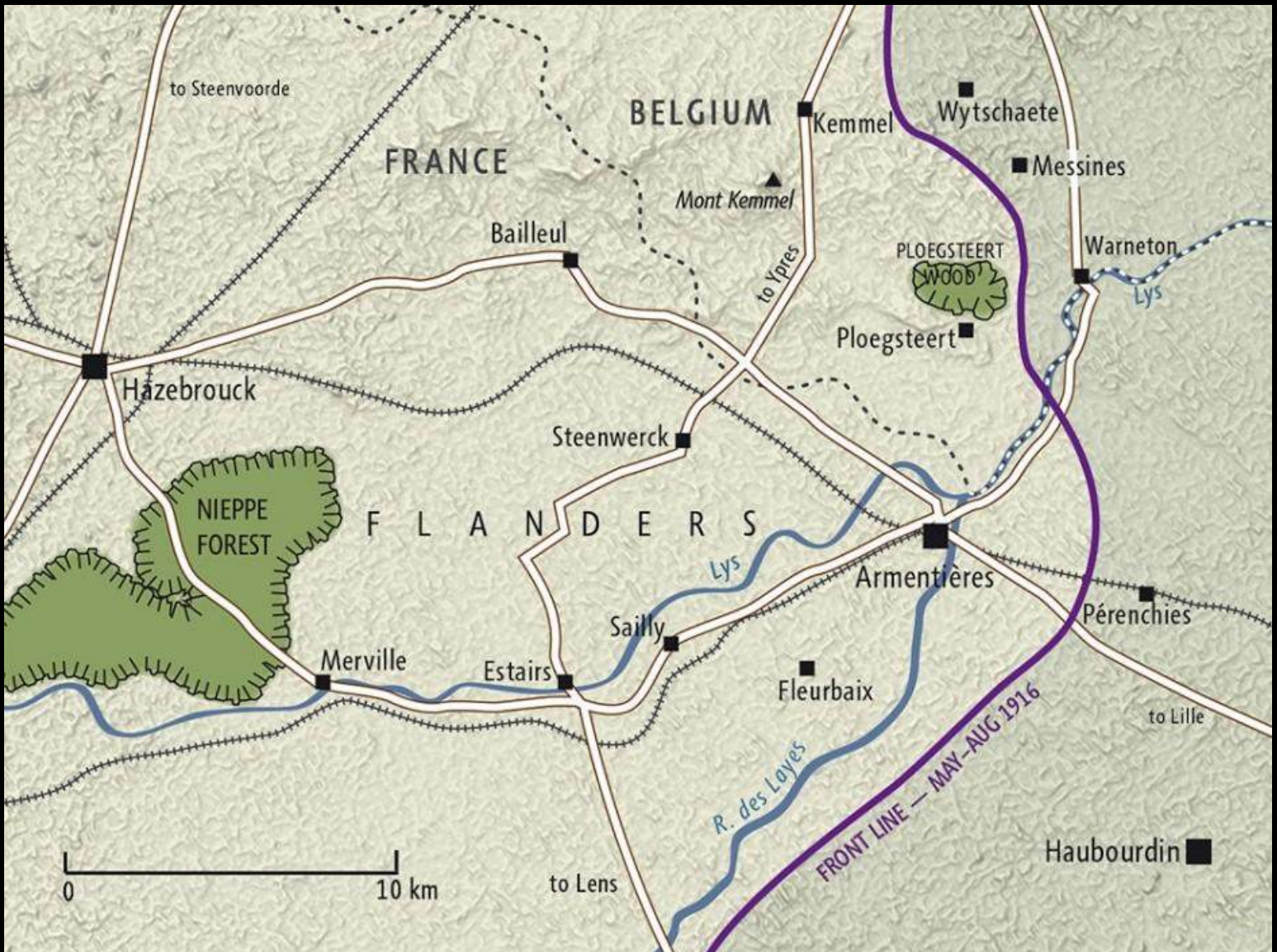
12 Wed A very wet morning, had parade in the barn. Sgt Mills returned from the trenches. Heavy bombardment in the east.

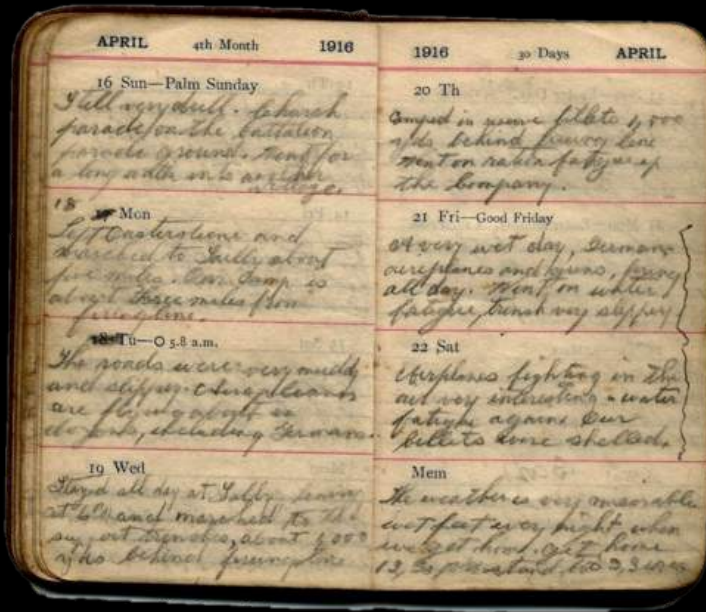
13 Th A very early parade, marched to Headquarters and was inspected by General Smith and General Walker. We then had a hot shower bath and got clean underclothing.

14 Fri Went for a long route march about 12 miles with full packs on. Started to snow and sleet, very cold too.

15 Sat Still inclined to snow a little, it also rained a little too. A half holiday in the afternoon.

Mem Hedges and fruit trees just starting to shoot. The hedges are made out of hawthorne bushes.





Apr 16 Sun Still very dull. Church parade on the battalion parade ground. Went for a long walk into another village.

18 Tu Left Ousterlone and marched to Saily, about 5 miles. Our camp is about 3 miles from the firing line. The roads were very muddy and slippery. Our planes are flying about in dozens including Germans.

19 Wed Stayed all day at Saily leaving at 6pm and marched to the support trenches about 1000yds behind the firing line.

20 Th Camped in reserve billets 1000yds behind firing line. Went on ration fatigue up the company.

21 Fri A very wet day, German aeroplanes and guns firing all day. Went on water fatigue, trench very slippery.

22 Sat Aeroplanes fighting in the air, very interesting. Water fatigue again. Our billets were shelled.

Mem The weather is very miserable, wet feet every night when we get home. Get home 12.30, stand to till 2.30am.



World War I saw the first use of manned aircraft in combat. Necessity powers innovation, and it was aviators who took to the skies during the war who quickly helped to advance the technology of flight, largely through trial and error.

- 70 different types of aircraft were used in WW1. Each country had distinguishing markings.
- The Germans were the first to sync the machine gun with the propeller (so the propeller wasn't shot). This led to the 1st aerial dogfights.
- The most famous aircraft was the British Sopwith Camel which is credited with 1300 kills
- The German 'Red Baron' achieved 80 victories - the most of any flying 'ace'.
- Aircraft had a maximum speed of about 100mph.
- The cockpits of these planes were so cramped the pilots were unable to wear parachutes.

hartzellprop.com



April 23 Sun A very heavy bombardment on both sides, shells coming from all directions. Water fatigue at night.

24 Mon Went for a warm bath and new clothing.

Relieved 14 platoon from firing line. Off post that night.

25 Tu Went on fatigue building up the trench floor and carrying away mud. A very lively night, heavy rifle fire.

26 Wed Germans used gas and attacked the 2nd division but our chaps were too good and captured their transports.

27 Th On observation lookout. Gas attack and terrible bombardment. Wizz bangs were just going over the parapet.

28 Fri A very quiet day nothing doing at all. I slept all day but went on post at night.

29 Sat A lovely day, just like Australian weather. Terrible rifle fire the night before, also artillery.

Mem (April 25 A celebration of Anzac day. We got rum, tin fruit and fruit cake, also cheese and bread.)



Australian soldiers at rest in a breastwork trench near Armentieres.

The defences in this area, although mostly still called trenches, consisted of raised breastworks because the high water table quickly filled any excavations.

Wizz bangs

The 'whizz bang' was originally attributed to the noise made by shells from German 77mm field guns. Because these shells travelled faster than the speed of sound, the soldiers heard the typical "whizz" noise of a travelling shell before the "bang" issued by the gun itself.



Australian soldiers on the way to the front line trenches at Bois Grenier June 5 1916

The Nursery Sector

Before engaging in major operations on the Western Front, troops of the four Australian Imperial Force (AIF) divisions completed extra training near the Belgian border. Between March and June 1916, the men were sent to a quieter section of trenches at Armentières, dubbed 'the Nursery sector'. Here they learned about battle conditions on the Western Front. They also experienced new weapons of modern warfare, such as gas.

anzacportal.dva.gov.au



Outtersteene 2005. DIY hire car the only way to see the district



Apr 30 Sun The 9th brigade got gassed by the Germans, but done no harm though. Off duty had a good rest and a sleep.

May 1 Mon Germans bombarded the billets behind our trenches with high explosive shells. Still done no damage.

2 Tue A heavy bombardment from our artillery. Shelled the German's billets. 2nd Battalion got relieved.

3 Wed We got relieved from trenches at 9.30am. Marched to billets 1 1/2 behind firing line.

4 Th Went into Saily railway station, bought food and chocolates. Went on fatigue up the firing line.

5 Fri Fatigue in the firing line. Gas attack and artillery duel, also a bomb attack. Got home about 12 oclock.

6 Sat Trench digging near our billets. Protection against bombardment of any kind. Weather very muggy.

Mem (Germans bombarded the road near our billet with shrapnel but done no harm)

Rotation of Duty at the Front Line

Rest was a factor the British Army had formally recognised to ensure all troops were running at their peak performance. When an infantry division occupied the trenches of the Western Front at any time, two infantry brigades were in the front line positions and one was resting. An infantry brigade of four battalions usually had two in the trenches and two behind the front lines billeted in farms, barns, and villages. The two battalions in the front line had two companies in the front and support trenches, with two in the reserve positions. The two forward companies had two platoons in the fire and command trenches and two in the support trench. About every eight days the two battalions in the front line changed places with the two battalions billeted behind.

awm.gov.au

Baths

A simpler pleasure granted to soldiers behind the lines was the opportunity to have a bath and get a clean uniform. Mass bathing tubs were constructed from brewing vats. Soldiers exchanged their infested clothing for freshly disinfected and fumigated items, although they were patched and threadbare. - - -

These instances of basic hygiene seem to rate very highly in most soldiers' opinions. Almost every bath was mentioned in many men's diaries. The process of washing the mud and grime away can be seen to represent the washing away of the horrors of battle. This brief return to cleanliness, to normalcy, may have reminded soldiers of the lives they once lived. awm.gov.au



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

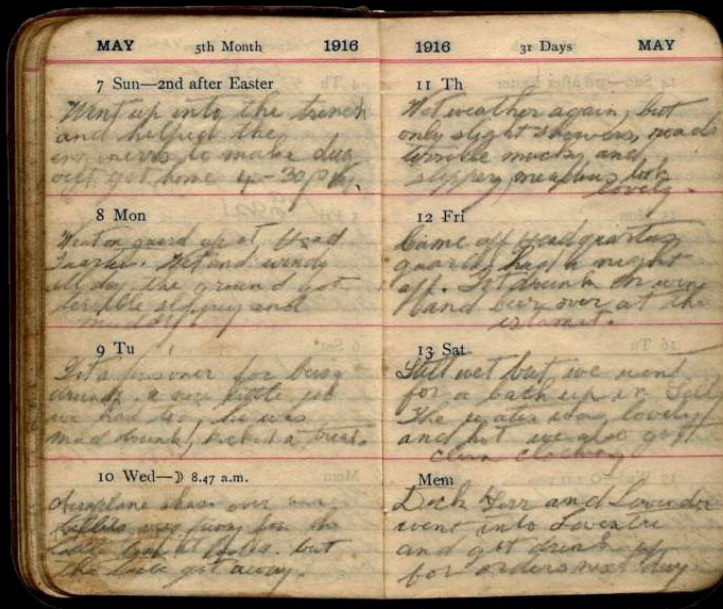
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Australian and Scottish soldiers being served coffee at an estaminet in May 1916 in the Nursery Sector

Estaminets

Despite the poor standard of many billets and bivouacs, and the boredom and tedium of training and fatigue parties, life behind the lines brought soldiers into contact with civilians, and with the simple pleasures in life. One of the most greatly appreciated aspects of rest was the estaminets – shabby French cafés that served wine, beer, eggs, and chips. Alcohol was the main attraction of the estaminets. Drinking was a pastime that many soldiers had enjoyed in Australia, and was one of the few luxuries Australian troops could enjoy when billeted behind the front line.

awm.gov.au



May 7 Sun Went up into the trench and helped the engineers to make dugouts. Got home 4.30pm.

8 Mon Went on guard up at Headquarters. Wet and windy all day. The ground got terrible sloppy and muddy.

9 Tu Got a prisoner for being drunk. A nice little job we had too, he was mad drunk, kicked a treat.

10 Wed Aeroplane chase over our billets.

11 Th Wet weather again but only slight showers, roads terrible mucky and slippery. Meadows look lovely.

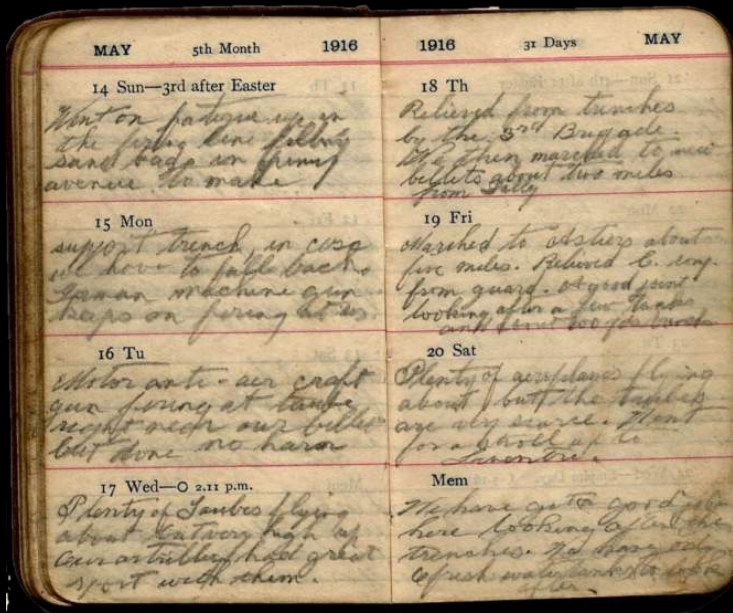
12 Fri Came off headquarters guard, had a night off. Got drunk on wine and beer over at the estaminet.

13 Sat Still wet but we went for a bath up in Saily. The water was lovely and hot, we also got clean clothing.

Mem (Dick Kerr and Lavender went into Laventie and got drunk, up for orders next day).



Lee Enfield Mk 3 .303 standard issue rifle as used by AIF at this time



May 14 - 15 Sun, Mon Went on fatigue up in the firing line filling sand bags in penny? avenue to make support trench in case we have to fall back. German machine gun keeps on firing at us.

16 Tu Motor anti-air craft gun firing at right near our billet, but done no harm.

17 Wed Plenty of Taubes flying about but very high up. Our artillery had great sport with them.

18 Th Relieved from trenches by the 3rd Brigade. We then marched to new billets about two miles from Saily.

19 Fri Marched to Astiers (Estaires) about five miles.

Relieved C Company from guard. A good joint looking after a few tanks and about 600yd trenches.

20 Sat Plenty of aeroplanes flying about but the Taubes are very scarce. Went for a stroll into Laventie.

Mem We have got a good job here looking after the trenches. We have only six fresh water tanks to look after.



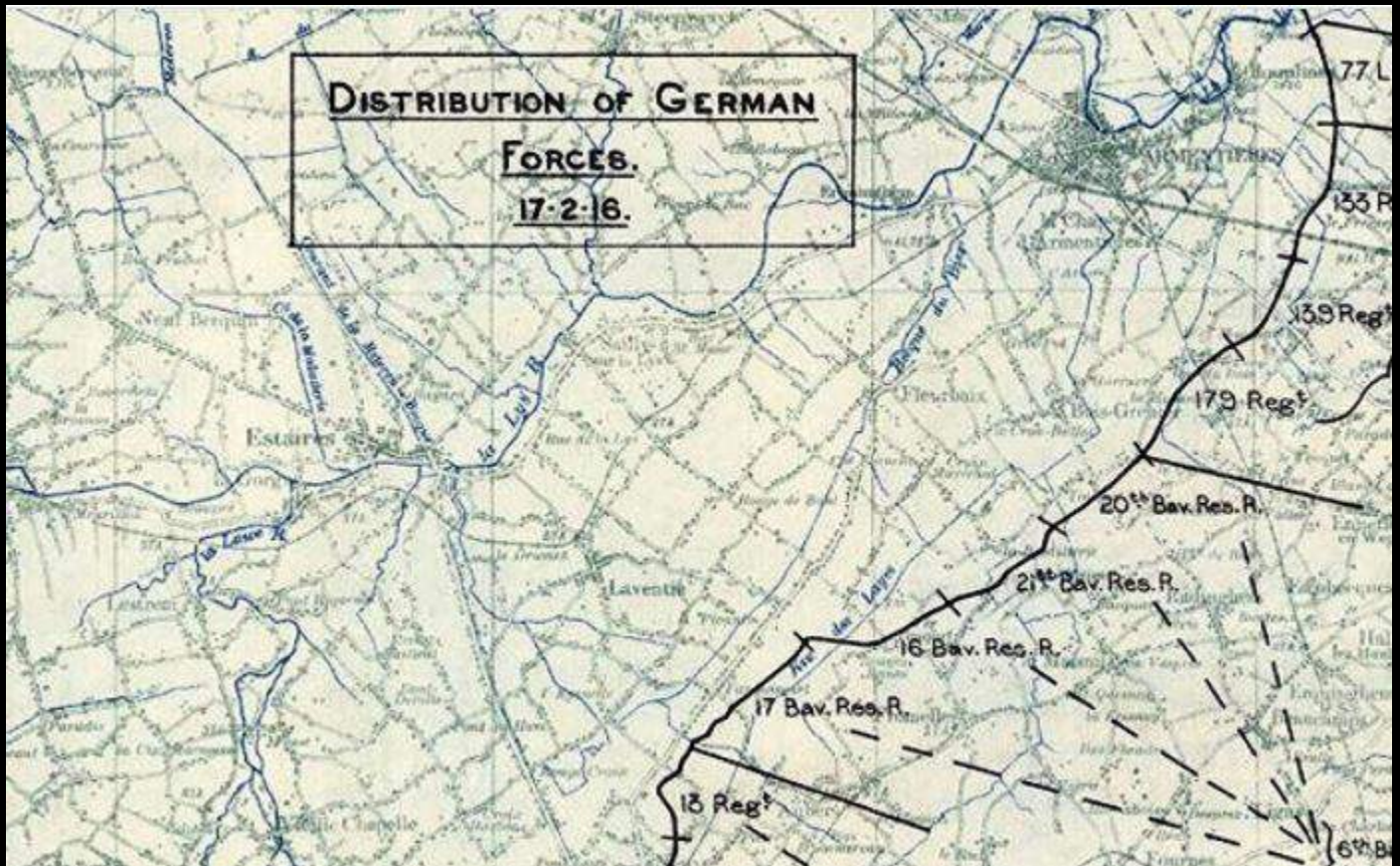
Church at Laventie 2005

At left - the same church at Laventie later in the war. During Harry's visit in May 1916 the church would have been intact

5. Western Front

Laventie to Cardonette

(Nursery Sector to the Somme)



May 21 Sun Went for a walk over to Estaires, struck a good joint plenty of molls but very hard to find.

22 Mon Dick and Lavender went to Estaires. Cpt Price came around and paid us while they were away. So they missed their money.

23 Tu We made great mates with the Tomys who were camped right near our billets. We also had a very good night.

24 Wed Things were very quiet all day. But a terrible bombardment in the evening. Plenty beer and laughs.

25 Th We done a little work filling five tanks with fresh water and fixed the parapets up. Capt. Price came around. I got terrible sick.

26 Fri Capt. Price called around very early, about 5am, but only Lavender was up. It is rumoured that the Huns are going to attack.

27 Sat Received a letter from Pearl Prior, her address is Wylies Flat, South Singleton.

Mem We are expecting the Huns to attack about Tuesday. Our rations are brought around on fresh horses

Capt. Philip Howell-Price

This is the first mention of Capt. Price in Harry's diary. Landing on the first day at Gallipoli Philip Price had a very distinguished career and was Capt. of Harry's D Company, 1st Battalion all through 1916.



Philip was born on 11 September 1894 at Mount Wilson and educated at Kogarah High School. He was a bank clerk and had served as a citizen soldier before enlisting in the 1st Battalion, A.I.F., as a private on 14 September 1914. He was commissioned second lieutenant four days later and embarked for Egypt on 18 October. AWM

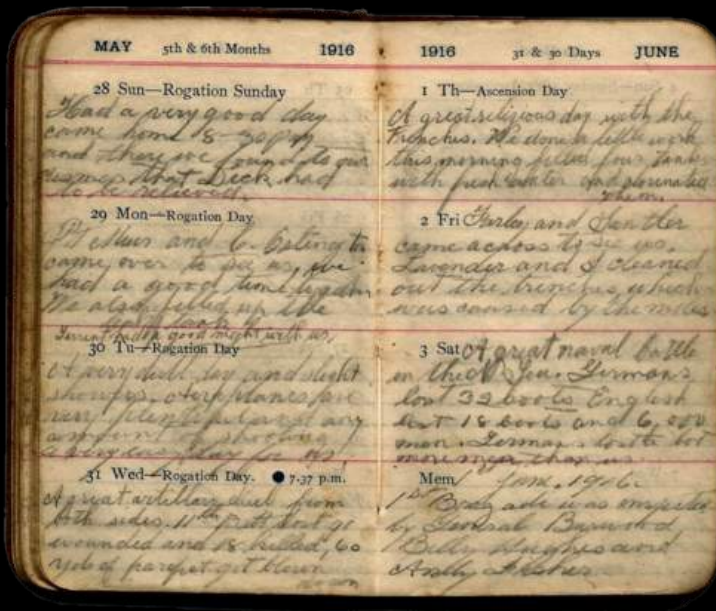


Philip Price at Gallipoli

The 1st battalion landed at Gallipoli on 25 August 1915 and Philip was promoted lieutenant next day. He was mentioned in dispatches for work in the battle of Lone Pine, during which he was severely wounded. Returning after three months in hospital, he was one of the last to evacuate Gallipoli. He was promoted captain on 28 January 1916 and was awarded the D.S.O. for leading a raiding party near Armentières, France, on 27 June. He fought on the Somme in July, at Flers in November and was wounded at Bullecourt in March 1917. General Sir William Birdwood soon had him appointed to the staff of the 1st Anzac Division; he was promoted major on 7 June 1917 and attached to the staff of the 2nd Brigade. That month he was awarded the Military Cross. On hearing that his old battalion was going into action he begged to be sent back to it and on 4 October was killed in an artillery barrage at Broodseinde. His body was never recovered. AWM

The Howell-Price brothers

The story of the Howell-Price brothers is one of the most remarkable examples of a family at war. Six Howell-Price brothers served during the First World War. They were sons of a Welsh clergyman, who for many years was the vicar of St Silas's Anglican Church in Waterloo, Sydney. When war broke out in 1914, the brothers ranged in age from David, 33, to down to Richmond, 18. All the brothers except David served overseas with distinction and were highly decorated. Sadly, the three youngest brothers were all killed in action on the Western Front. AWM



May 28 Sun Had a good day. Came home 8.30pm and there we found to our dismay that Dick had to be relieved.

29 Mon Pt Muir and C. Osling come over to see us, we had a good time together. We also filled up the leaky tanks.

30 Tu Very dull day and slight showers. Aeroplanes are very plentiful and any amount of shooting. A very easy day for us.

31 Wed A great artillery duel from both sides. 11th Battalion lost 91 wounded and 18 killed, 60 yds of parapet got blown down.

Jun 1 Th A great religious day with the Frenchies. We done a little work this morning, filled four tanks with fresh water and chlorinated them.

2 Fri Farley and Santler came across to see us. Lavender and I cleaned out the trenches which was caused by moles.

3 Sat A great naval battle in the North Sea. Germans lost 32 boats, English lost 18 boats and 6000 men. Germans lost a lot more men than us.

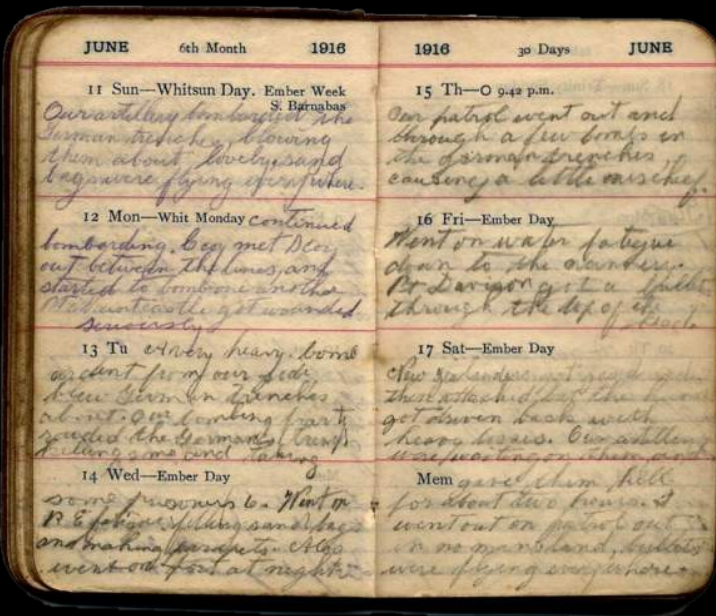
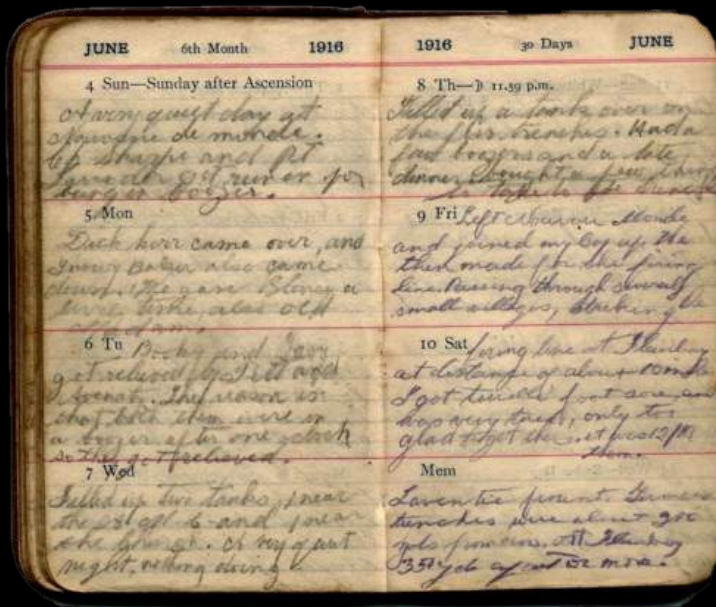
Mem 1st June 1916, 1st Brigade was inspected by General Birdwood, Billy Hughes and A. Fisher.



The Battle of Jutland

Harry's description of 'a great naval battle', The Battle of Jutland, may have been influenced by typical wartime propaganda designed to keep up the morale of troops.

'Jutland was a confused and bloody action involving 250 ships and around 100,000 men. The British lost 14 ships and over 6,000 men, but were ready for action again the next day. The Germans, who had lost 11 ships and over 2,500 men, avoided complete destruction but never again seriously challenged British control of the North Sea. Although it failed to achieve the decisive victory each side hoped for, the Battle of Jutland confirmed British naval dominance and secured its control of shipping lanes.' iwm.org.uk



Jun 4 Sun A very quiet day at Nouveau Monde. Cp Sharpe and Pt Lavender got run in for being on boozers.

5 Mon Dick Kerr came over and Snowy Baker also came down. We gave Stincy? a lively time, also old Madam.

6 Tu Booky and Davy got relieved by Bill and Aventy. The reason is that both of them were in a boozers after one o'clock, so they got relieved.

7 Wed Filled up two tanks one near the A.M.C. and one near the Church. a very quiet night, nothing doing.

8 Th Filled up a tank over on the far trenches. Had a few boozers and a late dinner. Bought a few things to take to the trenches.

9 Fri Left Nouveau Monde and joined my coy up. We then made for the firing line. Passing through several small villages, striking the

10 Sat firing line at Fleurbaix a distance of about 10 miles. I got terrible foot sore and was very tired, only too glad to get there. It was 12pm then.

Mem Laventie front. German trenches were about 200 yds from ours. At Fleurbaix 350yds apart or more.

Jun 11 Sun Our artillery bombarded the German trenches blowing them about lovely, sand bags were flying everywhere.

12 Mon Continued bombarding. C company met D coy out between the lines and started to bomb one another. Pte Muntcastle got wounded seriously.

13 Tu A very heavy bombardment from our side, blew German trenches about. Our bombing party raided the German trenches killing some and taking

14 Wed some prisoners 6. Went on RE fatigue filling sandbags and making parapets. Also went on post at night.

15 Th Our patrol went out and threw a few bombs in the German trenches causing a little mischief.

16 Fr Went on water fatigue to the nannery? Pte Davison got a bullet through the top of the head.

17 Sat New Zealanders got gassed and then attacked but the Huns got driven back with heavy losses. Our artillery were waiting on them and

Mem gave them hell for about two hours. I went out on patrol in no mans land, bullets were flying everywhere.

Mills Bombs

The Mills Bomb was adopted by the British Army as its standard hand grenade in 1915. It was known as a fragmentation grenade because of the shrapnel it delivered when it exploded. The casing was grooved to make it easier to grip, not as an aid to fragmentation and it has been shown that it does not shatter along the segmented lines. This No. 5 Mk 1 model, as used in 1916, had a seven second fuse.



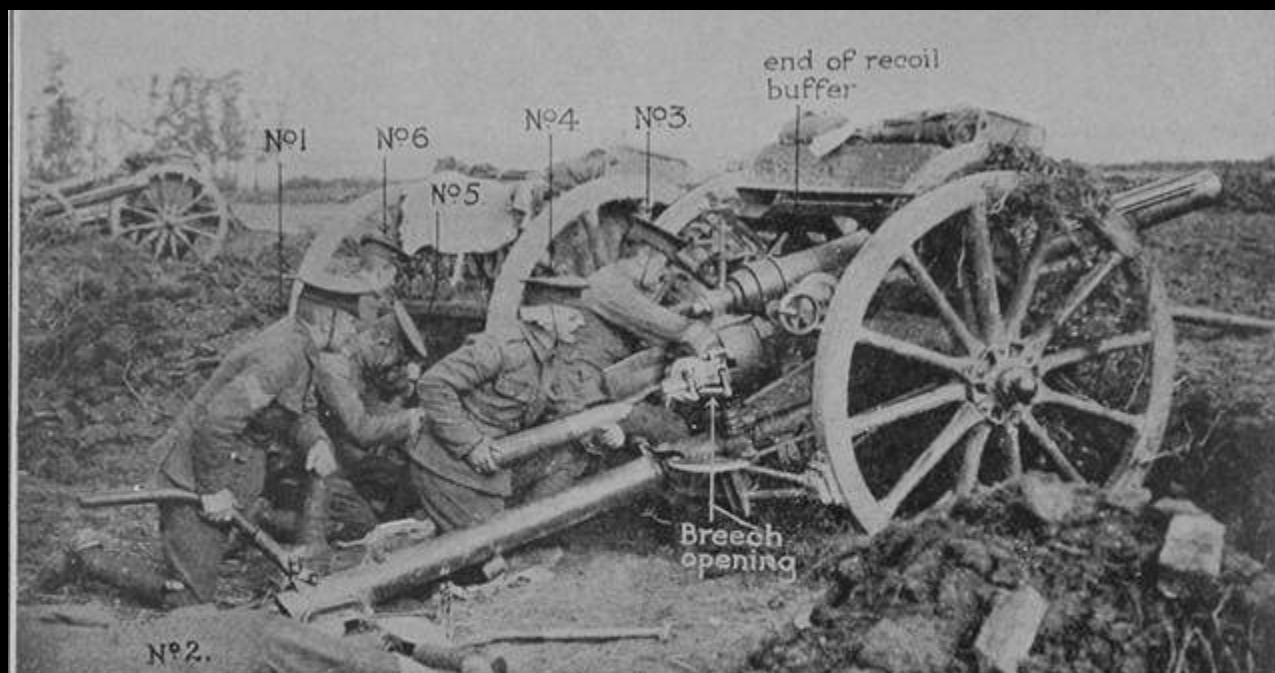


Fleurbaix, France. c. 1915. One of a series of Fleurbaix, photographs taken from a camera stationed south west of the town and covering an area from Bois Grenier to Fromelles. (Donor Imperial War Museum)



Fleurbaix 2005

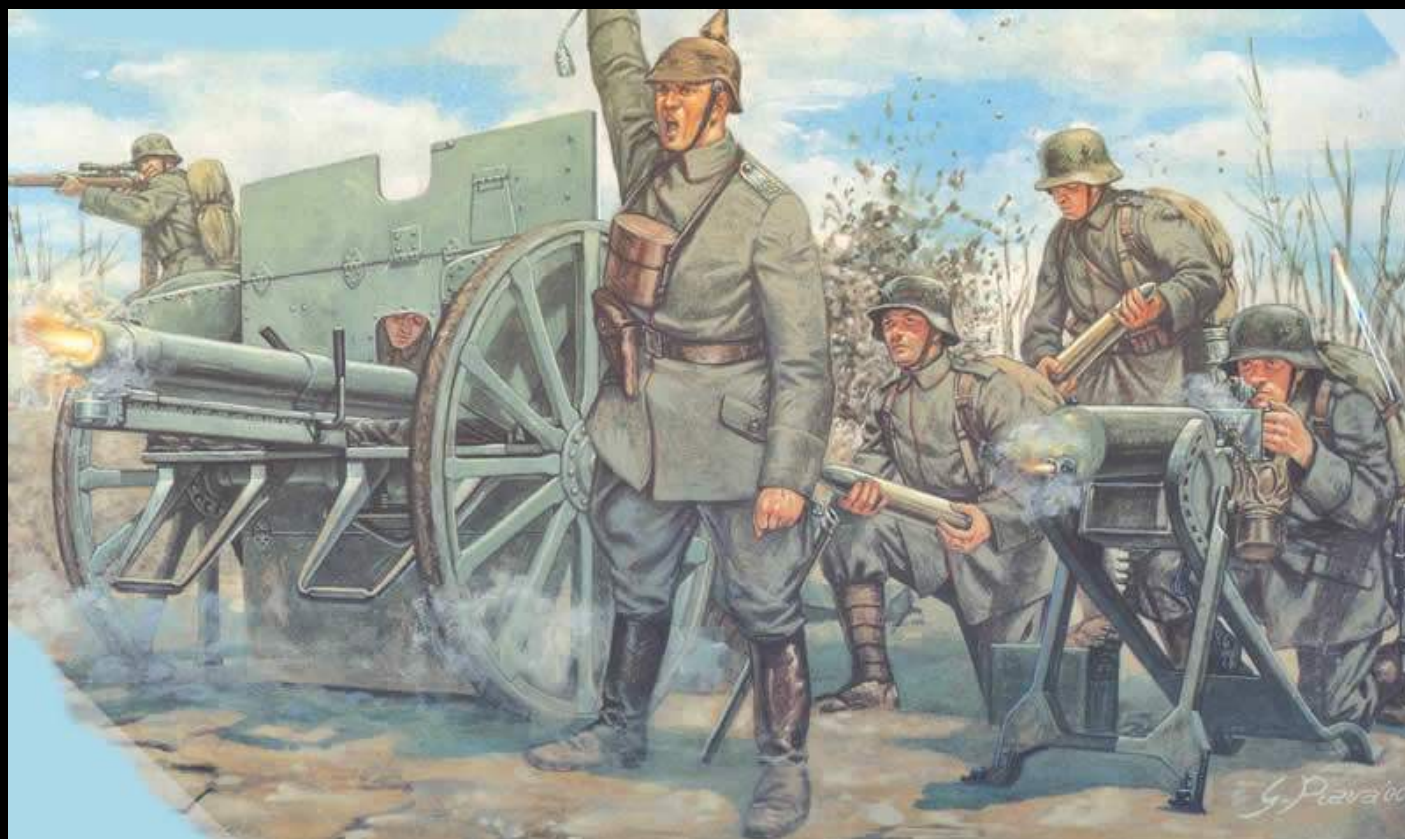
British and German artillery in action on the Western Front



ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

A British 18-pounder quick-firing gun in action.

No. 1 (the sergeant), with his hand on the spade, gives instructions to the rest of the detachment. At the actual moment when this picture was taken No. 2 was lying down. If the gun were actually firing his position would be to the right of the breech. No. 3 is ready to fire the gun; No. 4 has the shell in the correct position for placing in the bore; No. 5 adjusts the fuse and hands the shell to No. 4; No. 6, the farthest away, also prepares the ammunition and hands it to No. 5. The upper portion of the gun has been partially covered in order to conceal it from observers.



German Maxim MG08 Machine Gun firing alongside a 77mm Field Artillery Gun



Jun 18 Sun Our trench mortars threw a few plum puddings over to the huns blowing their trenches everywhere. These bombs weigh 60lbs.

19 Mon A terrible artillery duel. Had to stand too all Sunday night. Our bombers threw over some more of those 60lbs.

20 Tu A gas alarm came up from the left. We were standing too all night. Pte Eagles got killed out in no mans land.

21 Wed Pte Lamprell got shot through the knee at 2.30 this morning while filling sandbags 15yds behind our parapet.

22 Th Went out on patrol over to the German's barbwire. Very near got shot. Machine gun, bombs and rifle were shot at us, but got home quite safely.

23 Fri Got relieved by the 3rd Battalion and marched out to the support trenches about 1 mile from the firing line. A terrible place for shells.

24 Sat Went on guard at the X roads. Terrible artillery fire, also plenty of aeroplanes flying out and in all the time.

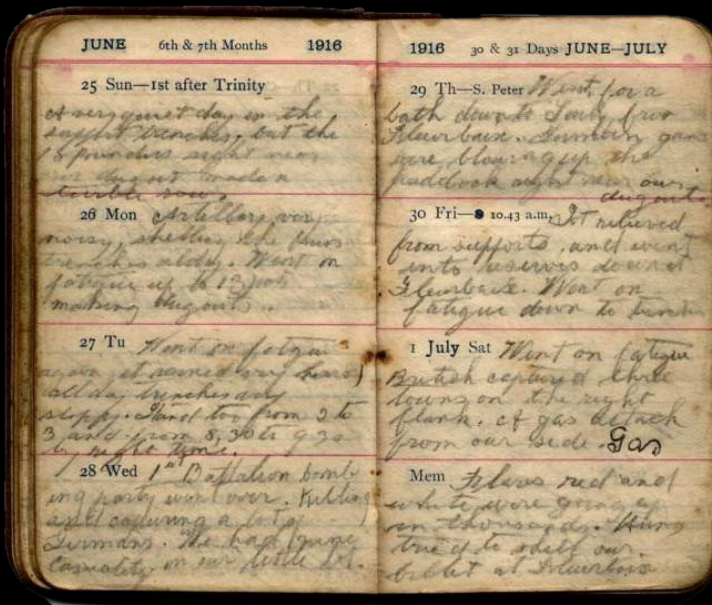
Mem We are camped in support for seven days about 1 1/2 miles from Fleurbaix.



The 2 inch medium trench mortar

Also known as the **2-inch howitzer**, and nicknamed the "toffee apple" or "plum pudding" mortar, was a British smooth bore muzzle loading (SBML) medium trench mortar in use in World War I from mid-1915 to mid-1917. The designation "2-inch" refers to the mortar barrel, into which only the 22-inch bomb shaft but not the bomb itself was inserted; the spherical bomb itself was actually 9 inches (230 mm) in diameter and weighed 42 lb (19 kg), hence this weapon is more comparable to a standard mortar of approximately 5-6 inch bore.





Jun 25 Sun A very quiet day in the support trenches, but the 18 pounders right near our dug out made a terrible noise.

26 Mon Artillery very noisy, shelling the huns trenches all day. Went on fatigue up to the front making dugouts.

27 Tu Went on fatigue again, it rained very heavy all day, trenches very sloppy. Stand too 2 to 3 and from 8.30 to 9.30 by night time?

28 Wed 1st Battalion bombing party went over killing and capturing a lot of Germans. We had nine casualties in our little lot.

29 Th Went for a bath down to Saily from Fleurbaix. German guns were blowing up the paddock right near our dug outs.

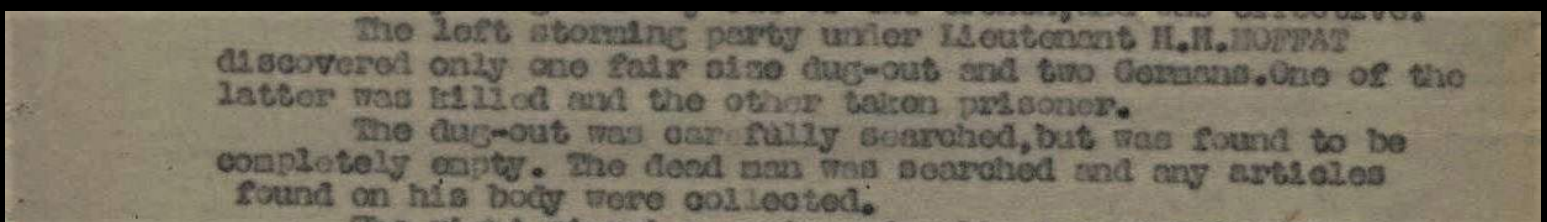
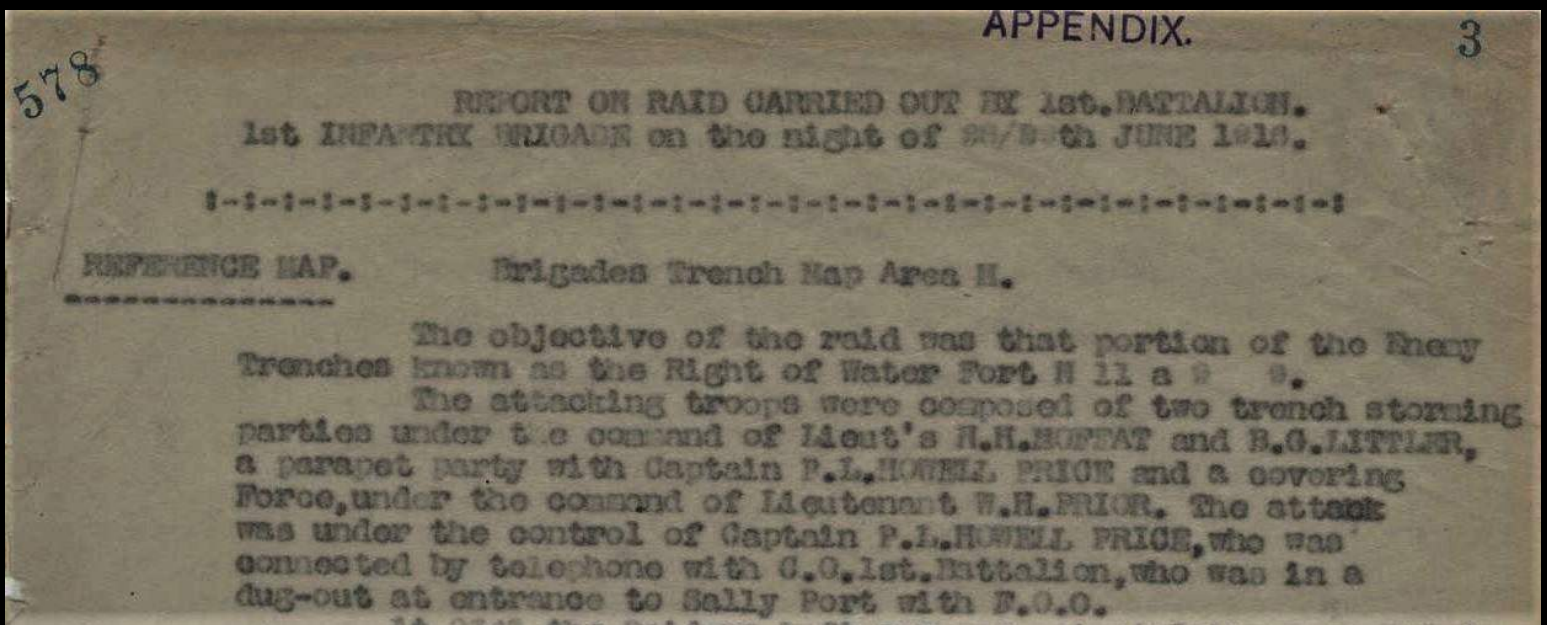
30 Fri Got relieved from supports and went into reserves down at Fleurbaix. Went on fatigue down to trenches.

Jul 1 Sat Went on fatigue. British captured three towns on the right flank. A gas attack from our side.

Mem Flares red and white were going up in thousands. Huns tried to shell our billet at Fleurbaix.

Trench Raids

On Jun 28 Harry mentions a '1st Battalion bombing party went over killing and capturing a lot of Germans.' The first Australian trench raid had been carried out on Jun 5, and its success prompted the carrying out of more. Their primary object was to secure information, which was best achieved by visiting the enemy lines and taking prisoners for cross examination. This successful raid carried out on Jun 28 was led by Capt. Philip Howell-Price who was subsequently awarded a Distinguished Service Order D.S.O. and warranted a typewritten two and a half pages in the Official Battalion Diaries.



The right storming party under Lieutenant B.G. LITTLER located two dug-outs, one containing 5 men and the other 4. They were promptly bombed. One surrendered and was taken prisoner. The others showed flight and were killed.

The Centre or parapet party were meanwhile stationed on the enemy's parapet at point of entry, and were engaged in passing the prisoners and our wounded back through the wire to the connecting files. Two men were engaged in knocking in earth to form a step to facilitate the exit of the storming parties.

Two dug-outs were blown up by the sappers, one being concrete and one built of wood.

After the parties had been 7 minutes in the trench, Captain P.L. HOWELL PRICE sounded the Claxton Horn as a signal for their withdrawal.

The parties were safely withdrawn with the exception of No 243 Sergeant Downer G.R. who was killed in the trench, and whose body became very firmly entangled in the enemy's wire, while attempt was being made to carry him out, and had to be abandoned.

The enemy casualties were 11 killed 9 prisoner

Our casualties were Lieutenant W.H Prior wounded - Lieutenant D.G Littler wounded - 1 other rank killed - 8 other rank wounded and evacuated - 5 other rank slightly wounded

Two of these casualties only were incurred in the Enemy's trenches. The remainder in NO MAN'S LAND and after returning to our lines.

After raids such as these the Germans retaliated with heavy artillery bombardment of No Man's Land and the enemy trenches.

NOTES.

Artillery. Our Artillery was very accurate. The Raiders were lying only 50 yards from the enemy parapet and suffered no loss or ill effects. The barrage was good.

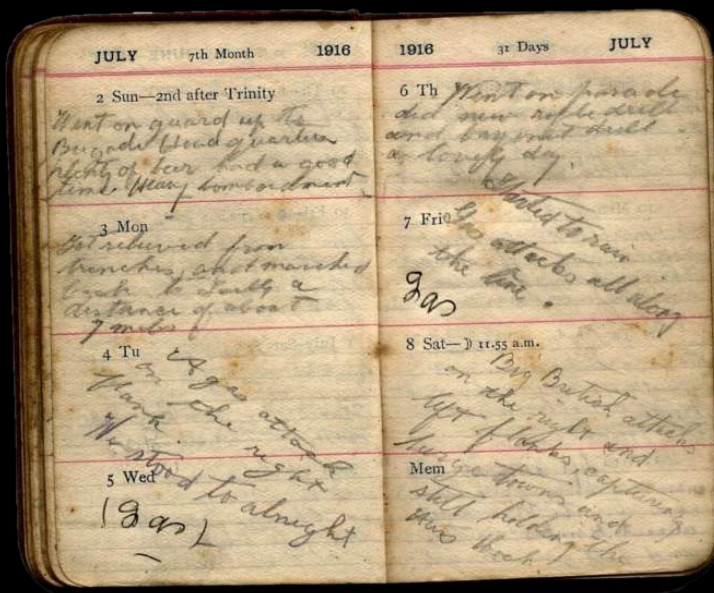
Enemy Fire. No fire was directed at our men whilst approaching the enemy lines, and they entered without a shot being fired.

On the return journey, however, the party was subjected to machine gun and heavy artillery fire. The former however was very high and did no damage.

Claxton Horn. was found to be hardly loud enough for the purpose.

Bombs. Percussion bombs (No 18) were found particularly useful, as they allowed our men to follow them up very rapidly, and they also do not allow the enemy picking them up and throwing them out of dugouts as might occur with "Mills" bombs. was found invaluable, and ensured quick movement on the part of our storming parties.

General. Wire cutting by Trench Mortars during the afternoon had no doubt given the enemy the cue as to an attack for as soon as our artillery opened the Germans replied on that portion of the trench from where the Mortar fired and plastered NO MAN'S LAND in front. The parapet and also well behind. No barrage was apparently attempted by the Germans. The Avenue, Convent and Bouillierie were well shelled, and were blown in in some places.



Jul 2 Sun Went on guard up at the brigade headquarters, plenty of beer had a good time. Heavy bombardment.

3 Mon Got relieved from trenches and marched back to Sailly a distance of about 7 miles.

4 & 5 Tu & Wed A gas attack on the right flank. We stood to all night.

6 Th Went on parade did new rifle drill and bayonet drill. A lovely day.

7 Fri Started to rain. Gas attacks all along the line.

8 Sat Big British attacks on the right and left flanks, capturing large towns and still holding the huns back.



Jul 9 Sun Left Sailly and marched to Outtersteene a distance of about 8 miles. Had a hot bath at Outtersteene.

10 Mon Left Outtersteene and marched to Bailleul entraining there for Somme, then marched 10 miles through to Domart-en-Ponthieu.

11 Tu Left Outtersteene at 6.30 and arriving at Somme 12.45 and arriving at Domart-en-Ponthieu 7 o'clock.

12 Wed Left Domart and marched through hilly country to Vignecourt about 8 miles, my toes and feet gave me gib?

13 Th Left Vignecourt and marched to Cardonette, about 12 miles, very hilly country and rather pretty. Feet sore.

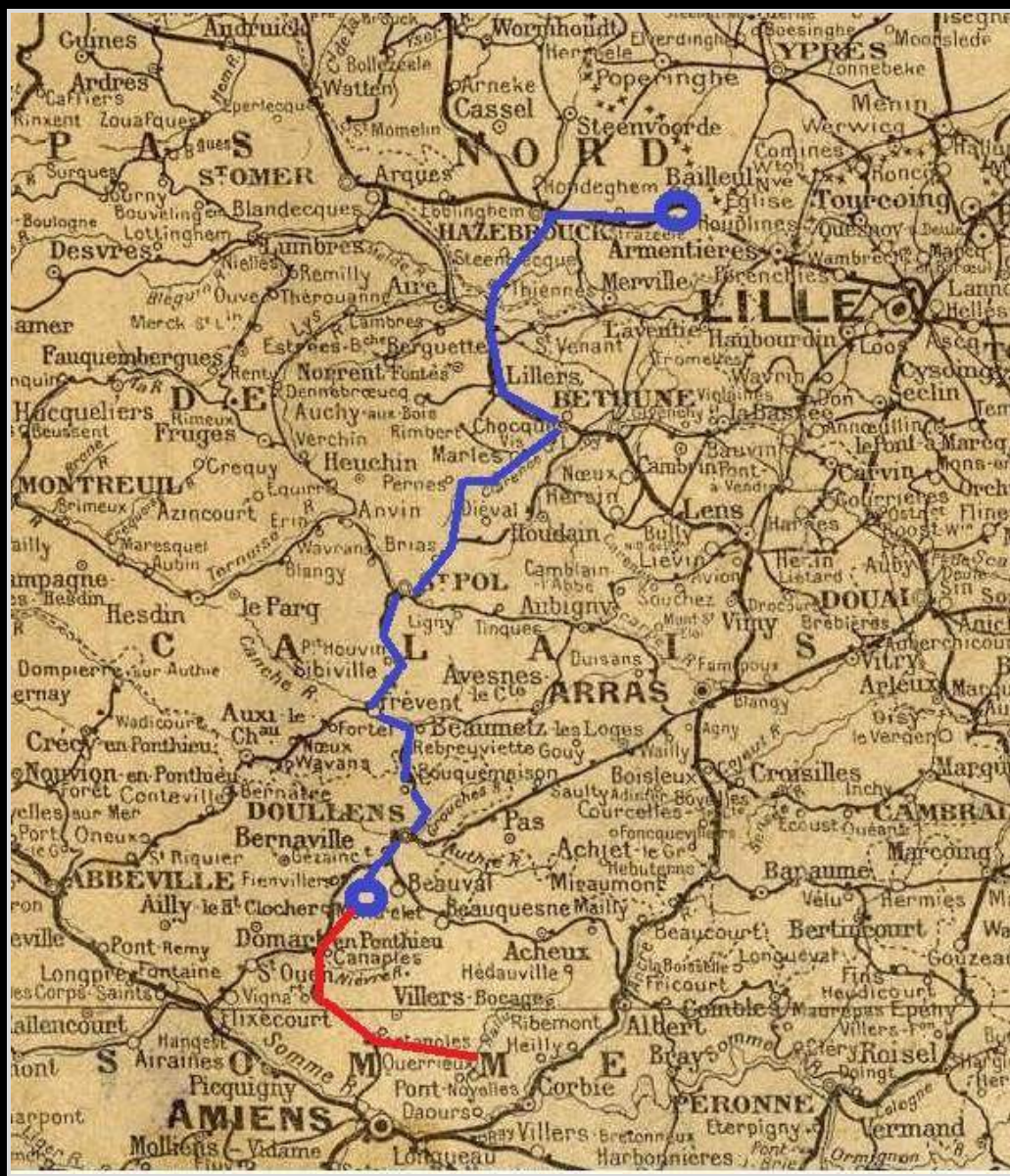
14 Fri Went on parade at Cardonette. Gas helmet inspection and other minor things, also had open skirmishing work.

15 Sat Went for a route march towards Amiens, we then had bayonet charging through the wheat crop.

Mem Cardonette 17 miles from firing line. English advanced 3 1/2 miles on our direct front.

Harry's diary is a little vague on the train trip from Bailleul to the Somme including where they detrained. The following is from the diary of Ben Champoin.

'Entraining; for where we knew not. We passed through Hazebrouck, where we had tea at 6.30 pm and settled down for the night. As the night went by we passed Berquette, Ham-en-Artoos, Lilliers, Choquettes, Marles, Callone, Ricourt, Perres Camplain, Brias to St. Pol, a large terminus, and then finally to Candas, where we arrived at 12.30 pm. The train must have had the line cleared, for we rattled on at a merry pace. And wasn't it cold when we detrained!'

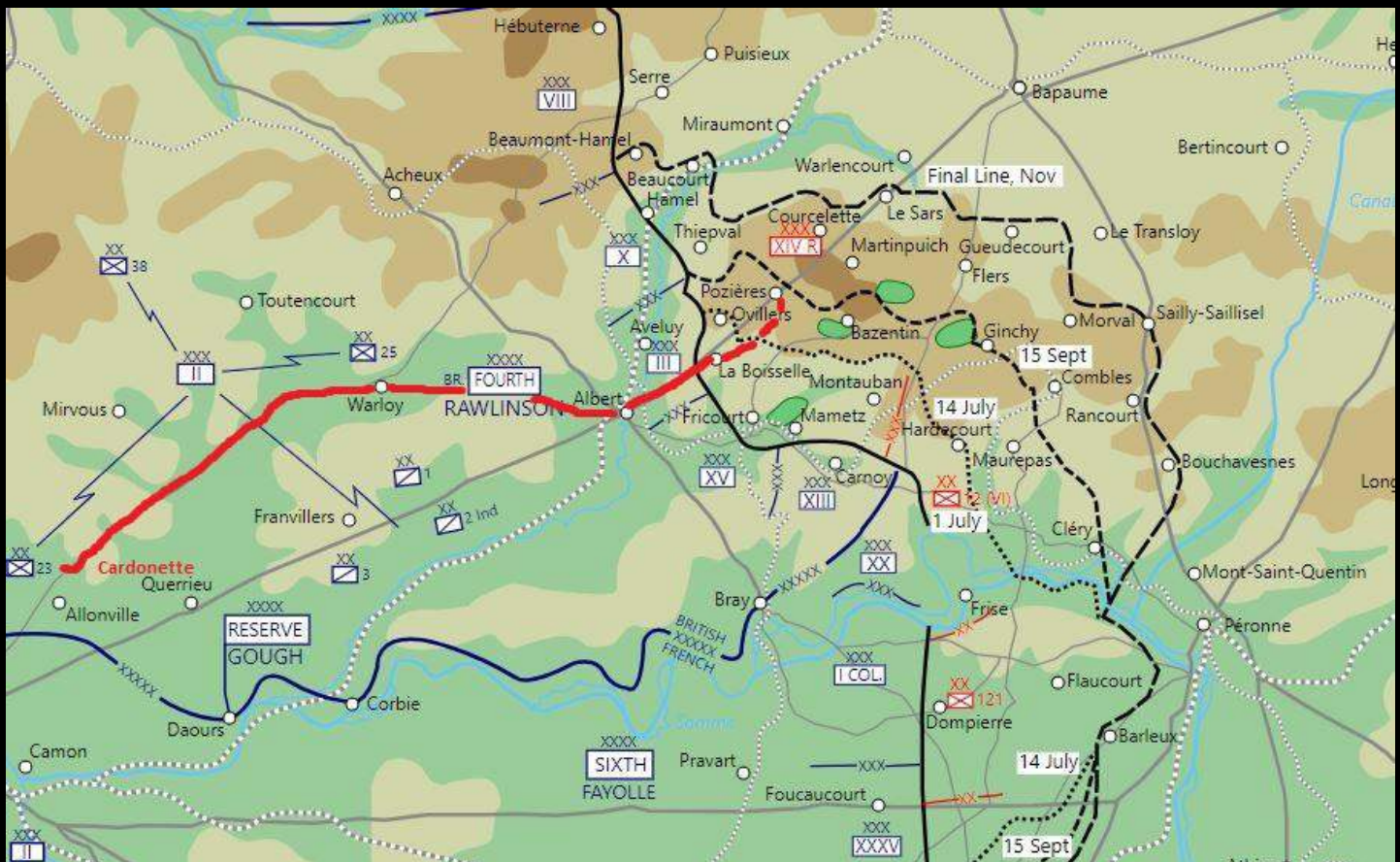


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

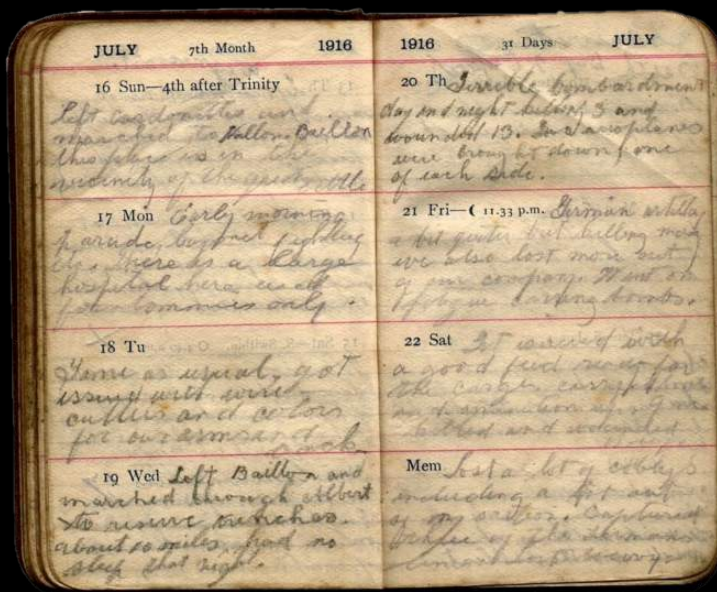
C04474

Troop train in France WW1

6. Western Front - Pozieres Cardonette to Ypres



Somme 1916 - Cardonette is at bottom left near Allonville



July 16 Sun Left Cardonette and marched to Warloy-Baillon, this place is in the vicinity of the great battle.

17 Mon Early morning parade, bayonet fighting etc. There is a large hospital here used for Tommies only.

18 Tu Tame as usual, got issued with wire cutters and colours for our arms and back.

19 Wed Left Warloy-Baillon and marched through Albert to reserve trenches about 10 miles. Had no sleep that night.

20 Th Terrible bombardment day and night killing 3 and wounding 13. Two aeroplanes were brought down, one of each side.

21 Fri German artillery bit quieter but killing many. We also lost more out of our company. Went on fatigue carrying bombs.

22 Sat Got issued with a good feed ready for the charge. Carried bombs and ammunition. 9 men killed and wounded today.

Mem Lost a lot of cobbys including a lot out of my section. Captured three of the Germans.

Harry's 1st Battalion was about to attack the village of Pozieres. The diary of Ben Champion has a vivid description of the march to the trenches at Contalmaison near Pozieres, via Sausage Valley and the Sunken Rd.

METHOD OF
ATTACK

5. The lines of advance will be as follows :-

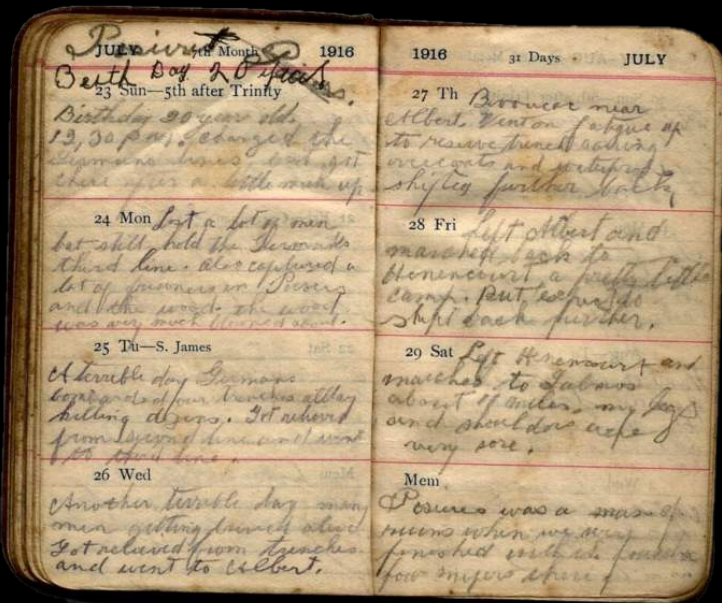
The advance to each objective will be timed accordingly to the barrage map. ~~XXXXXX~~.

1st Line "A" and "B" Coys. ~~XXXXXX~~ in two waves of 2 platoons each.

These companies will move to the selected position marked by patrols at about 100 yards in front of the enemy's position at 5 minutes before Zero. As soon as bombardment begins they will move forward as near as possible to the enemy's position.

2nd Line "C" and "D" Coys.

As soon as "A" and "B" Coys. have occupied their objective, "C" and "D" Coys. will move across, pass through "A" and "B" Coys., and move to as close as possible to the second objective while it is being bombarded, and rush the line as soon as the barrage lifts.



July 23 Sun Birthday, 20 yrs old. 12.30 pm charged the German lines and got there after a little muck up.

24 Mon Lost a lot of men but still held the German third line. Also captured a lot of prisoners in Pozieres and the wood. The wood was very much blown about.

25 Tu A terrible day. Germans bombarded our trenches all day killing dozens. Got relieved from second line and went to third line.

26 Wed Another terrible day, many men getting burned alive. Got relieved from trenches and went to Albert.

27 Th Bivouac near Albert. Went on fatigue up to reserve trench wearing overcoats and waterproofs & shifted further back.

28 Fri Left Albert and marched back to Henencourt, a pretty little camp. But expect to shift back further.

29 Sat Left Henencourt and marched to Talmas about 11 miles. My legs and shoulders ache, very sore,

Mem Pozieres was a mass of ruins when we were finished with it - found a few snipers there.

Other Eyewitness Accounts

Diary of L.F. Tesch signaller D Company 1st Battalion

23rd July

Our lads kept going past the third line (which was their objective) & went & dug themselves in the other side of the village of POZIERES. Through the day there was a continual stream of prisoners being brought in. The First Brigade infantry captured 8 field guns & 4 MG's in the woods on the left of the village. On the whole the day was quiet.

24th

Things were rather quiet all night but early in the morning they started bombing our 'D' Coy & continued all day. The casualties were very heavy. He also trained his guns on our main communications sap & really blew it all away. The night was not too quiet. There was some big gunfire through the night & early morning.

25th

Today was the scene of the worst bombardment that has taken place all through the stunt. All along the line we were shelled with all sized guns from 3in to 15in. Our men were being buried in all posts along the 1st, 2nd & 3rd lines. It was today that we lost 50% of our casualties. Officers suffered badly as well as the men. Our best friend was buried Lt. McShane. We were relieved by the 7th & 8th Bns, 2nd Brigade. The shelling ceased about 7pm & things were then as quiet as could be. The relief was completed at midnight. We marched to a field just outside Albert & bivouacked for the night.

Letter home from Capt. Philip Howell-Price

'At the fixed hour we were over our parapet & our artillery belched forth a tremendous bombardment on the enemy lines & works, at the time fixed, the artillery lifted to targets further in the rear & we took our objective. There was little or no opposition from the Hun infantry & machine guns. Prisoners were few but freely surrendered and caused no trouble. The following day was quiet. The enemy allowed us to dig in & freely walk about, also the night was entirely at our disposal. The next morning however, and the next night & again the following morning the Huns simply poured high explosive shells into our position. Trenches disappeared like paper in a storm. Where there had been trenches nobody could tell. The place was a series of huge shell-holes, some 30 feet wide & 20 feet deep. Shells were so thick they obscured the sun, smoke was so intense that one could not see, the row & noise was so terrific that men went mad, men simply stood and shook, their nervous system one entire wreck.'

Australians at War - Peter Cochrane

'Some went mad and galloped into the hail, screaming; some broke down and cried like children; one of them was talking to a dead man on a stretcher. But most held their quivering nerves.'

Sergeant Edgar Rule 14th Battalion

He had seen the men of the 1st Division pass him on the road after they had been relieved at Pozieres

'Those who saw them will never forget it as long as they live. They looked like men who had been in Hell. Almost without exception each man looked drawn and haggard, and so dazed that they appeared to be walking in a dream, and their eyes looked glassy and starey.'

More from

Diary of L.F. Tesch signaller D Company 1st Battalion

26th

Up at 8am breakfast at 8.30. Muster Parade where the Bn mustered 216 after 6 days in the trenches. The CO (Lt Col J. Heane) addressed us and told us all about our good work. We stayed at the place till 4pm & then moved to another field the other side of Albert for the night. In the afternoon the War Office Photographer was out and took our photo in German helmets that we got off the Germans.

Official War Diaries 1st Battalion

Our losses to 12 noon on the 26th July were 7 Officers and 100 other ranks Killed, 4 Officers and 376 other ranks wounded, 48 other ranks missing and 2 Officers died of wounds. This was the total loss in personnel of the Bn during the fighting in POZIERES. CAPT. HOWELL-PRICE P.L. was 1 of 3 Officers recommended for distinction along with 9 other ranks.



Main St. of Pozieres before and after



In all probability this famous photo is of men of the 1st Battalion with their spoils of victory after Pozieres



A busy scene in Sausage Valley during the fighting near Pozieres AWM EZ0113. The horse drawn vehicles with chimneys are field kitchens.



Sausage Valley 2005

I visited Pozieres in 2005, and followed the route taken by the soldiers to get to the Allied front line. It's a long walk from the 'La Grande Mine' also known as the 'Lochnagar Crater' near La Boisselle, to the village of Pozieres. This crater was caused by the explosion of a mine under the German Trenches on July 1st 1916. The walk took me along Sausage Valley, past the Gordon Dump cemetery and then Casualty Corner. Then I passed by a fairly recently discovered AIF dugout, past the Chalk Pit, along the Sunken Road, (also known as 'Dead Man's Road') before arriving at the outskirts of Pozieres.



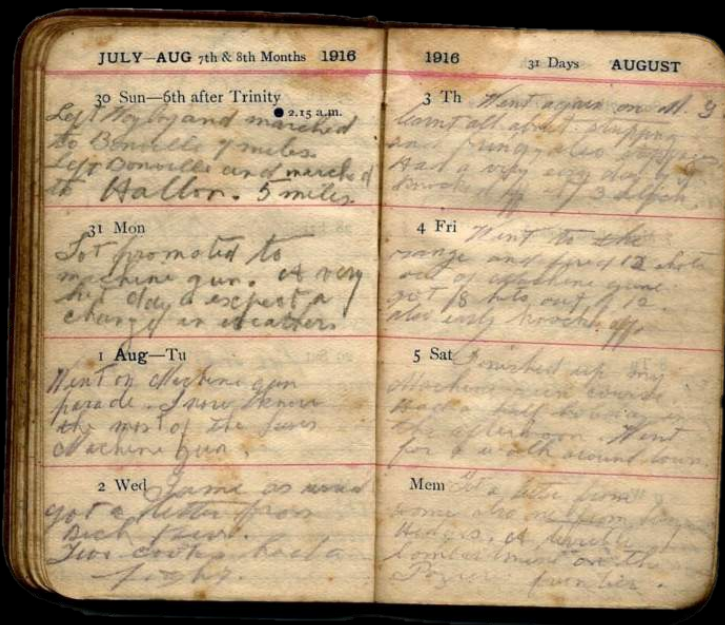
Fairly recently discovered AIF dugout



Remains of German pillbox 'Gibraltar'



For 6,842 soldiers of the AIF, this march to the battlefields in and around Pozieres, was a one way trip. On arrival at Pozieres, just across the road, lies the remains of the German pillbox 'Gibraltar', and nearby the 1st Division AIF Memorial. This memorial is just near the trenches taken and held by Harry's battalion on his 20th birthday.



July 30 Sun Left Talmas and marched to Bonville 7 miles. Left Bonville and marched to Halloy 5 miles.

31 Mon Got promoted to machine gun. A very hot day expect a change in the weather.

Aug 1 Tu Went on machine gun parade. I now know the most of the Lewis machine gun.

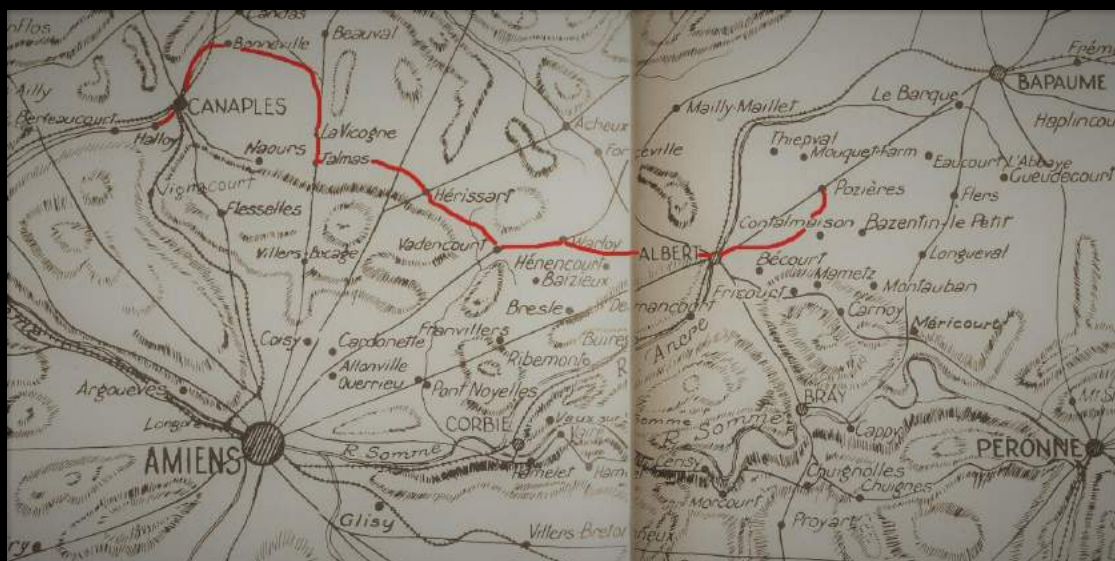
2 Wed Same as usual. Got a letter from Dick. Two cooks had a fight.

3 Th Went again on machine gun learnt all about stripping and firing, also stoppages. Had a very easy day of it, knocked off 3 o'clock.

4 Fri Went to the range and fired 12 shots out of machine gun. Got 8 hits out of 12 - early knock off.

5 Sat Finished up my machine gun course. Had a half holiday in the afternoon. Went for a walk around town.

Mem Got a letter from home also one from Lucy Hodges. A terrible bombardment on the Pozieres frontier.



Lewis Machine Gun

The Lewis Machine Gun was an American invention. 'It weighed 12.7kg and had a cyclic rate of fire of 500-600 rounds per minute. It was ingeniously air cooled, using the gas blast to set up air currents and aluminium components to dissipate heat. Notably, it could be disassembled with the one item guaranteed to be available: a .303 cartridge.' Order of Battle, Ross Mallet.

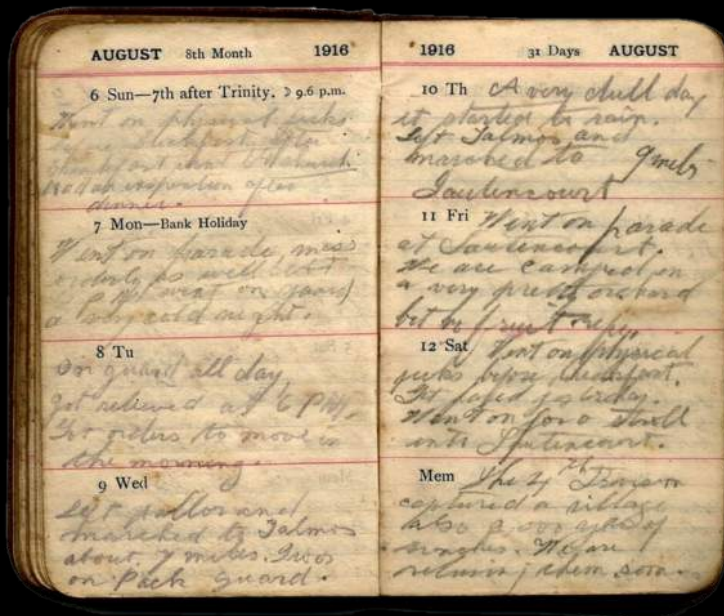
The advantage in having a lighter and more portable machine gun in addition to the Vickers were becoming more apparent, and more were gradually being added to the armoury of a Battalion. In July 1916 the allocation of Lewis guns was increased to twelve per Battalion. Two being assigned to each Company and four held as reserve. The structure of the Lewis Gun Platoons within the Battalion was also evolving and not hard and fast.



Harry Russell was now a Lewis Gunner, and the importance of these weapons can be gauged from the fact that all the men were trained in their use. Even though there were at this time only two allotted per Company, in the case of death or wounding of the gunner, the weapon can still be operated by others and its effectiveness not lost.

Transporting these Lewis guns was a not so easy task, not only because of their weight, but they required spare magazines each carrying 47 .303 rounds as well as a comprehensive range of spare parts.

They had limitations though as was discovered later in the year when the Somme turned into fields of mud. The Lewis gunners had the disadvantage of carrying a heavy weapon which became useless if it became muddy.



Aug 6 Sun Went on physical jerks before breakfast. After breakfast went to church. Had an inspection after dinner.

7 Mon Went on parade, mess orderly as well. At 6pm went on guard. A very cold night.

8 Tu On guard all day. Got relieved at 6pm. Got orders to move in the morning.

9 Wed Left Halloy and marched to Talmas about 7 mls. I was on pack guard.

10 Th A very dull day. It started to rain. Left Talmas and marched to Toutencourt - 9 miles.

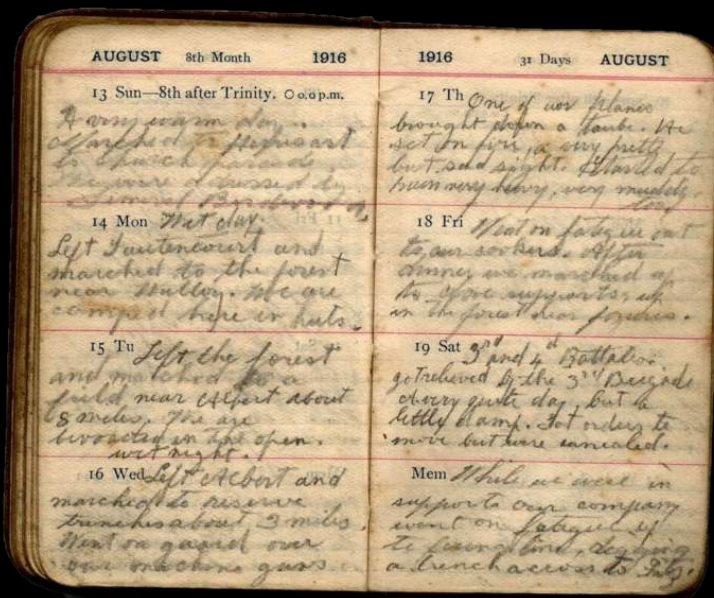
11 Fri Went on parade at Toutencourt. We are camped in a very pretty orchard but no fruit ripe.

12 Sat Went on physical jerks before breakfast. Got paid yesterday. Went out for a stroll into Toutencourt.

Mem The 4th Division captured a village also 2000 yds of trenches. We are returning to them soon.

Back to the Trenches at Pozieres

With the horror of their recent week in the trenches at Pozieres, and the 1st Battalion made up of around half reinforcements, morale was beginning to diminish. The tactics of the British Generals using them as cannon fodder was wearing a little thin. Still the men soldiered on.



Aug 13 Sun A very warm day. Marched to Herissart church parade. We were addressed by General Birdwood.

14 Mon Wet day. Left Toutencourt and marched to the forest near Halloy. We are camped here in huts.

15 Tu Left the forest and marched to a field near Albert about 8 miles. We are bivouacked in the open, wet night. (notation near back of diary "transferred to machine gun section")

16 Wed Left Albert and marched to reserve trenches about 3 miles. Went on guard over our machine guns.

17 Th One of our planes brought down a Taube. He set on fire, a very pretty but sad sight. Raining very heavily, very muddy too.

18 Fri Went on fatigue out to our cookers. After dinner we marched up to close supports, up in the forest near Pozieres.

19 Sat 3rd and 4th Battalions got relieved by the 3rd Brigade. A very quiet day but a little damp. Got orders to move but were cancelled.

Mem While we were in supports our company went on fatigue up to firing line, digging a trench up to Fritz.

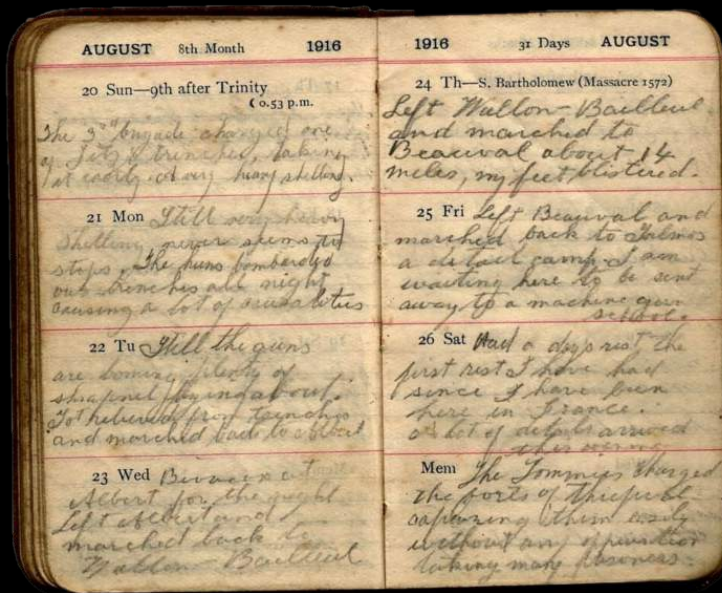


Field Cookers

Soldiers rely on regular meals to maintain their spirit. This obviously is a huge undertaking which relies on not only the delivery of food to the cooks, but its distribution to the men. In this particular case on **18 Fri** the cooks must have been close to the front line at Pozieres.

Drinking Water

Plentiful clean drinking water is also another obvious necessity and chlorine was used as a sanitiser.



Aug 20 Sun The 3rd Brigade charged one of Fritz's trenches taking it easily. A very heavy shelling.

21 Mon Still very heavy shelling, never seems to stop. The Huns bombarded our trenches all night causing a lot of casualties.

22 Tu Still the guns are booming, plenty of shrapnel flying about. Got relieved from trenches and marched back to Albert.

23 Wed Bivouac at Albert for the night. Left Albert and marched back to Warloy-Baillon.

24 Th Left Warloy-Baillon and marched to Beauval about 14 miles, my feet blistered.

25 Fri Left Beauval and marched back to Talmas, a detail camp. I am waiting here to be sent away to a machine gun school.

26 Sat Had a days rest the first rest I have had since I have been here in France. A lot of details arrived this evening.

Mem The Tommies charged the forts of Thiepval capturing them easily without any opposition taking many prisoners.

Reports on Casualties - Official Diary

20th Aug - Casualties up to noon were as follows: Killed 12 OR (Other Ranks) - Wounded 2 Officers and 43 OR - Missing 3 OR

21st Aug - Casualties to noon are as follows: Killed 16 OR - Wounded 2 Officers & 60 OR - Missing 4 OR

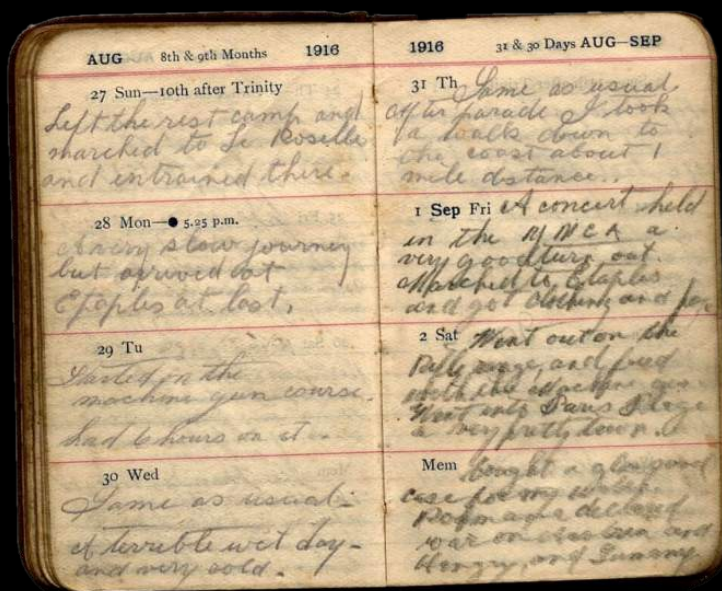
22nd Aug - Casualties to noon are as follows: Killed 20 OR - Wounded 2 Officers and 69 OR - Missing 4 OR

23rd Aug - Total casualties suffered by us to noon are as follows: Killed 22 OR - Wounded 3 Officers and 73 OR and 6 OR Missing

After the first spell at Pozieres the numbers of the Battalion were more than halved. After reinforcements were added at Halloy the Battalion was at almost $\frac{2}{3}$ strength and these casualties sustained at the second spell at Pozieres was a serious drain on manpower.

Battle of Pozieres Summary

The Australian official historian wrote that Pozieres ridge "is more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth." The Australians had suffered as many losses in the Battle for Pozieres in six weeks as they had in the entire Gallipoli Campaign. The British Generals were happy that Pozieres Ridge had been captured and held despite the terrible cost.



Aug 27 Sun Left the rest camp and marched to Le Roselle and entrained there.

28 Mon A very slow journey but arrived at Etaples at last.

29 Tu Started on the machine gun course, had 6 hours on it.

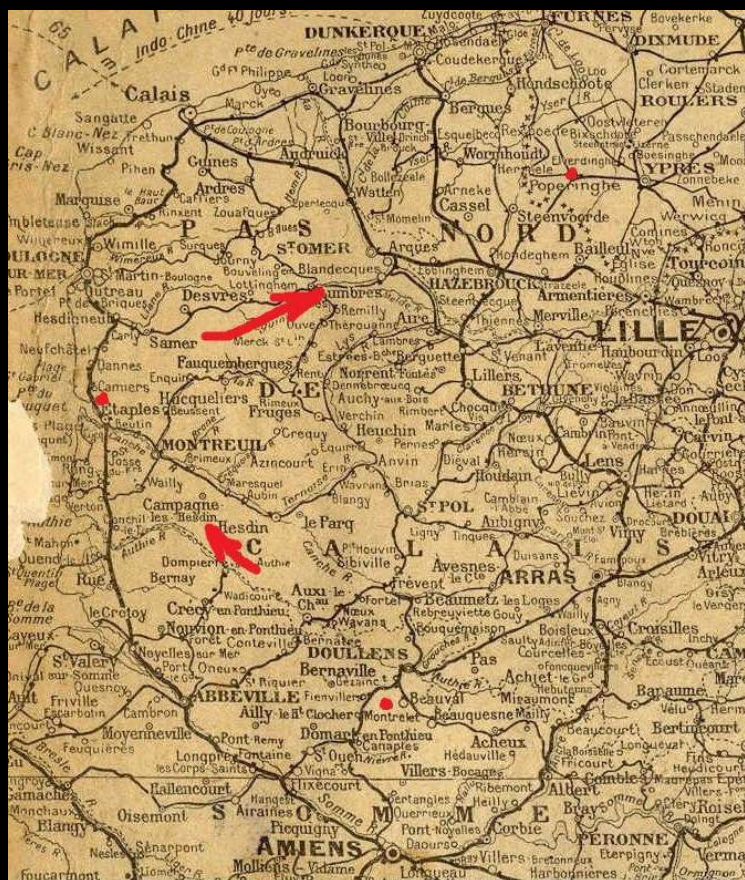
30 Wed Same as usual. A terrible wet day and very cold.

31 Th Same as usual. After parade I took a walk down to the coast about 1 mile distance.

Sept 1 Fri A concert held in the YMCA, a very good turnout. Marched to Etaples and got clothing and pay.

2 Sat Went out on the rifle range and fired with the machine gun. Went into Paris Plage a very pretty town.

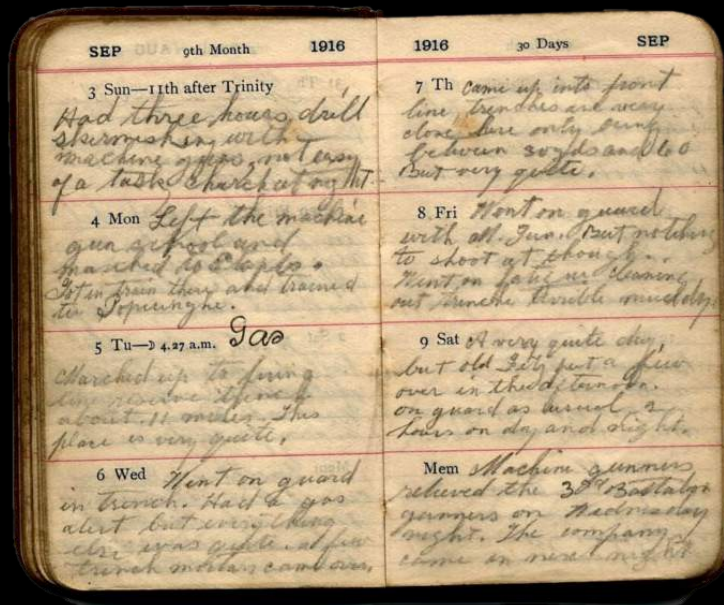
Mem Bought a good case for my watch. Romania declared war on Austria and Hungary and Germany.



Lewis Gun firing practice

Etaples

'The Étaples Army Base Camp, the largest of its kind ever established overseas by the British, was built along the railway adjacent to the town. It was served by a network of railways, canals, and roads connecting the camp to the southern and eastern fields of battle in France and to ships carrying troops, supplies, guns, equipment, and thousands of men and women across the English Channel. The camp was a training base, a depot for supplies, a detention centre for prisoners, and a centre for the treatment of the sick and wounded.'



Sept 3 Sun Had 3 hours drill skirmishing with machine guns, not easy task. Church at night.

4 Mon Left the machine gun school and marched to Etaples. Got in train there and trained to Poperinghe.

5 Tu Marched up to firing line reserve trench about 11 miles. This place is very quiet.

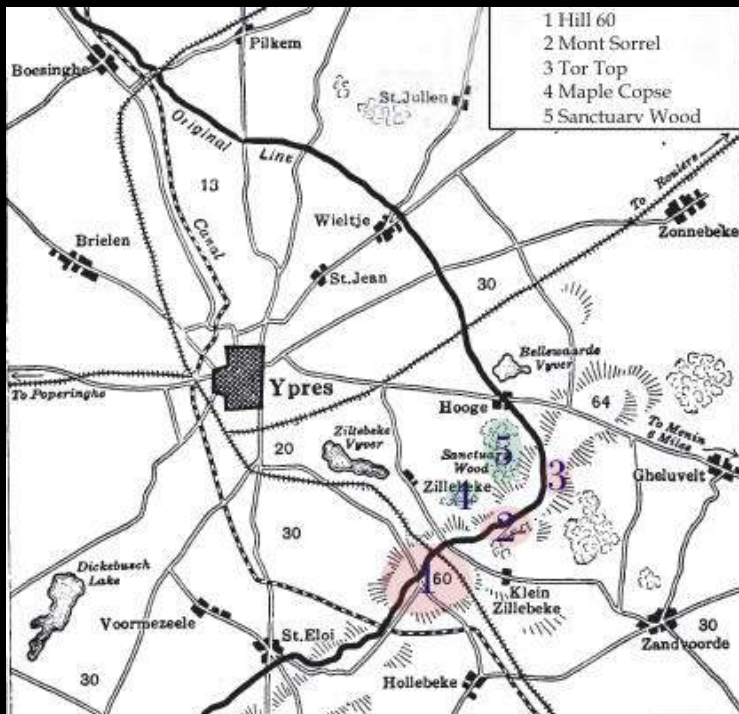
6 Wed Went on guard in trench. Had a gas alert but everything else was quiet. A few trench mortars came over.

7 Th Came up into front line, trenches are very close here only about 30 yds and 60 between. But very quiet.

8 Fri Went on guard with machine gun, but nothing to shoot at though. Went on fatigue cleaning out trenches, terribly muddy.

9 Sat A very quiet day but old Fritz put a few over in the afternoon. On guard as usual, 2hrs on day and night.

Mem Machine gunners relieved the 3rd Battalion gunners on Wednesday night. The company came in next night.



Ypres

Known to the British as Wipers

The trenches occupied by Harry's 1st Battalion were near Hill 60. At this time it was a relatively quiet sector with no major battles having been fought since May 1915.

In 1917 the Ypres sector was the scene of major battles such as Passchendaele and Broodseinde Ridge.

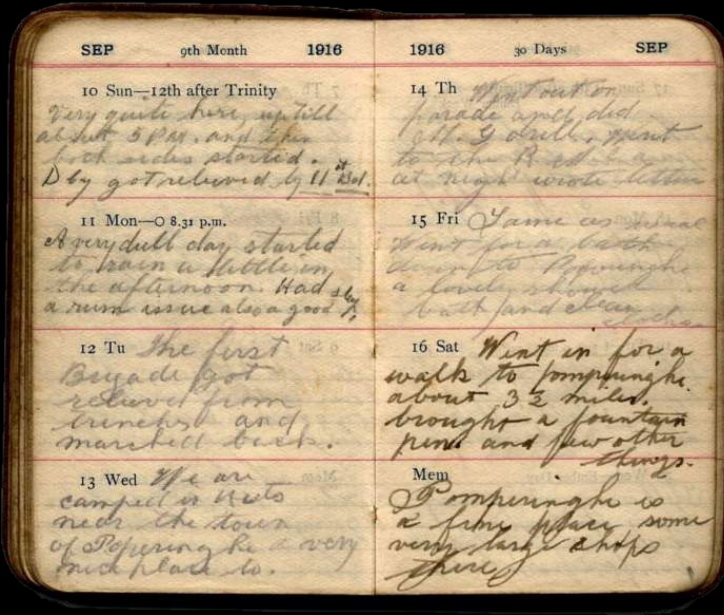


Beneath Hill 60

The subject of an award winning 2010 movie based on true events. The story of Australian miners tunnelling beneath Hill 60 to plant a massive amount of explosives which were detonated in June 1917. The blast created one of the largest explosions in history and killed an estimated 10,000 German soldiers.

7. Ypres to Flers

Flanders back to the Somme



Sept 10 Sun Very quiet here up till about 5pm and then both sides started. D coy got relieved by 11th battalion.

11 Mon A very dull day started to rain a little in the afternoon. Had sleep. A rum issue too.

12 Tu The first brigade got relieved from trenches and marched back.

13 Wed We are camped in huts near the town of Poperinghe, a very nice place too.

14 Th Went out on parade and did machine gun drill. Went to YMCA at night, wrote letters.

15 Fri Tame as usual. Went for a bath down to Poperinghe, a lovely shower bath and clean clothes.

16 Sat Went in for a walk to Poperinghe about 3 1/2 miles Brought a fountain pen and few other things.

Mem Poperinghe is a fine place, some very large shops there.



Army Rum

A strong dark tarry substance it provided soldiers with the courage to go into battle, calmed them down after it, warmed them up when it was cold and helped them sleep. It was also a much looked forward to reward when the going was tough.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

RCDIG1008643

Trenches near Hill 60



Sept 17 Sun Went on church parade then had the rest of the day off.

18 Mon Started to rain, very miserable and muddy, had no parade. Had machine gun practice in the hut.

19 Tu Still raining very hard. Went on picket up to a small village, about 3 miles away.

20 Wed Still very wet, a very heavy bombardment. There is a big balloon not far from here.

21 Th Sports postponed on account of the wet.

22 Fri Battalion sports held on a nice piece of ground near gas school. Had a good evening.

23 Sat Brigade sports held on same ground but did not go. I went into Poperinghe for the night.

Mem D coy won the squad drill on Battalion day and a few more honours.

Sept 24 Sun Brigade church parade on gas school ground. General Birdwood and Andy Fisher were there.

25 Mon Left the camp and marched to the train. Took train to Ypres then marched to

26 Tu firing line, getting there about 10 o'clock. Old Fritz sent over a few mine and rifle grenades.

27 Wed On fatigue making dugouts and fixing parapets. The Huns sent over a terrible lot of grenades.

28 Th Fatigue as usual. 2nd Battalion had a little bombing raid. On post 2 hours on and four off.

29 Fri Our trench mortars threw over a terrible lot of bombs and rifle grenades, doing a lot of damage.

30 Sat A very quiet night - the Huns never fired a shot. 6th Battalion made a raid on Fritz's trenches and

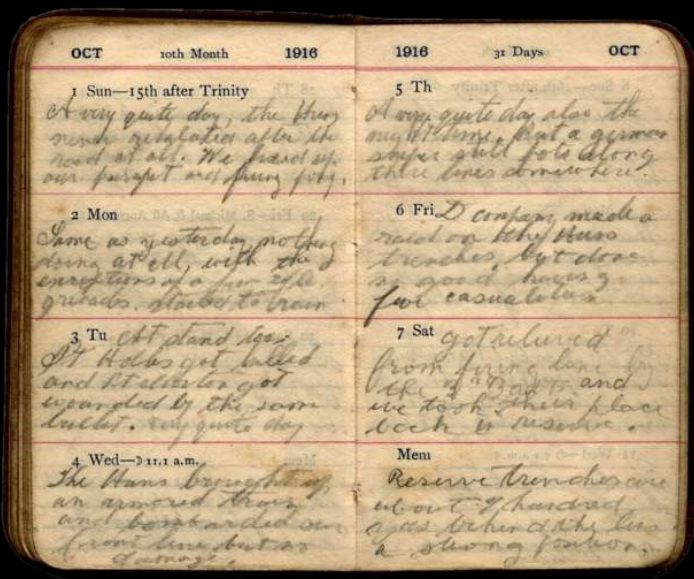
Mem capturing prisoners and killing a couple. They only had three casualties themselves.

German Rifle Grenades

The grenade was screwed to the steel rod which was then inserted down the barrel of the standard German Mauser rifle then fired using a blank round.

The rifle grenades used by the AIF operated on the same principle.





Oct 1 Sun A very quiet day, the Huns never retaliated after the raid at all. We fixed up our parapets and firing steps.

2 Mon Same as yesterday, nothing doing at all, with the exception of a few rifle grenades. Started to rain.

3 Tu At stand too: Pte Hollis got killed and Pte Morton got wounded by the same bullet. Very quiet day.

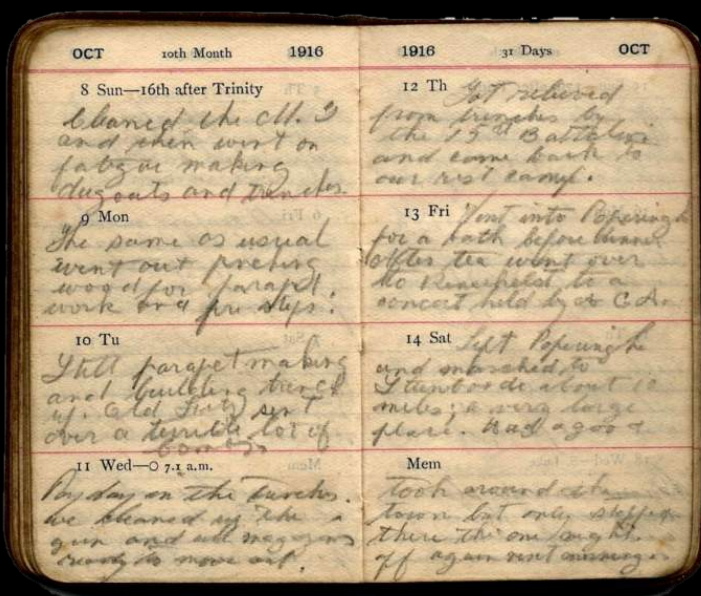
4 Wed The Huns brought up an armoured train and bombarded our front line, but no damage.

5 Th A very quiet day also the night time. But a German sniper still pots along these lines somewhere.

6 Fri D Coy made a raid on the Huns trenches but done no good having five casualties.

7 Sat Got relieved from firing line by 3rd Batt and we took their place back in reserve.

Mem Reserve trenches are about a hundred yards behind the line, a strong position.



Oct 8 Sun Cleaned the machine gun and then went on fatigue making dugouts and trenches.

9 Mon The same as usual, went out pinching wood for parapet work and fire steps.

10 Tu Still parapet making and building trench up. Old Fritz sent over a terrible lot of bombs.

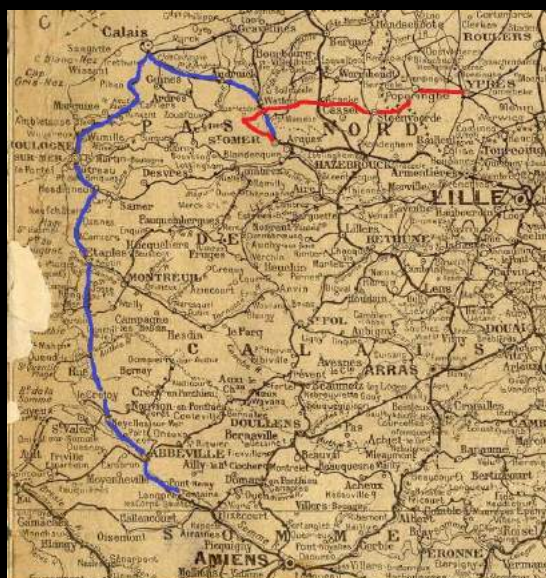
11 Wed Pay day in the trenches. We cleaned up the gun and all magazines ready to move out.

12 Th Got relieved from trenches by the 15th Battalion and came back to our rest camp.

13 Fri Went into Poperinghe for a bath before dinner. After tea went over to Rineshelst to a concert held by ACA.

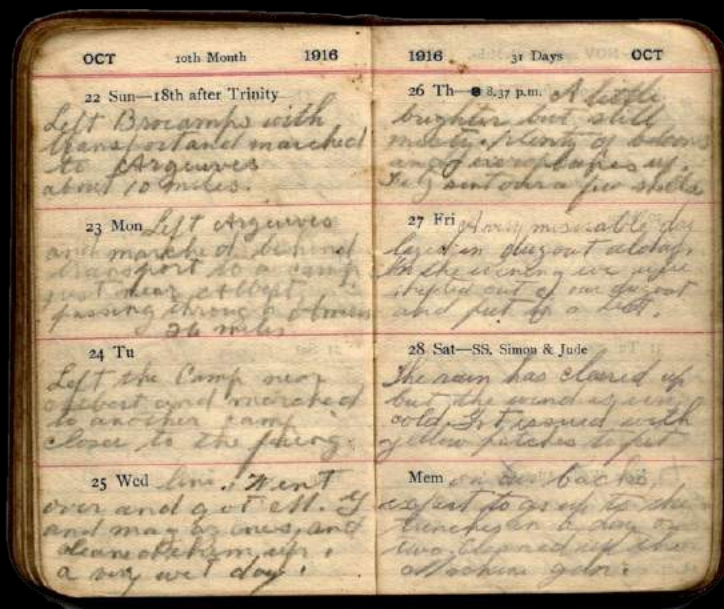
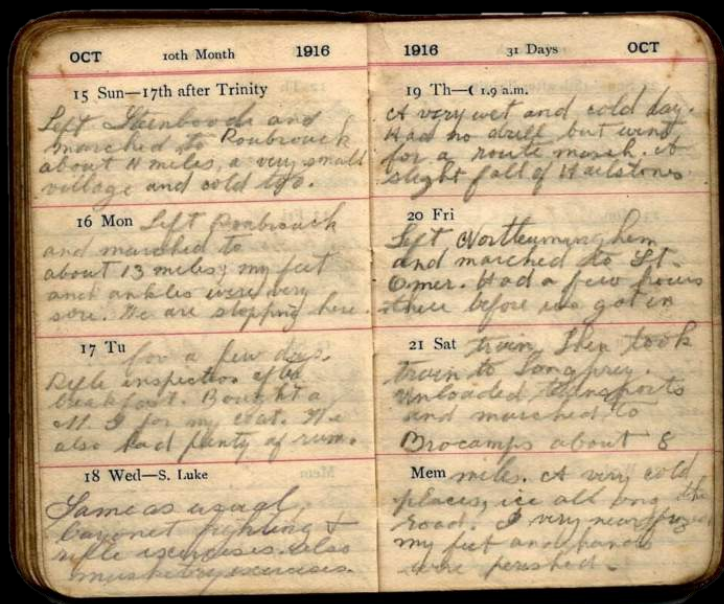
14 Sat Left Poperinghe and marched to Steenvoorde, about 10 miles, a very large place. Had a good

Mem look around the town but only stopped there one night. Off again next morning.



Back to the Somme

The diary of Ben Champion gives us the route taken by train to arrive back on the Somme at Longpre.



Oct 15 Sun Left Steenvoorde and marched to Rubrouck about 11 miles, a very small village and old too.

16 Mon Left Rubrouck and marched to Nort-Leulinghem about 13 miles, my feet and ankles were very sore. We are stopping here

17 Tue for a few days. Rifle inspection after breakfast. Bought a MG? for my coat. We also had plenty of rum.

18 Wed Same as usual bayonet fighting and rifle exercises, also musketry exercises.

19 Th A very wet and cold day. Had no drill but went for a route march. A slight fall of hailstones.

20 Fri Left Nort-Leulinghem and marched to St Omer. Had a few hours there before we got in

21 Sat train. Then took train to Longpre. Unloaded transports and marched to Brucamps about 8

Mem miles. A very cold place ice all along the road. I very nearly froze, my feet and hands were perished.

Oct 22 Sun Left Brucamps with transport and marched to Argoeuves about 10 miles.

23 Mon Left Argoeuves and marched behind transport to a camp just near Albert passing through Amiens 26 miles.

24 Tu Left the camp near Albert and marched to another camp closer to the firing.

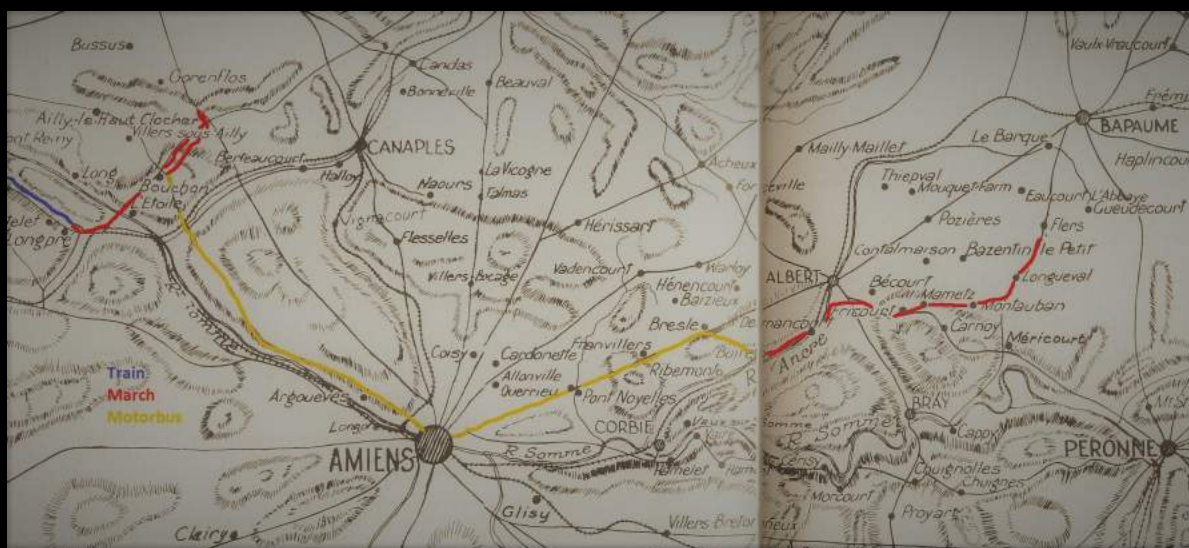
25 Wed Went over and got M.G. and magazines and cleaned them up. A very wet day.

26 Th A little brighter but still misty. Plenty of balloons and aeroplanes up. Fritz sent over a few shells.

27 Fri A very miserable day - lazed in dugout all day. In the evening we were shifted out of our dugout and put in a tent.

28 Sat The rain has cleared up but the wind is very cold. Got issued with yellow patches to put

Mem on our backs. Expect to go to the trenches in a day or two. Cleaned up the machine gun.





French Army Buses

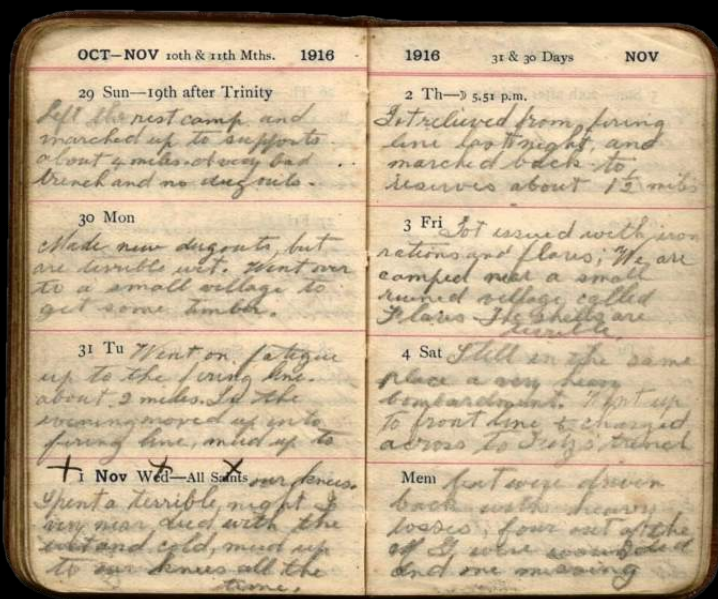
Harry's diary is a bit vague on how they travelled from Brucamps to Fricourt.

Ben Champion's diary

'We came on a fleet of French Army buses which held 30 men. -- Spare buses were also in the column in case of break down, and it was a much better way of travelling than per foot.'

Official Diary

23/10/16 0800 Bn moved by march route to starting point north of MOUFLERS and from there proceeded by motorbus to BUIRE arriving at 1400 then marched with 200 x distance between Coys to camp near FRICOURT arriving at 1700.



Oct 29 Sun Left the camp and marched up to supports about 4 miles. A very bad trench and no dugouts.

30 Mon Made new dugouts, but are terribly wet. Went over to a small village to get some timber.

31 Tu Went on fatigue up to the firing line, about 2 miles. In the evening moved up into firing lines, mud up to our knees.

Nov 1 Wed Spent a terrible night. I very nearly died with the wet and cold. Mud up to our knees all the time.

2 Th Got relieved from firing line last night and marched back to reserves, about 1 1/2 miles.

3 Fri Got issued with iron rations and flares. We are camped near a small ruined village called Flers. The shells are terrible.

4 Sat Still in the same place, a very heavy bombardment. went up to front line and charged across to Fritz's trenches

Mem but were driven back with heavy losses. Four out of the M.G. were wounded and one missing. Charged 12 o'clock Nov 4.

Capt. C E W Bean in mud Gird Trench near Gueudecourt Nov 1916.

Leaders of the men of the AIF who were at the front line, and aware of the atrocious conditions, advised their superiors that any attack was sure to fail. This advice was ignored for reasons that were either political or senseless and the attack went ahead.

British Army Officer Lord Cavan commanded the XIV Corps who had been already attacking in the area in the mud.

'No one who has not visited the front can really know the state of exhaustion to which the men are reduced. The conditions are far worse than in the First Battle of Ypres; all my general officers and staff officers agree that they are the worst they have seen.' He desired to know whether it was deliberately intended to sacrifice the British right in order to save the French left - since a sacrifice it must be.

'Bayonet Trench' was to be attacked by two Companies from the 1st Battalion and three bombing parties from the 3rd Battalion. Harry's D Company was one of these.



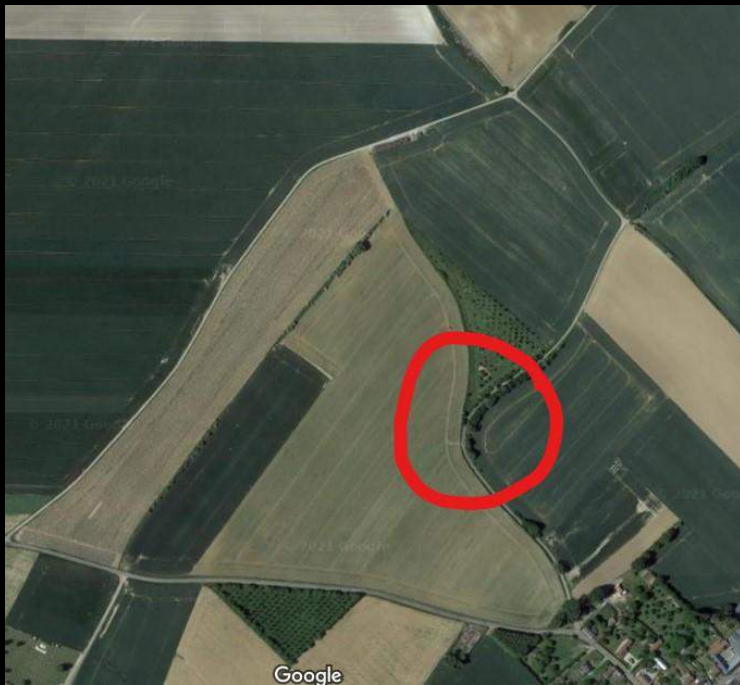


Horses haul ammunition forward in deep mud outside Flers. November, 1916.



Lieutenant Colonel Owen Howell-Price

Just prior to the Battle of 'Bayonet Trench', Philip Howell-Price's older brother Owen, the commanding officer of the 3rd Battalion, was shot by a German sniper while setting up a machine gun post to support the 1st Battalion's attack on the enemy trenches. There are conflicting reports whether he was killed outright or survived a day or so. But he was still dead.



Lt Finlayson and his bombing party were apparently wiped out as they rounded the corner in the Sunken Rd. 74 1st Battalion soldiers were reported missing after the attack, of these 73 were confirmed as being killed.

Looking at the battlefield it is not hard to see why they were repulsed by the Germans. Not even taking into account the terrible muddy conditions or the exhausted state of the men. The mud also affected their weapons.

Official Battalion History

'Lewis Guns were clogged with mud and absolutely useless'

Ben Champion's diary

'The mud was too thick. Our men were trying to fire their rifles but they were choked with mud'. - - -

'In a few minutes a glorious unit had suffered losses which would never be made up'. - - -

'This was the first time our Battalion had ever failed to capture its objective, and the old hands were very wroth with the authorities for not seeing the conditions under which we attacked.'



A German view of the Sunken Road at left

It is a short drive from the village of Gueudecourt to the battlefield along a muddy road. The thick clayey mud accumulated alarmingly on the tires of the hire car. Probably little has changed to the countryside since November 1916.



There is little doubt that this battle not only left a huge dent in the morale of the men of the 1st Battalion, but also reinforced their bitterness to the British High Command. This time they had gone too far. Any enthusiasm that might have shown in Harry's diary was no longer. No doubt he'd had a gutful. Even before this attack the men had been discouraged - as it turns out even the heroic Capt. Philip Howell-Price. In 2004 I transcribed a photocopy of a handwritten letter dated October 2nd 1916 sent home to his family by Philip Howell-Price. It is held in the Collections of the AWM in Canberra. It was not easy handwriting to understand - but I gradually pieced together an extraordinarily descriptive and cynical view of a WW1 battlefield and the macabre description of a shell exploding among a group of soldiers nearby.

'The modern battlefield is a glorious thing, a sight to behold (from a long way off), a view that would cause the beholder to become spellbound; (for ever if he had not a good dugout); Something miraculous, wonderful, uncanny, yes spiritual is depicted before the eye of the onlooker, all for nothing too.'

Miraculous in so far that there are not more casualties - wonderful because of the various forces brought into action unbeknown and unseen by the observer - uncanny were the minds that invented some of these means of murder - spiritual in so far that generally after a long 'scrap' there is a rum issue.

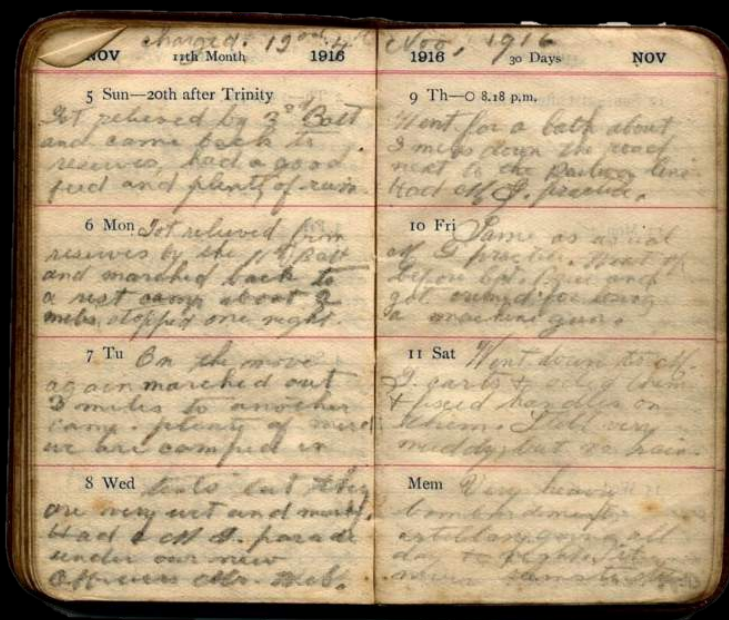
We hear of villages being captured and of some wonderful & weird great conflicts. Generally this is sincerely the 'idea' of the correspondent who views the war from Army Headquarters or some such 'forward' position.

War is not known by people who live behind & swiftly come up now and again to have a look around. To fully realise the real thing a man must live it. Live in the front line with an insecure dugout; have a bomb drop on it and bury him alive; be dug out and then have no change of clothes & no rest but still have to dodge the damned things. Life is a joke eh what.

The heralding of a shell is a low 'whirr'. It can be heard coming - one listens & wonders if it is his turn. The shell arrives - whizz - bang. One man is seen taking a birds eye view of the surrounding country, accompanied by a ton of earth - another heard moaning underneath the earth, he thought perhaps that he was a ???corpse??? but found the game not too good; a third considered himself a shrapnel shell & hurled his own pieces broadcast, a piece of leg hits you in the mouth - it tastes nasty and you leave it; a fourth thought he would like to be a figure at a wax works and lies still & cold, his lips parted in a smile, his eyes steady and staring at heaven, indeed the most terrifying sight in war. But all have gone their way; all have done their duty; all have died for their parents, relations & country & their conscience'.



8. Flers to London



Nov 5 Sun Got relieved by 3rd Battalion and came back to reserves. Had a good feed and plenty of rum.

6 Mon Got relieved from reserves by 11th Battalion and marched back to a rest camp about 2 miles. Stopped one night. (Bernafay Camp)

7 Tu On the move again, marched out 3 miles to another camp. Plenty of mud we are camped in (Pommiers Camp)

8 Wed tents but they are very wet and musty. Had a M.G. parade under our new officer Mr Webb.

9 Th Went for a bath about 3 miles down the road next to the railway line. Had M.G. practice. (Fricourt)

10 Fri Same as usual, M.G. practice. Went up before Cpt Price and got crimed for losing a machine gun.

11 Sat Went down to M.G. carts and oiled them and fixed handles on them. Still very muddy but no rain.

Mem Very heavy bombardment artillery going all day and night, it never seems to stop.

Harry was 'crimed' (put on a charge) for losing a machine gun and went before Cpt. Price. This was probably a formality as no further action appears to have been taken and Harry continued on as a Lewis machine gunner. As mentioned in the Battalion History 'Lewis Guns were clogged with mud and absolutely useless'. As walking was impossible and 'the men had to resort to slithering and sliding', a non working Lewis Gun weighing 12.7kg would have been quite a liability in retreat. Also 'Four out of the M.G. were wounded and one was missing'. Maybe helping a wounded mate back to safety would take priority over a non-working machine gun. During the nearby battle at 'The Maze', which was carried out at the same time by the 7th Brigade, there were reports of more Lewis guns lost.



A 1916 model Lewis Machine Gun cart

Harry's last battle with the 1st Battalion

This battle was to be the last fought by Harry with the 1st Battalion. He went on leave at the end of 1916 to London and due partly to ongoing poor health never rejoined them. It was also the last fought by the 1st Battalion during the winter of 1916-17 and indeed almost the last fought by any of the AIF.

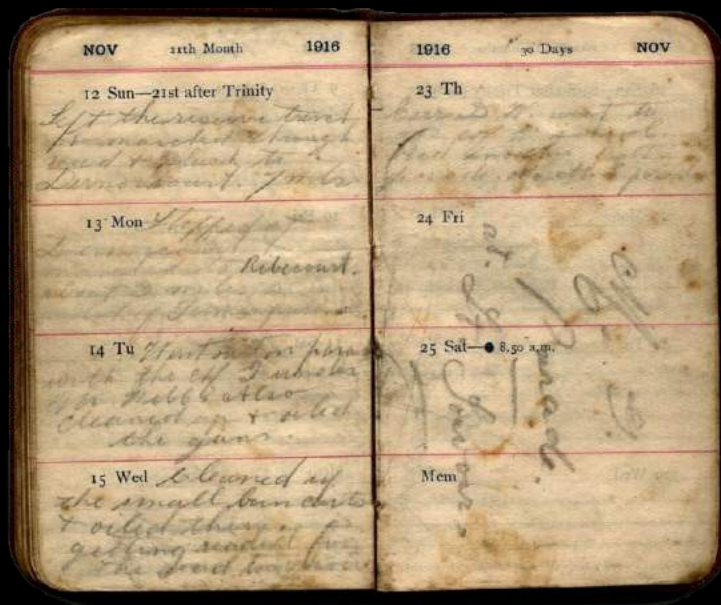
		INFANTRY		
DIVISION	BATTALION Upper colour	BRIGADE Lower colour	BRIGADE Lower colour	BRIGADE Lower colour
		NEW SOUTH WALES usually GREEN	VICTORIA usually RED	QUEENSLAND TASMANIA SOUTH AUSTRALIA WEST AUSTRALIA usually LIGHT BLUE
FIRST	black 1 st Bn in Bde	1 Bde HQ	2 Bde HQ	3 Bde HQ
	purple 2 nd Bn in Bde	1 Bn	5 Bn	9 Bn
	brown 3 rd Bn in Bde	2 Bn	6 Bn	10 Bn
	white 4 th Bn in Bde	3 Bn	7 Bn	11 Bn
SECOND	black 1 st Bn in Bde	4 Bn	8 Bn	12 Bn
	purple 2 nd Bn in Bde	5 Bde HQ	6 Bde HQ	7 Bde HQ
	brown 3 rd Bn in Bde	17 Bn	21 Bn	25 Bn
	white 4 th Bn in Bde	18 Bn	22 Bn	26 Bn
THIRD	black 1 st Bn in Bde	19 Bn	23 Bn	27 Bn
	purple 2 nd Bn in Bde	20 Bn	24 Bn	28 Bn
	brown 3 rd Bn in Bde	9 Bde HQ	10 Bde HQ	11 Bde HQ
	white 4 th Bn in Bde	33 Bn	37 Bn	41 Bn
		34 Bn	38 Bn	42 Bn
		35 Bn	39 Bn	43 Bn
		36 Bn	40 Bn	44 Bn

Colour Patches

Colour patches were worn on Australian uniforms to indicate the division, battalion and brigade of the soldier.



Colour Patch of 1st Infantry Battalion AWM



Nov 12 Sun Left the reserve trench and marched through mud and slush to Dernancourt - 7 miles.

13 Mon Stopped at Dernancourt and marched to Ribemont (Ribemont-sur-Ancre) about 3 miles, a lot of German prisoners.

14 Tu Went out on parade with M.G. under Mr Webb and also cleaned up and oiled the guns.

15 Wed Cleaned up the small bun carts and oiled them. Getting ready for the road tomorrow.

There is one page missing 16th to 22nd November.

I have replaced this empty space with the diary entries of L.F. Tesch who was a signaller in Harry's D Coy. 1st Battalion. He has more detail of day to day activities which makes for an interesting change.

Nov 16

Rev 6am - Jerks 6.30 to 7am. The usual routine was gone through & in the evening I wrote letters till 8.30pm. Bed at 9pm.

Nov 17

Rev 6.15am - no jerks. We had breakfast at 7.30am & then packed up our gear ready to move off by 10.15am. We marched about 3/4 mile where we were put in Motors for FREMONT, a very small village which was about 35 miles away. We started off at 11.45 & arrived at our destination at 4pm. There was absolutely nothing to be bought in the village at all. I had a great run of luck during the day which ended up splendidly by being presented with a bottle of Watson's No 12 (Brandy?) It was very acceptable indeed on account of the very cold night that it was. (Ben Champion was promoted from Sgt. to Second Lieutenant)

Nov 18

Out of bed 8am. As soon as I looked out of the door I was nearly blinded by the sight which met my eyes SNOW. Everything was covered with it & my word it WAS cold. At 11.30 we were fallen in full march order to move off to another village about 5 kilometres (3 1/2 miles) away called ST SAVEUR. St Saveur is the largest village we have been in for some time & there is plenty of everything that one wants in it. The night was spent very enjoyably.

Nov 19

Out of bed at 8am. For the first time in the history of the 1st Bn we were put on usual parades such as rifle drill etc. The hours of parade were 9 to 11.30 - 2 to 3.30pm. After parade I went for a walk to AILLY - SUR - SOMME another large village about 1 kilometre from here. I didn't stay long but came back home and wrote some letters.

Nov 20

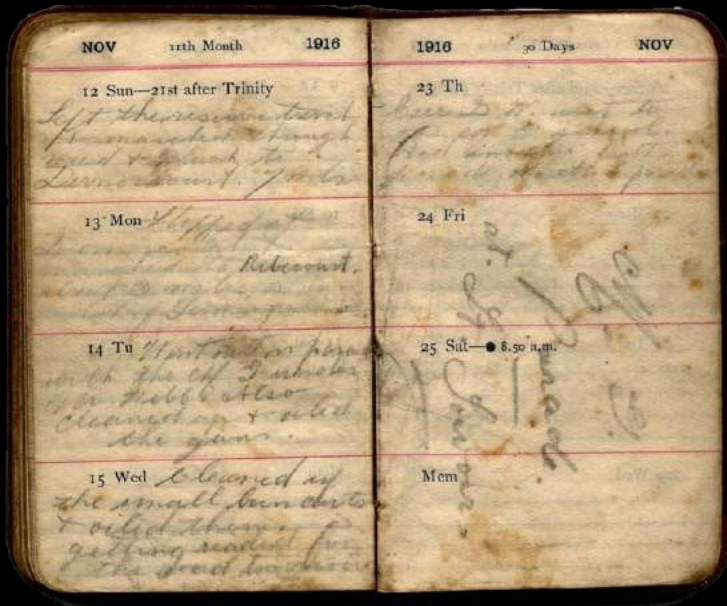
Rev 6am - Jerks 6.30 - Breakfast 7am. The usual parades were done in the morning but after dinner the Bn was out on parade which the C.O. was in charge of. Everybody had to be there. The parade was finished at 3.30pm. After tea we went for a quiet stroll round the village returning for bed at 9pm.

Nov 21

Rev 6am etc. The usual programme was worked out for signallers. After tea I wrote some letters retiring to bed at 9.30.

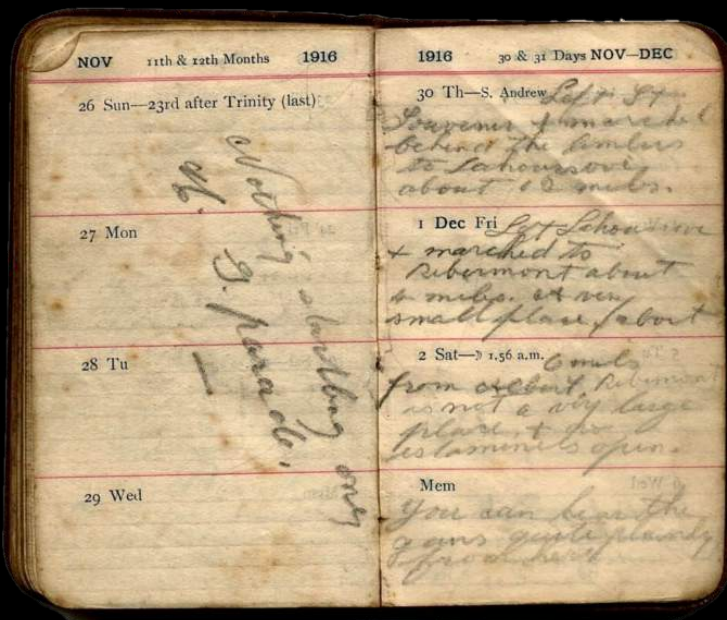
Nov 22

Rev 6.30 - No Jerks. The programme of work has been altered slightly cutting out physical exercise in the early morning. Morning parade started 8am to 11.30 am. Dinner 12.30. Afternoon parade from 2 to 3.30pm. After tea I visited some French people who made us very welcome. We stayed till about midnight when we came home to bed after having a splendid time.



Nov 23 We went to the M.G. school had another light parade. M.G. parade.

24 - 25 Fri - Sat M.G. parade St. Sauveur



26 Nov - 29 Sun - Wed Nothing startling only M.G. parade.

30 Th Left St Sauveur and marched behind the limbers to Lahoussoye - about 10 miles.

Dec 1 Fri Left Lahoussoye and marched to Ribemont about 4 miles. A very small place about

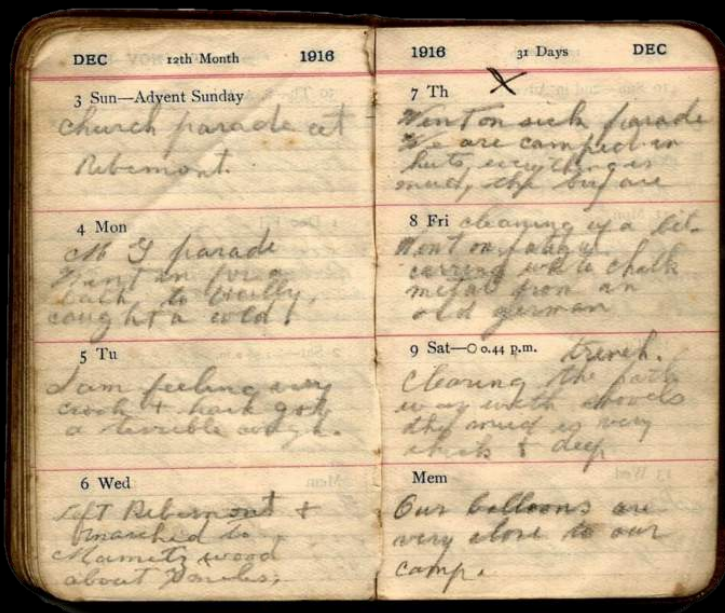
2 Sat 6 miles from Albert. Ribemont is not a very large place and no estaminets open.

Mem You can hear the guns quite plainly from here.

A **limber** is a two-wheeled cart designed to support the trail of an artillery piece, or the stock of a field carriage such as a caisson or traveling forge, allowing it to be towed.



AIF Limbers in France 1916



Dec 3 Sun Church parade at Ribemont.

4 Mon M.G. parade. Went in for a bath to Heilly. Caught a cold.

5 Tu I am feeling very crook and have got a terrible cough.

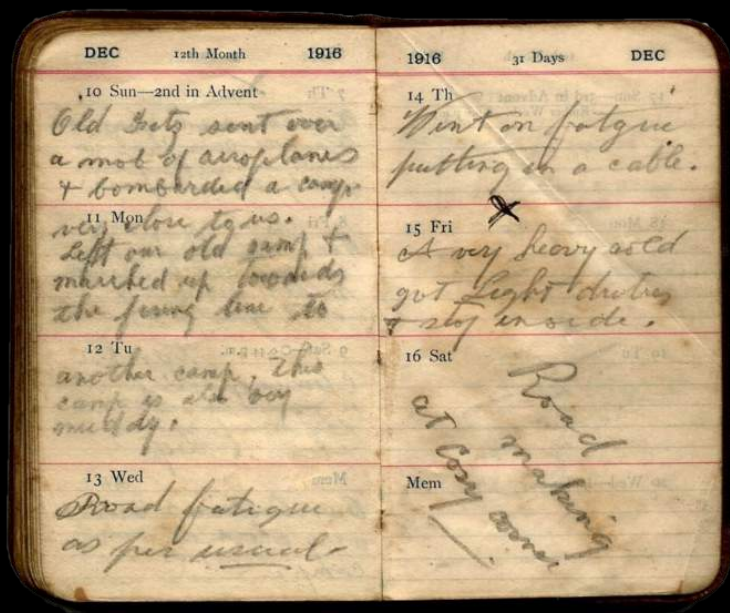
6 Wed Left Ribemont and marched to Mametz Wood, about 7 miles.

7 Th Went on sick parade. We are camped in huts everything is mud, the ? are cleaning up a bit.

8 Fri Went on fatigue carrying white chalk metal from an old German

9 Sat trench. Cleaning the pathway with shovels. The mud is very thick and deep.

Mem Our balloons are very close to our camp.



Dec 10 Sun Old Fritz sent over a mob of aeroplanes and bombarded a camp

11 Mon very close to us. Left our old camp and marched up towards the firing line to (Adelaide Camp)

12 Tu another camp. This camp is also very muddy.

13 Wed Road fatigue as usual.

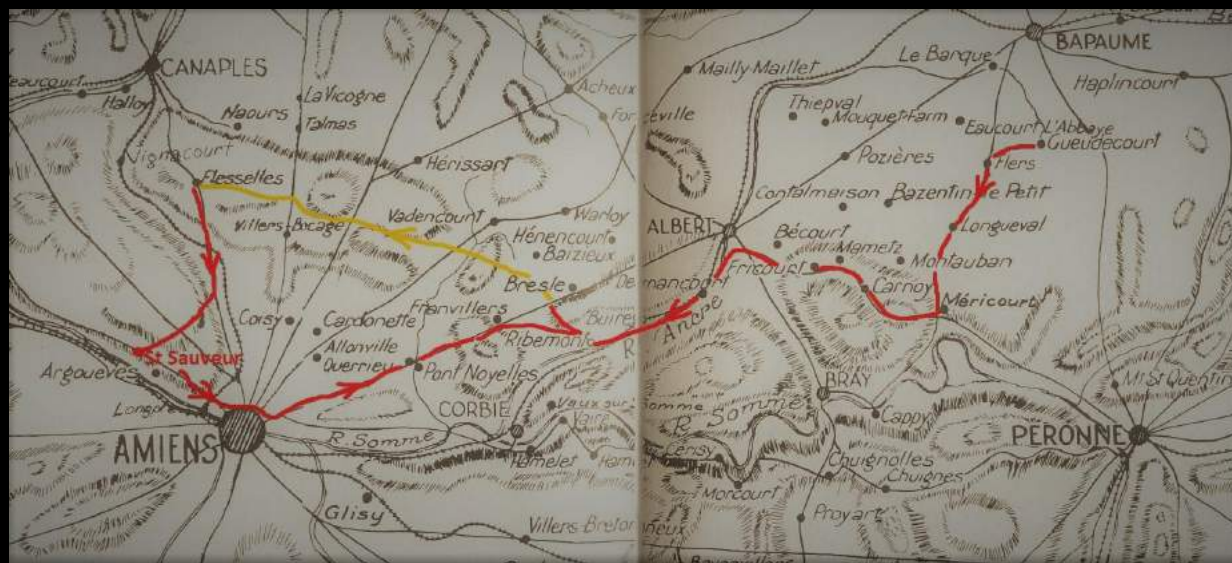
14 Th Went on fatigue putting in a cable.

15 Fri A very heavy cold, got light duties and stayed inside.

16 Sat Road making at cosy corner.

Harry's Service Record

Appointed L/Cpl 10-12-16

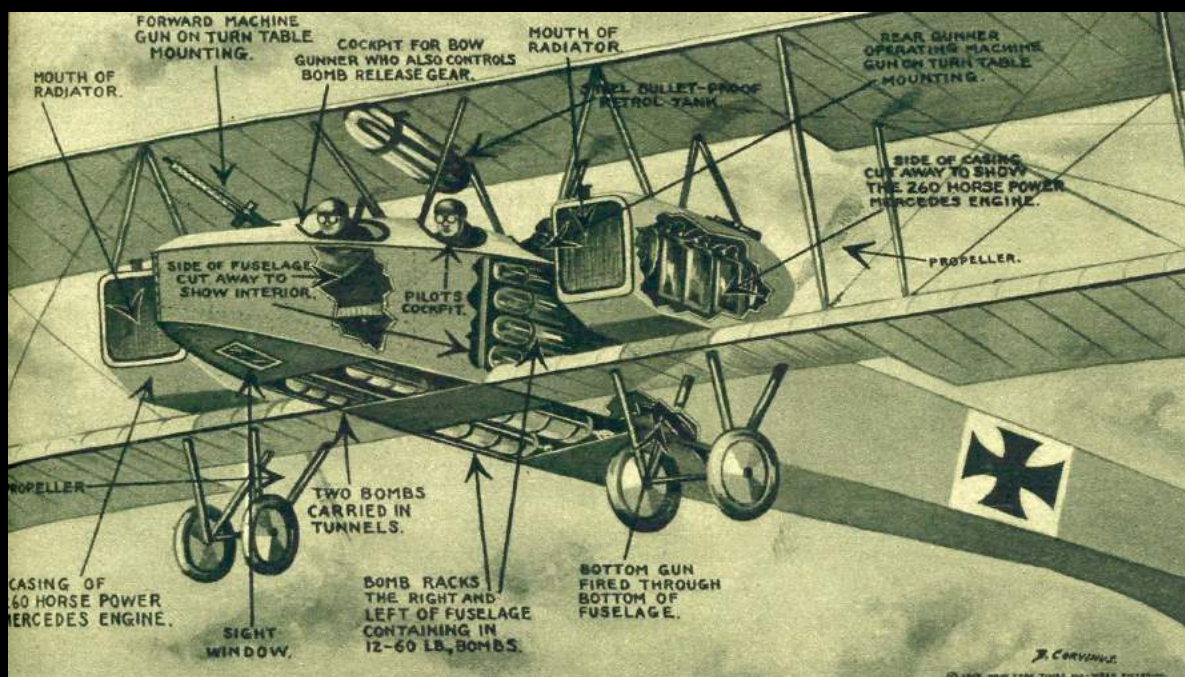
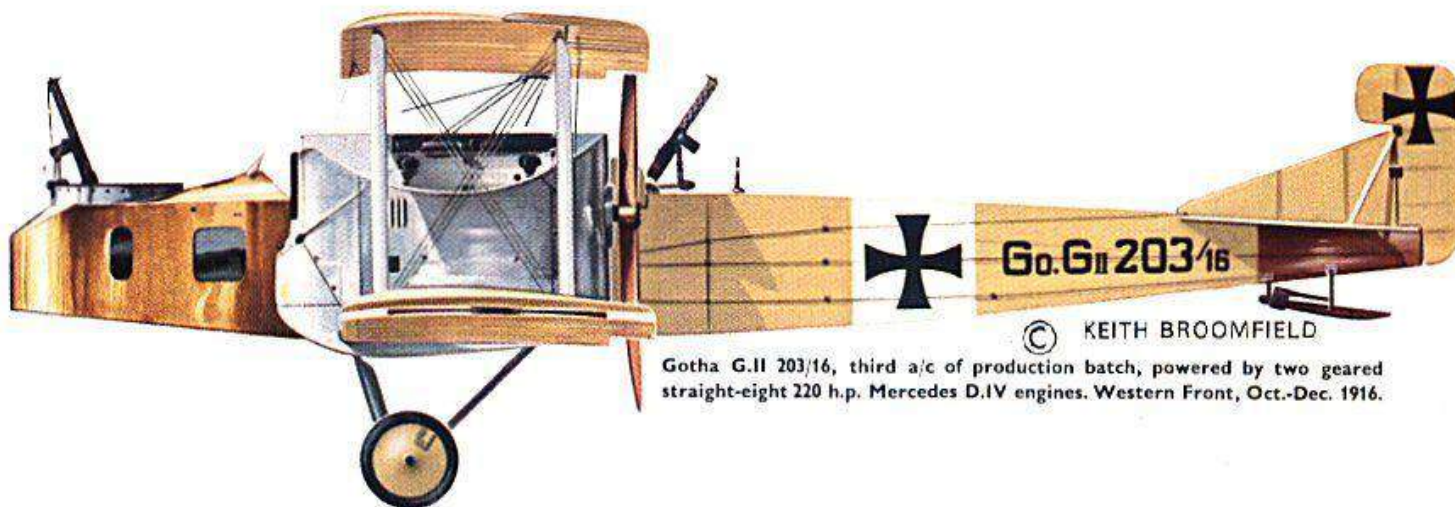


German Bomber Aircraft of WW1

At the outset of war the fighting aircraft of all sides were very rudimentary. War necessitated the rapid development of technology, so by the end of 1916 we can see that the Germans were able to bomb a camp nearby to Harry. One German bomber at this point of the war was the Gotha G. II which held up to 1,000lb of bombs in built in racks under the fuselage.



Gotha G.II G.203/16, G.205/16 and G.200/16





Dec 17,18,19,20 Sun - Wed Road making at cosy corner.

21 Th Colonel Carvel took charge of

22 Fri the M.G. section.

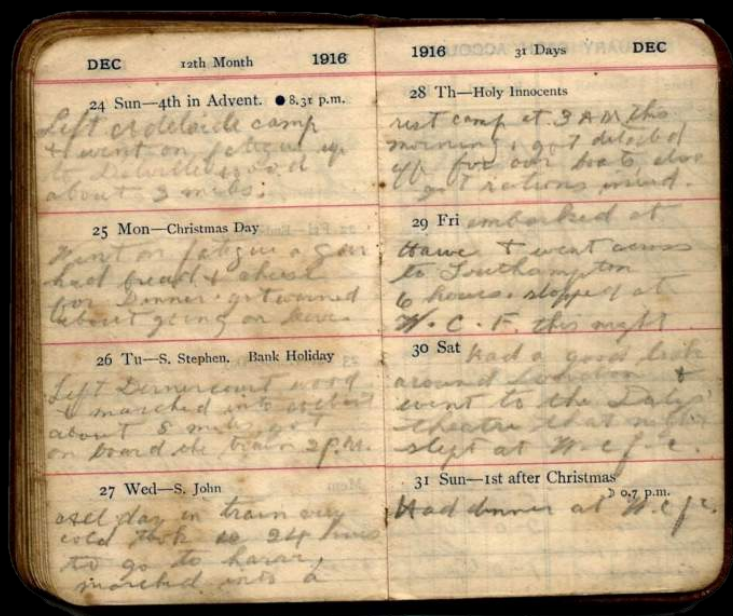
23 Sat Left our old camp and marched to Birnacourt Wood

Mem about 3 miles. We carried all guns and magazines.

'Cosy Corner' was a traffic police control point leading to access to Trones Wood

Trench Foot

During this first part of winter in 1916, because of the constant water and mud in and around the trenches, the feet became vulnerable. Trench foot was the condition where feet became swollen and tender and was the cause of many evacuations. More severe cases led to gangrene and amputations.



Dec 24 Sun Left Adelaide camp and went on fatigue up to Delville Wood about 3 miles.

25 Mon Went on fatigue again. Had bread and cheese for dinner and got warned about going on leave.

26 Tu Left Birnacourt Wood and marched into Albert about 8 miles, got on board the train 2pm.

27 Wed All day in train, very cold took us 24hrs to go to Havre. Marched into a rest

28 Th camp at 3am, got detailed off for our boats also got rations issued.

29 Fri Embarked at Havre and went across to Southampton - 6 hours. Stopped at W.C.F. this night.

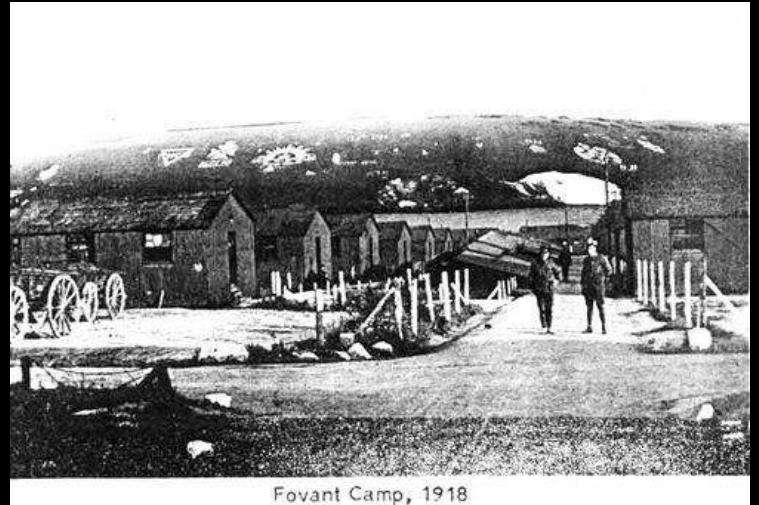
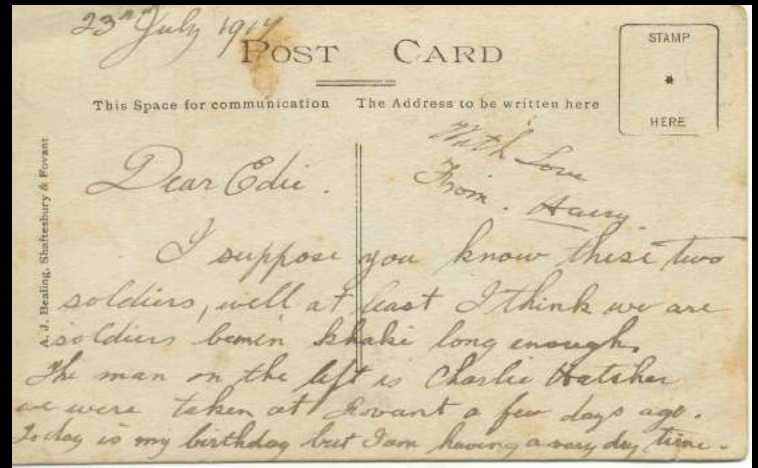
30 Sat Had a good look around London and went to the Daly's theatre that night. Slept at W.C.F.

31 Sun Had dinner at W.C.F.

Transfer to 61st Battalion

During his leave in London, Harry reported sick to Admin Headquarters London and was sent to hospital for a short time. One gets the feeling that he was in no hurry to get back to the fighting in France. His ordeal through 1916 had undoubtedly drained him both physically and mentally - life in England would have been a nice change.

In an effort to raise a 6th Australian Division the 61st Battalion was formed in England in February 1917. Harry was transferred to this battalion in March 1917. Due to the heavy losses sustained by the AIF during 1917 and the shortage of reinforcements from Australia mainly due to the failure to introduce conscription, the 6th Division never formed and the 61st Battalion was disbanded in September 1917 without seeing active service. The personnel were then used to reinforce the units fighting in France and Belgium.



Meanwhile back in France with the 1st Battalion

After Harry left his 1st Battalion at Birnacourt Wood for leave in England they were involved in the defence of the lines around Flers. The same area where they were when Harry left for London. This was an especially bitter winter and the troops suffered greatly. The front line trenches were particularly inhospitable and even though there were frequent rotations back to reserves there was much illness including respiratory diseases, trench foot and frostbite. Troops were issued with sheepskin jackets to try to combat the cold.



Action near Bullecourt

The 1st Battalion's next major operation was on 8th/9th April when they successfully captured the towns of Hermies, Demicourt and Boursies to the south of Bullecourt against strong resistance. They were relieved on 11th April but spent most of the month in defence of Boursies. They played no role in the disastrous First Battle of Bullecourt which occurred at this time.

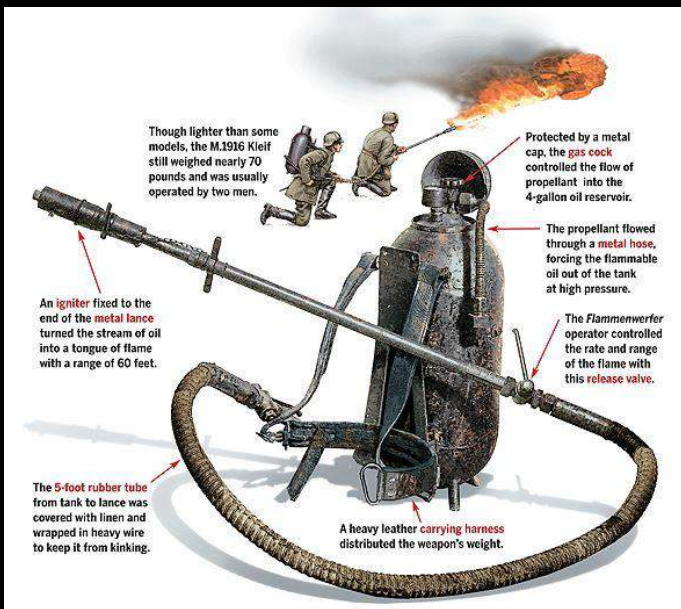


Capture of Boursies Western Front WW1

Second Battle of Bullecourt

3rd May saw the 1st Bn back in action at nearby Vraucourt, during the Second Battle of Bullecourt. They sustained heavy casualties before being relieved on the night of 6th May. Noteworthy here is the use by the Germans of the FLAMMENWERFER and the poor spelling. Maybe it was an unfamiliar weapon and the writer was unsure of the name?

On 4th May at 0400 the enemy made a bombing attack on our right post at U29 A8570 using a FLAMMENWERFER without success, attack lasting five minutes when he returned leaving 5 dead.



In 1901 Richard Fiedler rolled out a prototype of what he called a *Flammenwerfer* ("flamethrower"). Fiedler's early design centered on a vertical tank divided into two compartments. The lower section held compressed gas, usually nitrogen, which forced flammable oil from the upper section through a rubber tube and past a simple ignition device in the steel nozzle. A stationary form of the weapon, the *grosse Flammenwerfer*, or Grof, was capable of throwing fire as far as 120 feet. Its smaller cousin the *kleine Flammenwerfer*, or Kleif, could project flames only half as far but was portable, small enough to be operated by two men.

At the Second Battle of Ypres, a half-dozen Kleif operators so terrified British soldiers on the night of July 29–30, 1915, that the Germans were able to capture several trench lines. But its material effectiveness seldom exceeded its psychological effect, as the fuel lacked a thickening agent to make it stick to its target—a shortcoming remedied by World War II.

Going into battle on 3rd May 'The garrison at this time was approximately 19 Officers and 400 other ranks'.

'The casualties suffered while the Battalion was in the forward area were:- 5 Officers Killed. 8 Officers Wounded. 44 Other Ranks Killed. 232 Other Ranks Wounded. 29 Other Ranks Missing'.

'The enemy shelling during the period was exceptionally heavy, destructive and constant and I cannot speak too highly of the spirit in which all ranks bore it nor of the cool and able manner in which they coped with the enemy attacks, using all weapons with judgement and skill'.

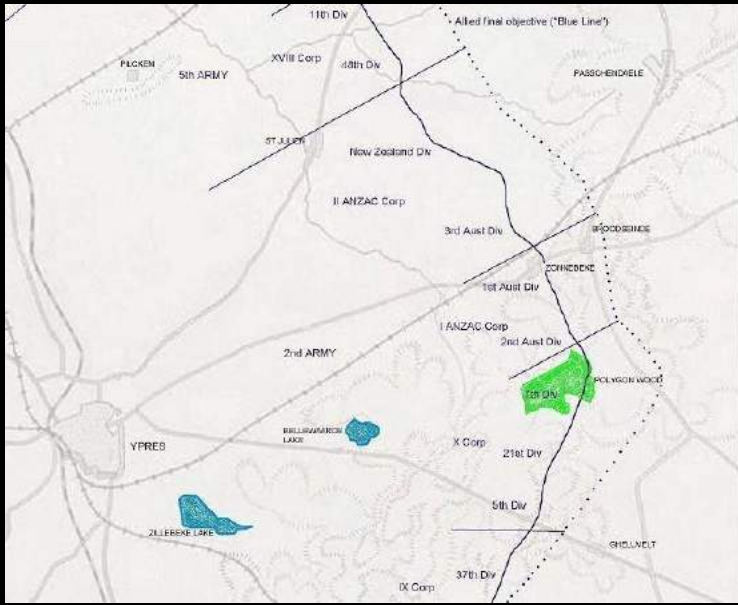
Back to Flanders

On 19th July while still on the Somme at Bray, Major P.L. Howell-Price DSO MC rejoined his Battalion. He had been slightly wounded in March and then appointed to staff of the 1st ANZAC Division.

Battle of the Menin Road Ridge

The 1st Bn were back in action on 16th September for the Battle of Menin Road Ridge, then were relieved at midnight 21st/22nd September. This battle, along with the closely following Battle of Polygon Wood (see page ? 53rd Bn) were lead ups to the Battle of Broodseinde beginning 4th October.

Battle of Broodseinde



BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE BATTLE OF BROODSEINDE 4 October 1917

The Battalion took part in the initial attack on Passchendaele Ridge as part of the I ANZAC Corps at 6am. Prior to this, at 5.30am, the Germans subjected it to a heavy artillery bombardment causing many casualties.

The Allies went on to take their objectives and the German histories refer to 4th October as a 'black day'. It was also a black day for Major Howell-Price.

LINE	4.10.17	Bn took part in attack on PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE. Consolidated on 2nd objective from D 29 d 45. 15 J 5. 6. 5. 7. Following officers killed:- LT V.C. McKELL and LT J.N. BENNETT. Wounded:- LT-COL B.V. STACY D.S.O., 2/LT C.C. JODD M.H. Missing:- Major P.L. HOWELL-PRICE M.C. D.S.O. 2/LT C. FARRY.
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Although initially listed as missing, subsequent investigations found that Major P.L. Howell-Price had been killed. His body, like so many others, had simply disappeared as the result of shellfire, and became one with the mud.

Menin Gate Memorial



The Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres remembers some 54,000 Allied 'missing'. Soldiers of whom no trace was ever found. They have no grave. The memorial to Major Howell-Price P.L. D.S.O. MC., as shown below, is almost at street level and quite easy to photograph.



Photo and Medals AWM

Major Howell-Price had gone his way also (see p 65)

'But all have gone their way; all have done their duty; all have died for their parents, relations & country & their conscience'.

Winter 1917 -18

The mud and the cold that came with the onset of winter put an end to any major hostilities in the Ypres sector and on the Somme. The casualties sustained by the AIF were not being replaced fast enough by reinforcements from Australia and all battalions were operating undermanned. The 1st Battalion spent the winter around Ypres and were subsequently sent back to the Somme for the Final Offensive (see p 89)



Passchendaele mud

9. The 53rd Battalion

A Brief Look at the Activities of the 53rd Bn. of Glen Manuel and Roy Gibbs 1916 to 1918

The Infamous Desert March

Shortly after the formation of the 53rd Bn, the 14th Brigade (which included the 53rd, 54th, 55th and 56th Infantry Bns) were ordered to proceed from Tel-el-Kebir to Ferry Post, by marching 35 miles across desert. This story is probably best briefly told by Ross McMullin writing about Pompey Elliot who was in command of the 15th Brigade.

'In March 1916, Australian formations, including Pompey's brigade, were directed to take over the task of safeguarding the Suez Canal. There were no available trains, so the top-level British commanders, in a characteristically blinkered and culpable decision, directed that the Australians had to get there on foot. That is, by marching 35 miles across the desert.'

'It was not Pompey's brigade that had to go first. The 14th Australian Brigade set off first. They endured a terrible ordeal. Baked by intense heat, their water bottles soon empty and their feet blistering painfully in new boots, they sank into the heavy, burning sand up to their knees. A cloud of dust and flies added to their misery. The brigade disintegrated into a rabble. Men fell out all over the place. Many, delirious with thirst and exhaustion, were barely alive. Medical and other units were rushed to the rescue, and encountered scenes of dreadful suffering. There were reputedly a number of deaths. The brigade commander was sacked. He was less culpable than the senior British commanders, but he was sent home to Australia.' (Brigadier General G.G.H. Irving)

The Commander of the 5th Division Major-General James McCay's viewpoint

728
APPENDIX 32/1/1
When troops are ordered to make marches it is for some definite purpose, and it is always necessary that the troops reach their destination as formed bodies capable of immediate action; for example taking part in a battle, forming an outpost line, or in the easiest case forming a camp. The 14th. Brigade did not answer this test on any of the 3 days of its march from Tel-el-Kebir to Ferry Post. This might be excused for the first days march to Mahsama, for the Brigade was marching for the first time. The rank and file might be excused for the 2nd days journey (Mahsama to Moascar) for they were directed in the latter part of the route to make their way to Moascar individually. But there is no excuse for anyone in the Brigade for what happened in the final stage of the 3rd days March, when large numbers of the Brigade fell out without authority and regrettable to say, unchecked in many cases by Officers or N.C.Os. Indeed some Officers and N.C.Os. were themselves and the Brigade again straggled into its Camp without cohesion and for the time without value.

A soldiers duty is to do what he is told in the time and manner appointed, and to persevere to the limits of his endurance.

It is the duty of all N.C.Os. and Officers, firstly to set an example and secondly to ensure the compliance with orders of their subordinates. Applied to marches this means that men must move when ordered, halt only when ordered, move again when ordered, and under all circumstances retain their formations. It means that N.C.Os. and Officers must not only do the same, but must also see that the rank and file do it, encouraging them when the task is hard, and setting an example of cheerful endurance. Similar advice to the troops is meant to be heeded. In many cases the unpleasantness of the march, Mahsama to Moascar, was directly due to the emptying of water bottles early in the day despite warnings to the contrary.

I returned from Australia to take over the command of the 5th. Division which includes the 14th. Brigade, full of pleasurable anticipations of again commanding in the field Australian Soldiers, but I am compelled to say plainly that to-days failure in soldierliness of the 14th. Brigade after crossing the SUEZ CANAL has been a great disappointment to me, and that the blame rests largely with regimental Officers as well as N.C.Os. and the men themselves. The Brigade must pull itself together and every man must remember he is part of A Regiment and not merely an individual, if I am to hope to take it into battle. The material is all right but the men themselves, guided and assisted by the N.C.Os. and Officers must realise more fully their responsibilities and their duties, and act accordingly. If they will do that, I look forward to being as proud of the 14th Brigade in the firing line, as I have previously had reason to be of my old Brigade in the First Division; but until a great improvement takes place I shall not be able to report the 14th Brigade as fit for active service.

From the Battalion viewpoint

Any members of the 14th Aust. Inf. Brigade who took part in the never-to-be-forgotten march from TEL-EL-KEBIR to FERRY'S POST will, I dare say, yet shudder at the thought of it. Now right from the native Village of TEL EL KEBIR to MOASCA is a perfectly good road running alongside a sweet water canal. I do not know whether it was to test the stamina of the troops, or because the canal was supposed to contain germs which produced all sorts of ~~wierd~~ diseases in the bodies of the Australian, or what it was, but for some reason we did not take the road. Instead of this we marched across country carrying all our worldly goods on our backs as well as 120 rounds of ammunition, rations and water. The march commenced about eight O'Clock on the morning of the 27th March 1916. The first day, although frightfully heavy on us in the terrific heat, was ~~easy~~ compared with what we had to face the next day. It spoke well for the excellent condition of the men when it was found at the end of the first day, on halting in the vicinity of ~~MOASCA~~ that surprisingly few had failed to ~~keep~~ keep up. Next day we prepared to continue the journey, footsore and not a little stiff. The Brigade was formed up and the Band (yes, we had a band even. One for the whole of the Brigade) was merrily playing "It's a long way to Tipperary" more or less out of tune. The Band was quite right, it was a long way ~~is~~ Tipperary represented our halting place for that night, MOASCA. Now the character of the country at this point undergoes a change. One ~~th~~ previous day the ground was fair fairly solid, and with the exception of soft places here and there, good marching; but now the sand became deeper and everyone knows how distressing sand is under normal conditions, but when it means a march carrying between sixty and seventy pounds, it ~~means~~ takes human endurance to the utmost. The Brigade was at the time of halting for mid-day meal, showing very evident signs of distress, and water was very scarce. The heat was even greater than the day before, and to add to our tortures a very fine white dust thrown up by the moving feet of marching men, entered our nostrils, ears and formed a hard dry caking of mud in the mouth.

SUBSEQUENT WAR DIARY. Continued.

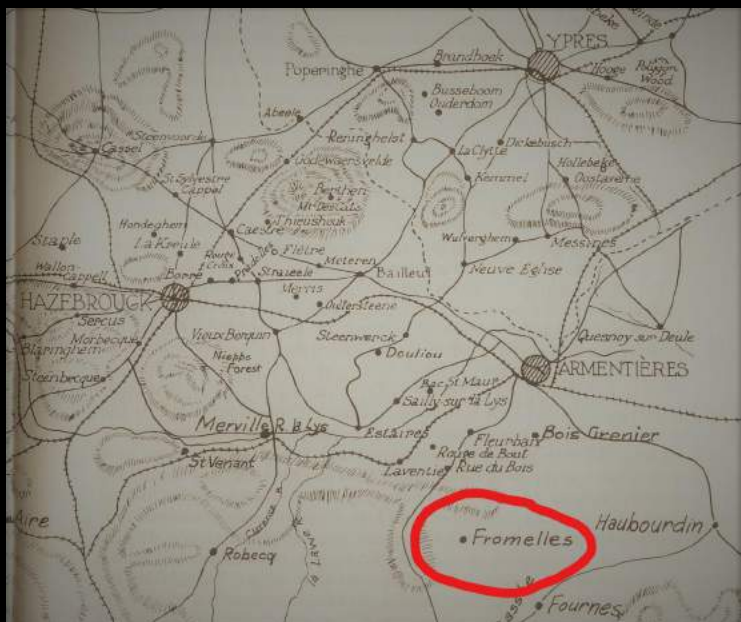
mouth/ The journey continued through the afternoon and after almost indescribable hardships in which Australian endurance was strained to a breaking point, MOASCA was reached. No praise can be too great for the New Zealand regiments who were stationed there, for the work they did in searching the Desert, succouring those of our men who had succumbed to the intense ~~heat~~, heat. The Battalion rested for one night and after being ~~reviewed~~ reviewed by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, continued the journey across the Suez Canal to our position on the Sinai Peninsula.

Disaster at Fromelles

'The battalion arrived in France on 27 June 1916, entered the front line for the first time on 10 July, and became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front, at Fromelles, on 19 July. The battle of Fromelles was a disaster. The 53rd was part of the initial assault and suffered grievously, incurring 625 casualties, including its commanding officer, amounting to over three-quarters of its attacking strength. Casualty rates among the rest of the 5th Division were similarly high, but despite these losses it continued to man the front in the Fromelles sector for a further two months.' AWM

Glen Manuel escaped Fromelles without a scratch. He was reportedly 'the only one left in his Section'. Roy Gibbs received a gunshot wound to the thigh and was evacuated to England.

'The battle of Fromelles on 19 July 1916 was a bloody initiation for Australian soldiers to warfare on the Western Front. Soldiers of the newly arrived 5th Australian Division, together with the British 61st Division, were ordered to attack strongly fortified German front line positions near the Aubers Ridge in French Flanders. The attack was intended as a feint to hold German reserves from moving south to the Somme where a large Allied offensive had begun on 1 July. The feint was a disastrous failure. Australian and British soldiers assaulted over open ground in broad daylight and under direct observation and heavy fire from the German lines. Over 5,500 Australians became casualties. Almost 2,000 of them were killed in action or died of wounds and some 400 were captured. This is believed to be the greatest loss by a single division in 24 hours during the entire First World War. Some consider Fromelles the most tragic event in Australia's history.' AWM



Men of the 53rd Battalion waiting to don their equipment for the attack at Fromelles. Only three of the men shown here came out of the action alive, and those three were wounded (AWM A03042)



The body of an Australian soldier lies in a German trench the morning after the battle. The photograph, taken by a Bavarian intelligence officer, was given to Captain Charles Mills after the armistice in 1918. AWM A01566

Memorials at Fromelles

Australian Memorial Park



VC Corner Australian Cemetery

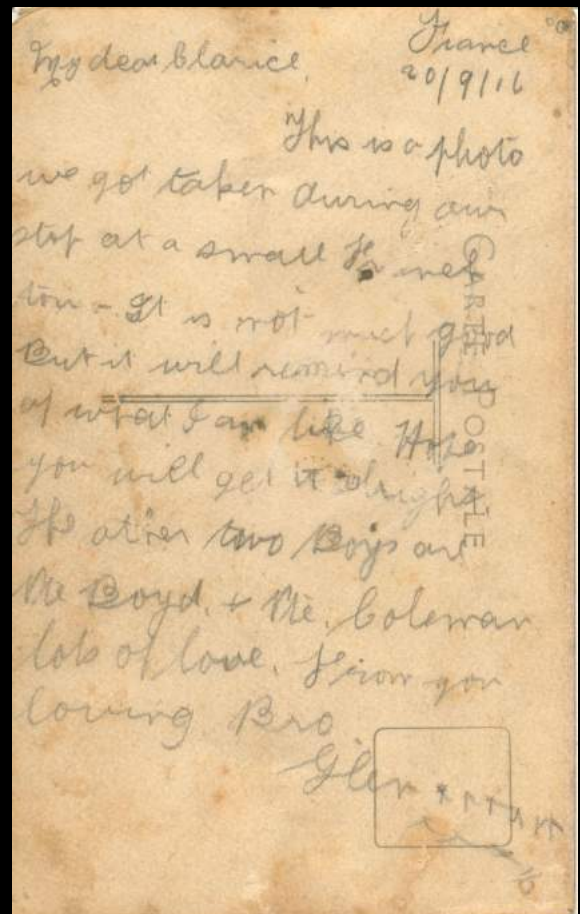




The Australian Memorial Park is located on the original German line and has preserved some of the original concrete formations.

The famous 'Cobbers' statue is of Sergeant Simon Fraser rescuing a fellow digger from No Man's Land

VC Corner Australian Cemetery is located a short distance away and is approximately on the Australian trench line. There are no individual graves here. It has the names of 410 soldiers who have no known graves.





Taken before the formation of the 53rd Bn as Glen is wearing his colour patch horizontally as in the 1st Bn

Sniper's Course - Mont des Cats

Glen's service record shows he did a week's sniper's course 30-9-16 to 7-10-16 at Mont des Cats, a Canadian run facility in NE France near Berthen.

Early in the war the Germans were the masters of the Allies in the act of sniping. Depending on conditions and the situation, telescopic sights were used, the quality of the German optics at the time being far superior. The Canadian's proved themselves quite adept and their methods became the benchmark. By the end of 1916 the Allies were beginning to match it with the Germans.

There is much more to becoming a sniper than putting a telescopic sight on a rifle. He must be trained well as in the hands of a novice the rifle is useless. The sight must be adjusted under shooting conditions to become accurate, and then carefully protected as the slightest bump can put it out. In most cases iron sights were the chosen option as trench conditions including mud and rain were experienced. As well as being able to shoot straight, a sniper had to be proficient in all aspects of the art including camouflage. As well as being able to identify a target such as a machine gun post or another sniper and then hitting it, he had to be suitably positioned and hidden so as not to be killed himself.

And so the prospective sniper, such as Glen Manuel, was sent to school to learn the craft. He was a country lad and probably a good shot to be chosen. A week would have been a very basic course which probably didn't reach the telescopic sighting stage. Only the very best marksmen went on to do this.



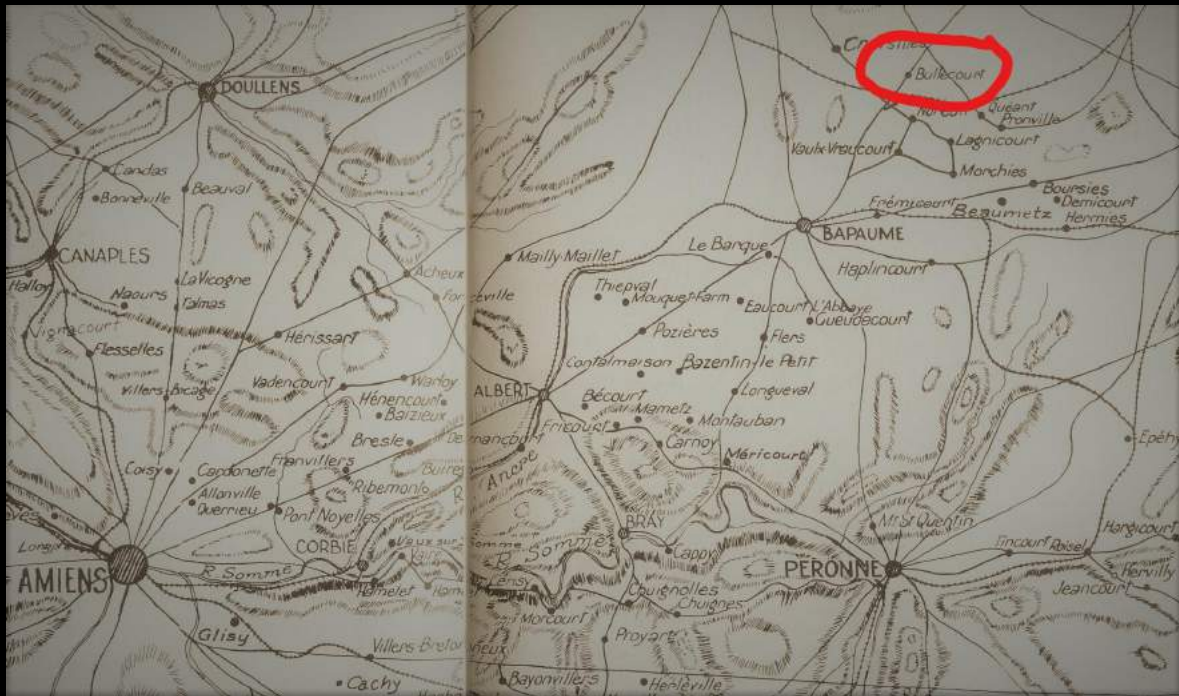
WW1 SMLE with sniper's scope

Divisional Infantry School

After returning from Sniper School Glen then spent a little over a month at Div Inf School from 17-11-16 to 23-12-16. I found little information on what was actually taught here! We can assume that due to the rapid advances in technology and tactics on the battlefield, these had to be passed on to the troops. Eg. At the start of the war the British tactics relied heavily on the use of the bayonet in attack. They found that no matter how well trained the soldier was in its use, or how sharp it was, it was useless against well organised machine gun fire. By the end of 1916 the Infantry battalions had more Lewis machine guns. The structure of the battalions and the tactics it used, had to be altered to suit. Fighter aircraft were becoming more sophisticated. Defences had to be upgraded against these. Gas warfare was evolving and so the list goes on. Glen Manuel was promoted to Lance Corporal during this time.

Second Battle of Bullecourt

Bullecourt was a heavily fortified village on the Hindenburg Line. Well established trenches were protected by machine guns and acres of barbed wire. The First Battle of Bullecourt on 10th/11th April was a total disaster. Almost a third of the attacking Australians were either killed or wounded. The Second Battle was also a disaster.



THE HINDENBURG LINE AT BULLECOURT

Three trench lines and communications are here shown, with acres of wire entanglements in the left foreground protecting first-line positions. Beyond Bullecourt runs the St. Quentin Canal and tunnel, which was taken late in September by the Twenty-seventh and Thirtieth American divisions

"Bullecourt, more than any other battle, shook the confidence of Australian soldiers in the capacity of the British command; the errors, especially on April 10th and 11th, were obvious to almost anyone." Charles Bean

'Our men are being put into the hottest fighting and are being sacrificed in hair-brained ventures, like Bullecourt and Passchendaele ...' General John Monash

The 53rd Battalion entered the front line at Bullecourt on 8th May 1917. Despite remaining in defence they were subjected to heavy shellfire and the casualties mounted.

Battalion Diary

May 9 1917 Lieut. A.O. Corry was wounded & 3 OR killed & 26 OR wounded

One of the 26 OR wounded was Lance Corporal Glen Manuel (he had been promoted on Dec 1st 1916) who suffered multiple gunshot wounds to the legs, neck and hand. He had only recently rejoined the unit after leave in England.

20-4-17	do	On leave England	do	13-4-17	H13/19
11-5-17	do	Rejoined Unit ex Leave	do	4-5-17	H13/19
11-5-17	do	WOUNDED IN ACTION	Field	9-5-17	H13/19 D041/3181 VL349 of 17-5-17
13-5-17	6th Aust F.Amb.	Adm G.S.W. Multiple Tfd to Gas Clg Stn.	do	9-5-17	A.R.1238/75
21-5-17	3rd Gas Clg Stn	Adm G.S.W. Multiple Tfd to Amb Train	do	9-5-17	A.R.1238/68
10-5-17	14th Gen	Adm GSW. Legs Neck & Hand	Wimereux	10-5-17	A.R.1238/65
13-5-17	Hosp	Tfd to England	do	13-5-17	A.R.1238/64 D044/
13-5-17	H.B. St Andrew	Cpl Embarked for England (G.S.W. Multiple)	Boulogne	13-5-17	L.H.3612
18-7-17	O.C. Hosp.	Cpl Adm Red Cross Hospital	Christchurch	14-5-17	H.R.1257
18-7-17	do	GSW. Legs & Neck	Harefield	18-7-17	D056/3307 H1-8-17
18-7-17	do	Cpl Trans to 1st Aux Hosp			

May 11 1917 Usual heavy artillery activity (enemy) 3 OR killed & 16 OR wounded. Weather has been continuously hot for several days now & owing to the number of unburied dead there was a terrible stench.



Australians clean their rifles in the second line of trenches near Bullecourt AWM E00454

After two spells in the front line the 53rd Bn. withdrew on May 23rd.

The two battles had a significant impact on the Australian Imperial Force. The first left a toll of 3,000 killed and wounded, and 1,170 taken prisoner; while the second battle resulted in 7,000 casualties.

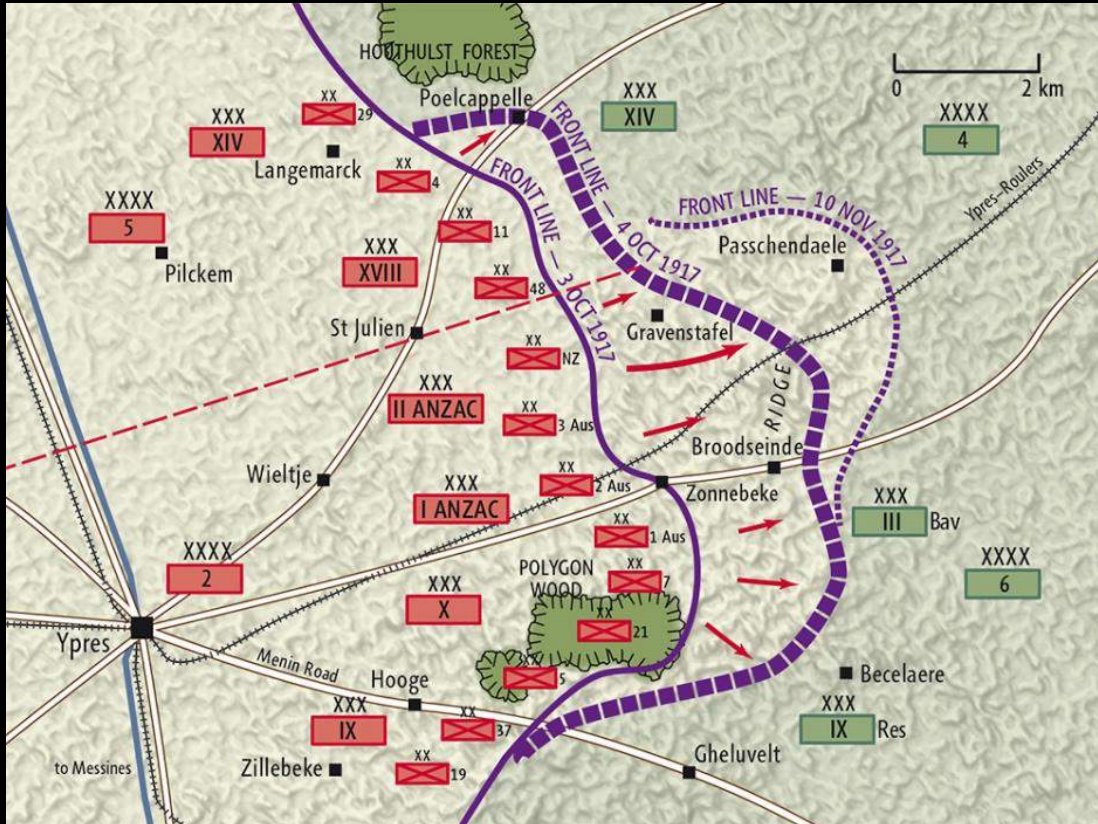
The first two major actions involving the 53rd Bn were disasters.

Battle of Polygon Wood

September 26th to 3rd October 1917

This battle was part of the 'Third Battle of Ypres'. Australian soldiers fought to take objectives in and around the young forest plantation known as Polygon Wood. Victory here allowed the Allied advance to the tactically important Broodseinde Ridge. This victory came at a cost of 5,770 casualties.

Glen Manuel missed action at Polygon Wood. Still in England recovering from wounds received at Bullecourt in May, he rejoined his Bn on 17th November and was promoted to Sergeant on 26th December.



Australian soldiers marching off to battle past the cloth hall Ypres Oct 1917 - Ypres cloth hall 2005



Australian soldiers on the Menin Rd.

The Third Battle of Ypres was the major British offensive in Flanders in 1917. It was planned to break through the strongly fortified and in-depth German defences enclosing the Ypres salient, a protruding bulge in the British front line, with the intention of sweeping through to the German submarine bases on the Belgian coast. AWM

Australian Divisions participated in the battles of Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde, Poelcapelle and the First Battle of Passchendaele. In eight weeks of fighting Australian forces incurred 38,000 casualties. AWM

The 53rd Bn has a comprehensive account of its actions in this battle including casualties

'The strength of the Battalion at zero hour was 16 Officers 507 other ranks'

'The total casualties suffered by the Battalion were 8 Officers 342 other ranks'

On the morning of the 27th September an enemy plane of the "GOTHA" type flew low along our lines firing its machine gun; several Lewis and Machine Guns opened fire, and the plane was brought down just in rear of our lines and behind the Battalion on our right flank.

(Allied) 'Fighters flying at about 300 ft (91 m) attacked German infantry and artillery; German aircraft tried the same tactic against British troops with some success, although five were shot down by ground fire.' Wikipedia

The new method of the wearing of the Entrenching Tool Head proved very efficacious. At least three instances in this Battalion casualties were averted as Machine Gun bullets were found embedded in the Web Covering of the Entrenching Tool Head.



Entrenching Tool

The entrenching tool was an invaluable piece of kit for all soldiers. Mainly used to dig trenches it could also be used in close hand to hand combat. The wooden handle was separate from the metal tool which was carried in a webbing cover. Apparently a 'new method of wearing', probably on the chest, stopped some Machine Gun bullets.

Battle of Broodseinde Ridge

Immediately following the Battle of Polygon Wood was the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge which began on October 4th. It was here that the distinguished career of Major Philip Howell-Price came to an end. He was killed by shellfire on the first day of the battle, his body never being recovered. (see page 75)

Back to the Somme 28th March 1918

After spending winter in the Ypres sector the 53rd Bn were shifted back to the Somme to counter the German Spring Offensive which began on 21st March. (see page 89). This Chapter on the 3rd Machine Gun Battalion follows the fate of the 53rd Bn through to war's end.



Ernest Manuel with brother Glen (seated)

3411 Sergeant Glen Manuel

May 31st 1896 - Apr 15th 1918



Memorial Plaque

After the war, the family of every British serviceman killed, was issued with a Memorial Plaque with the name cast into the bronze. In all 1,355,000 were issued, made from 450 tons of bronze. No rank was stated so there would be no distinction between their individual sacrifice. They also were known as 'The Death Penny' or 'The Dead Man's Penny'.

32070 Gunner Ernest Russell Manuel

Enlisted in Sydney on 4th October 1916. Stated on enlistment that he was born at Uralla, NSW and 26 3/12 years of age. Served in France with the following units: 6th (Army) Brigade Australian Field Artillery, 4th Australian Field Artillery Brigade. Wounded in action on 22nd March 1918. Returned to Australia 17th August 1919.

10. The Final Offensive - On to the Hindenburg Line

3rd Machine Gun Battalion



The 3rd Machine Gun Battalion colour patch

They were equipped with 64 Vickers Medium Machine Guns shown opposite



The 3rd Machine Gun Battalion was an infantry support unit of the Australian Army. Originally formed in March 1918 for service during World War I as part of the all volunteer Australian Imperial Force, it was one of five such units raised as part of the AIF during the war. Assigned to the 3rd Division, and consisting of personnel from the Australian Machine Gun Corps, the battalion had an authorised strength of 46 officers and 890 other ranks. The battalion consisted of four machine gun companies, the 9th, 10th, 11th and 23rd which had previously existed as independent companies assigned mainly at brigade level. The battalion took part in the final stages of the war, seeing action during the Allied defensive operations during the German Spring Offensive and then the Allied Hundred Days Offensive, which finally brought an end to the war. The battalion was disbanded in mid-1919 during the demobilisation of the AIF following the conclusion of hostilities.

Vickers Medium Machine Gun in the Machine Gun Battalions

'This weapon was served by a crew of three and mounted on a tripod. It was not easily portable and was generally sited in a prepared fixed position. - - The Vickers was renowned for its reliability and it could maintain blistering rates of fire for extended periods, thanks to its robust design and the fact that it was water-cooled. These weapons were capable of firing at extended ranges, out to 3,000 yards. - - They would be sited to provide flanking fire across a defensive front, often covering belts of barbed wire or other obstacles forcing the enemy to attack through their line of fire with devastating results; a tactic known as "enfilade fire".'

'They were often the lynch-pin of defensive positions and thus the object of enemy attempts to neutralise them as a prelude to attack, by mortar, artillery fire or even raids by parties of grenadiers with hand and rifle grenades. Some machine gun teams would also be assigned to follow the assaulting formations where they were to establish themselves in order to provide defensive fire across the front of the "limit of exploitation" of the attack as protection against counter attack by the enemy.'

Steve Larkins vwma.org.au



9th Machine Gun Coy. The Harrower Collection

Machine Gun Companies were originally units attached to a Brigade of the same number. Thus the 9th Machine Gun Company was attached to the 9th Brigade which was part of the 3rd Division. This Brigade included the 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th infantry battalions.

As mentioned the 9th MGC became part of the 3rd Machine Gun Battalion in March 1918 but whenever needed it worked with the 9th Infantry Brigade.

2657 L/CPL Harry Russell

3rd Machine Gun Battalion

France 1918

Harry returned to France and was 'Taken on Strength' by the 3rd Machine Gun Battalion on 22-6-18 around 18 months after he last saw service there with the 1st Battalion (infantry). Unfortunately the 'Record of Service' does not give details as to what Company or Section he was assigned to. By referring to the Official Diaries of the 3rd MGB I found that Harry had been assigned to the 9th Machine Gun Company - or had been in that Coy. when they were demobilised in 1919.

158 APPENDIX VI.

O.C. 9th. M.G.Coy.
O.C. 10th. M.G.Coy.
O.C. 11th. M.G.Coy.
O.C. 23rd. M.G.Coy.
QUARTERMASTER.
R.M.O.
Lieut. BADGERY.
3 Copies War Diary.

8th AUSTRALIAN
MACHINE GUN
BATTALION.

BN/D 67.
18/2/19.

No.
Date

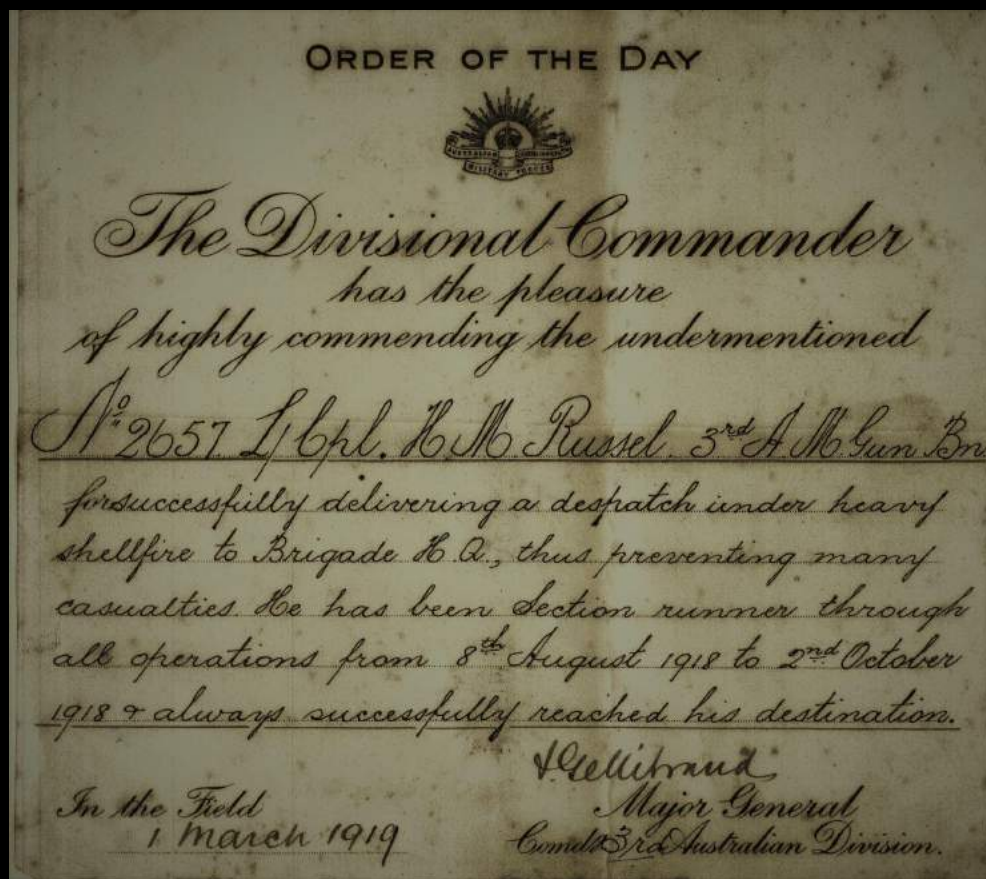
(1). The following is the amende tentative allotment for our second quota, as detailed in Divisional Demobilisation Circular Memo No. 12. of 28/1/19.

NOMINAL ROLL.				
158	Lieut.	Badger, M.F.		9th Coy.
108	CQMS.	Scholfield, H.A.		9th
420	Sgt.	Malone, A.L.		23rd
461b	Cpl.	Dixon, L.R.		23rd
351a	"	Moore, I.		10th
409	T/Cpl.	Bray, F.J.		9th
370	Cpl.	Hudson, E.L.M.		23rd
426a	"	Sinclair, A.L.		23rd
380	"	Birse, J.S.		9th
387	L/Cpl.	Tierney, T.		10th
2657	Pte.	Russell, H.M.		9th
3158	"	Roberts, E.N.		23rd
3651	"	Wilson, F.J.D.		23rd
830	"	McFarlane, P.M.		9th

Harry was short changed here by the typist. He is listed as a Pte when he was L/Cpl

9th Machine Gun Company

The 9th MGC also has Official War Diaries so we can further isolate Harry's role here. Like the Infantry Battalions the 3rd MGB had 4 Companies. Each of these Companies were then divided into 4 Sections. On March 1 1919 Harry was awarded an 'Order of the Day', signed by Major General Sir John Gellibrand, for his invaluable service as 'Section runner'.



Once again Harry got a 'typo' with the misspelling of his surname

The 'Runner'

Communications between the Headquarters and the front line, as well as communications along the front line, relied principally on telephones with cable running between them. These cables were prone to breakage from shellfire - it was one of the jobs of the signallers to repair these breakages to restore communications. When this was not possible the job of communication was left to a soldier - a 'runner'. A 'runner' had to be physically fit and able to traverse difficult terrain with a good sense of direction. Also the 'runner' had to have the nerve to carry on regardless of the danger, as he was often out in the open exposed to shell and gunfire. Maybe Harry's experience at the front in 1916 helped him through this. Regardless of experience, being hit or not with shellfire, bullets or shrapnel has a big element of luck. A 'runner' did not have a long life expectancy. Harry apparently had all these attributes and the luck to survive.

German Spring Offensive

After the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia eventually withdrew from the war. This freed up nearly 50 German Divisions on the Eastern Front. The Germans launched a major offensive in France on March 21st to hopefully end the war before the resources of the United States could be fully utilised. They retook much of the ground they had lost in 1916 - 17 and went even further in places. This major attack ultimately failed mainly because the fast moving German troops outran their supplies of food and ammunition. Both the Allies and Germans suffered heavy casualties, with the Germans losing many of their crack stormtrooper units. Thus even though the Germans had gained some territory they had not achieved the victory they were after and their troops were depleted and exhausted.

One of the major objectives of the German push was the city of Amiens, a strategic junction of road and rail. Villers-Bretonneux was a crucial objective as it would bring the Germans to the edge of a plateau overlooking Amiens and therefore subject to artillery attack. It was here that the Australians were involved in much fierce fighting.

The 3rd M.G. Bn was involved in supporting infantry in defensive fighting which helped to halt the German advance on Amiens at Villers-Bretonneux on April 4. Fighting continued through April and a renewed German offensive aided by the use of tanks saw them recapture the town on April 24. Such was the strategic importance, an immediate attempt was made by the Allies to retake Villers-Bretonneux and that night the 13th and 15th Australian Brigades in a ferocious and daring assault succeeded. This was achieved on the third anniversary of ANZAC Day, the 25th, and ended the German advance in this area.

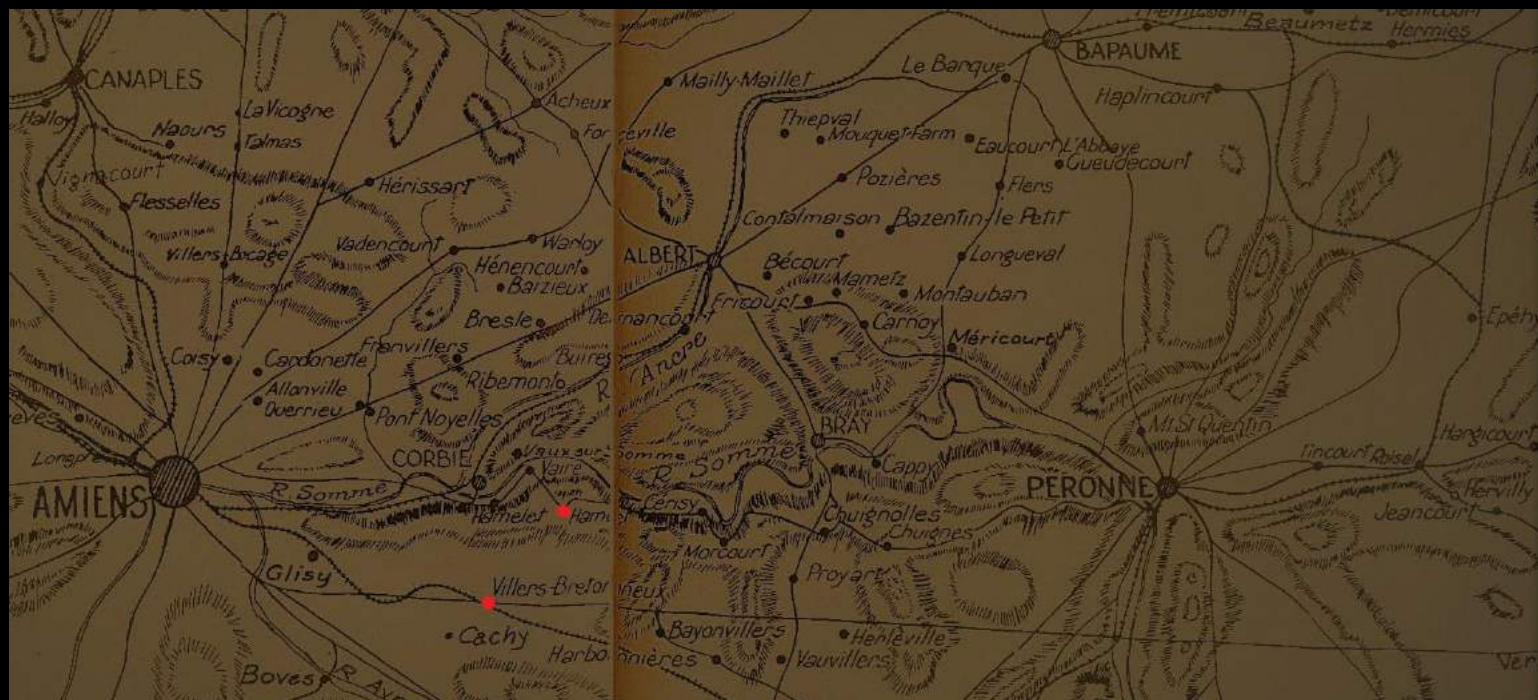


Glen Manuel was killed near Villers-Bretonneux on April 15th while the 53rd Bn was defending to the N of the town

Villers-Bretonneux celebrates ANZAC Day yearly in respect for the Australian casualties - 2,473 in April alone



The Australian National Memorial near Villers-Bretonneux is a memorial to the Australians killed on the Western Front during WW1. It lists the names of 10,773 soldiers of the AIF who have no known grave



Battle of Hamel

When Harry arrived back on the Western Front the Battalion diary records **VILLERS-BRETONNEUX SECTOR 21st June**, Reinforcements marched in 35 other ranks. The Battalion at the time was engaged in the harassing fire of enemy tracks, roads and communications and on the receiving end of regular shelling including gas.

ALLONVILLE 2nd July. 11th A.M.G.Coy. plus one section made up with representatives of the 9th, 10th and 23rd Coys. moved out from ALLONVILLE to BUSSY-les-DAOURS in connection with the HAMEL offensive which was fixed for the morning of 4th July

'The Battle of Hamel was a small-scale brilliantly successful advance made by elements of the Australian Corps under the command of Lieutenant General John Monash. The purpose of the attack was to take the high ground east of the village of Hamel. On 4 July 1918, with 1000 United States infantrymen attached, four brigades drawn from 2nd, 3rd and 4th Australian Divisions, 8000 men, attacked Hamel with 550 guns, 60 tanks and 85 aircraft in support. In 93 minutes, the Australians had taken all their objectives, advancing 2km on a 6km front. The Germans lost 2600 men killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Some 1260 Australians and Americans were killed or wounded. The battle was regarded as a model of innovative tactics, one which was repeated on a larger scale in the series of Allied advances from 8 August which ended the war.' anzacportal.dva.gov.au

This was a different type of warfare than the one Harry had experienced and one that would set the stage for the Final Offensive until the Germans were defeated. It was no longer trench but open warfare and one to which the AIF seemed to be suited.



A British Mark V tank and a British r.e. 8 Fighter aircraft both used at the Battle of Hamel



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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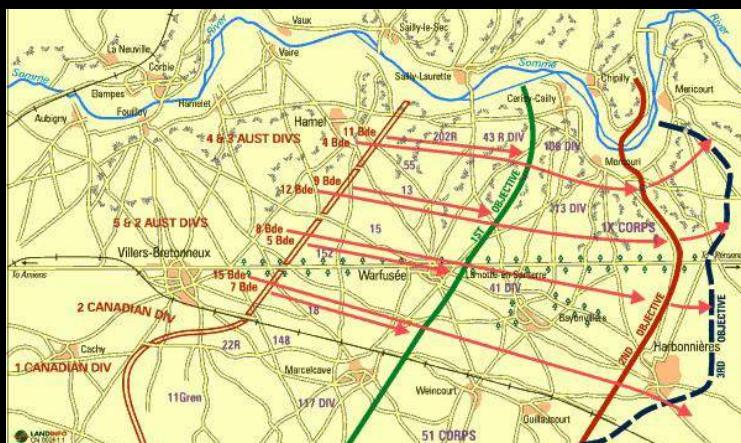
Battle of Amiens (100 day Offensive)

General Monash "For the first time in the history of this Corps all five Australian Divisions will tomorrow be engaged in the largest and most important battle operation ever undertaken by the Corps. They will be supported by an exceptionally powerful artillery, and by tanks and aeroplanes on a scale never previously attempted. The full resources of our sister Dominion, the Canadian Corps, will also operate on our right, while two British Divisions will guard our left flank... we shall inflict blows upon the enemy which will make him stagger, and bring the end appreciably nearer."

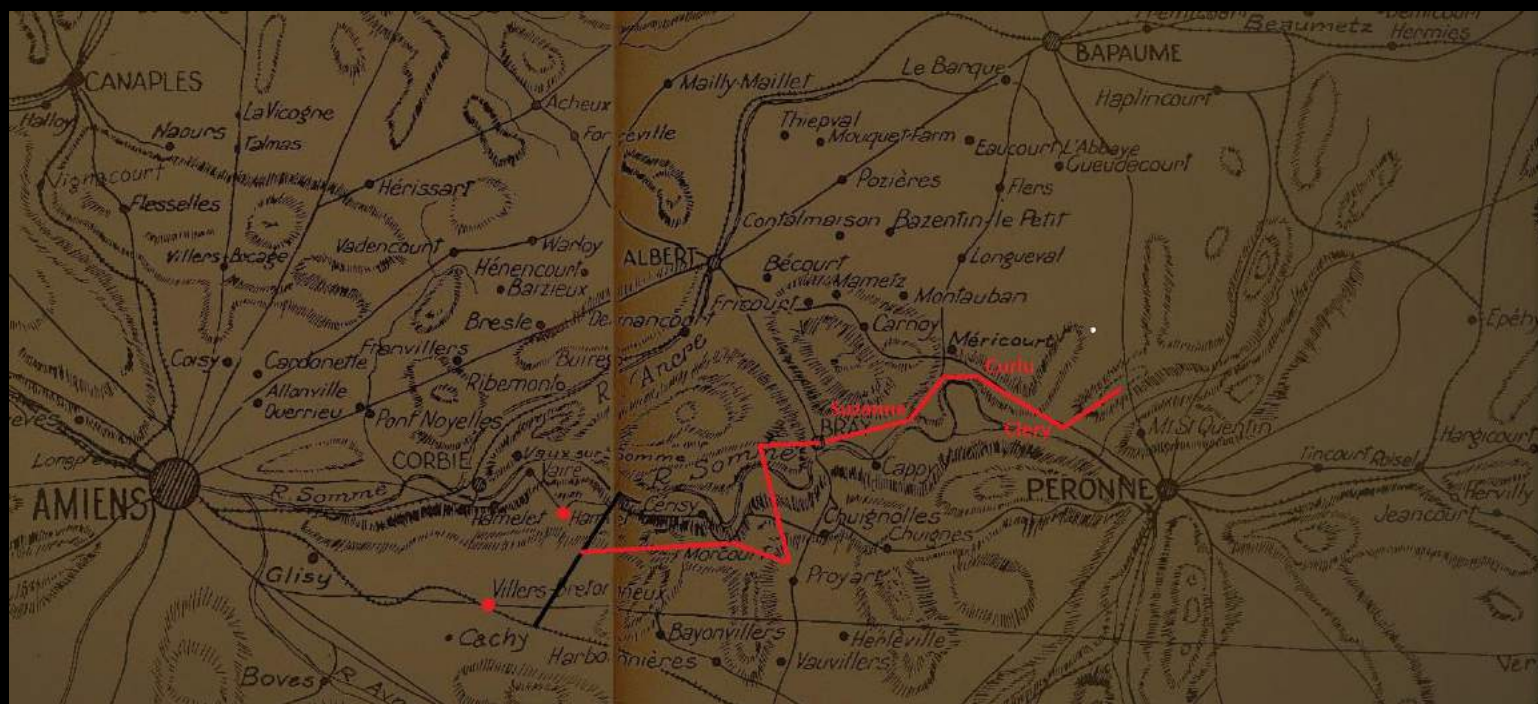
At 4.20 am on 8th August the Battle of Amiens began with a tremendous artillery barrage. The offensive involved the 1st French and the 4th British Armies but was led by combined Australian and Canadian forces. The Australian forces set out from Villers-Bretonneux and Hamel and accomplished all their objectives in two hours.

'In just over 3 hours, the enemy's front line had been overrun. In total, the Allied forces captured 29,144 prisoners, 338 guns, and liberated 116 towns and villages. Ludendorff called 8 August "the black day of the German army".' - - 'From 9 - 11 August, although the Allies continued to advance with Australians maintaining the lead, there were heavier losses for fewer gains in ground, there were fewer tanks to use as protection, and German forces regrouped and began to advance into other areas.' AWM

During this operation the 2nd and 3rd Divisions were to take the first objective - some 3,000yds away. The 4th and 5th Divisions were then to pass through to take the second objective and then on to the third objective which involved taking the village of Harbonnières in the south and almost reaching Mericourt and Proyart in the North. The 9th M.G. Coy was assigned to assist the 9th Infantry Brigade (33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Infantry Bns) and was divided into two portions. Half were to closely support the advancing infantry and the other to provide creeping barrages ahead of them. They were to stop at the first objective which they did before the allotted time and the 4th Division passed through and achieved the 2nd and 3rd objectives.

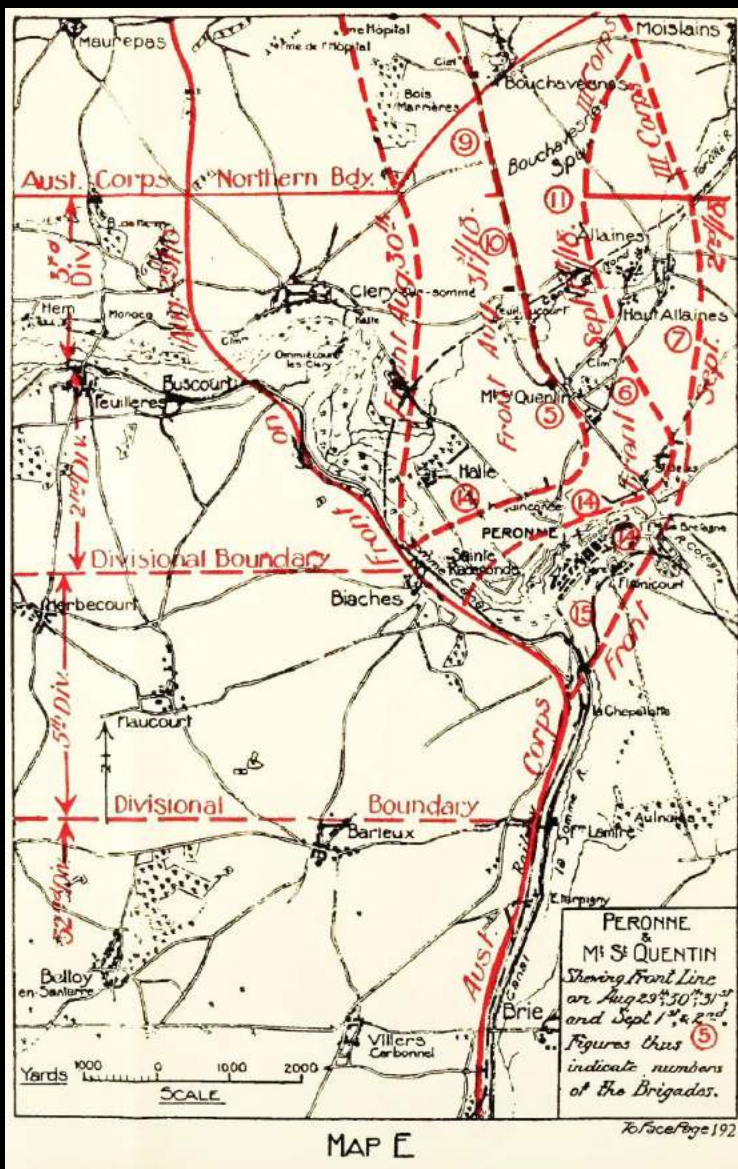


The 3rd M.G. Bn took over position on the 3rd objective on the night of 10th/11th Aug which by now was meeting stiff German resistance. The line was further advanced on the 12th when the 9th M.G. Coy assisted the 10th Brigade to take Proyart. The advance stalled here until the 18th Aug when the 3rd M.G. Bn moved to the north of the Somme immediately west of Bray. Bray was taken on 24th August, bridges were repaired across the Somme and the remainder of the 3rd Division moved across. From here the 3rd Division remained north of the Somme as they moved westward toward Peronne, taking Suzanne on the 26th, Curly on the 28th and reaching the outskirts of Clery-sur-Somme on the 29th. Here they stalled when met with strong German resistance. Clery had to be taken as it was vital to the effort to take Mont St. Quentin.



Battle of Mont Saint-Quentin

Though not directly involved in the assault of Mont Saint-Quentin, the 3rd Division were to take the high ground of Bouchavesnes Spur to the north, vital to the success of the battle. The success of this battle was described by the British Fourth Armies Commander General Henry Rawlinson as 'perhaps the greatest military achievement in the war.' Mont Saint-Quentin was vital to military control of the area and the last major German stronghold before the Hindenburg Line. The already seriously depleted Australians suffered another 3,000 casualties during action between 31st August and 4th September but ensured the Germans continued retreat towards the Hindenburg Line.



Mont Saint-Quentin diorama AWM



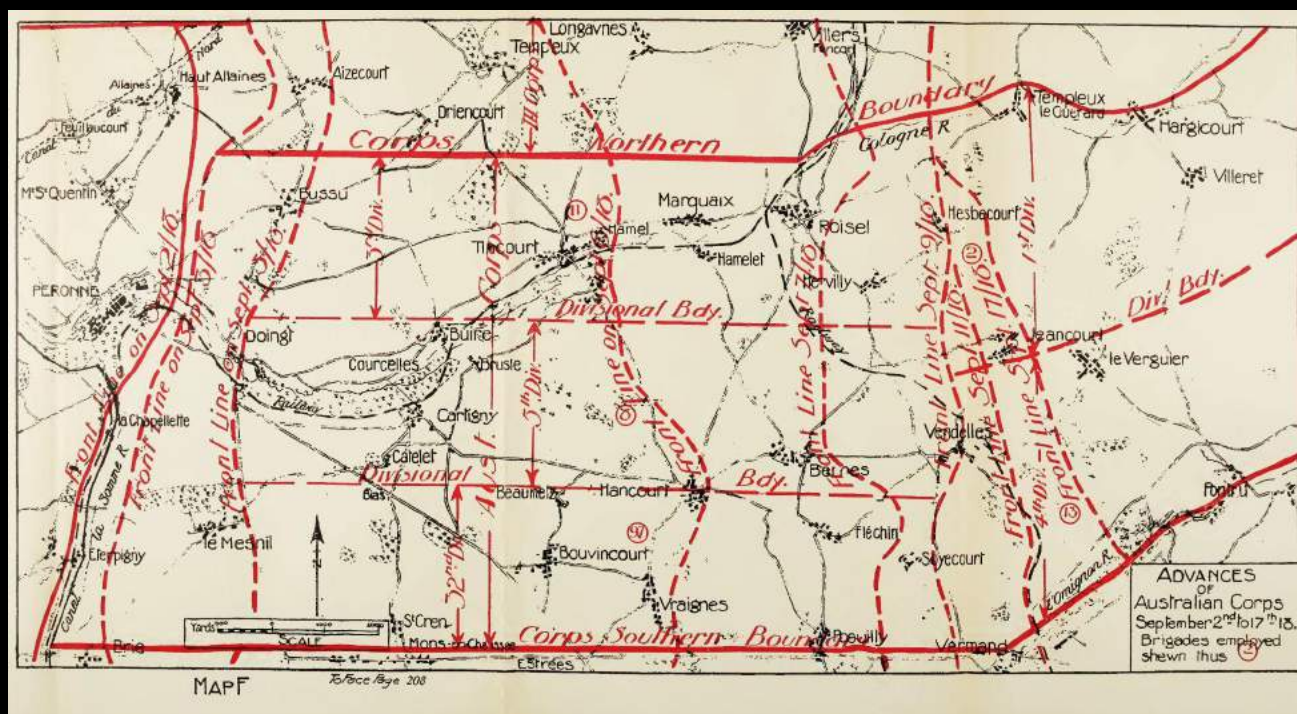
Harry's cousin Roy Gibbs was still fighting with the 53rd Bn. 'The gaps in the wire near Anvil Wood through which the 53rd Bn rushed the machine gun posts on Aug 31 were death traps.'



Official War Diaries

All levels of the AIF kept Official Diaries. These diaries are all available on the AWM website for study purposes. They give a comprehensive day to day description of the activities undertaken by the unit in question. For example the 9th M.G.Co. has some handwritten diaries during its time with the 3rd M.G.Bn. who has typewritten diaries. If the Companies were assigned to a Brigade then the activities would be covered in the Brigade diary. Typewriters obviously could only be used at headquarters and handwritten diaries kept by those in the field.

The 1916 Royal typewriter was a popular model shown here in its leather case



After the Battle of Mont Saint-Quentin there were no more major battles until 18th September.

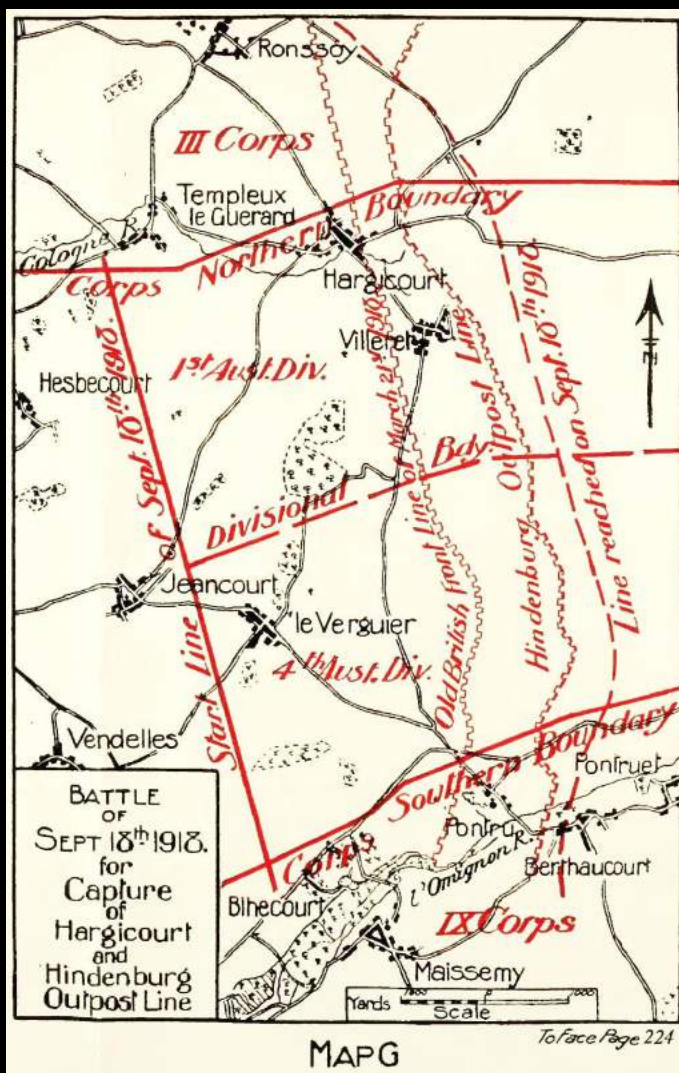
Capture of the Hindenburg 'outpost line'

On 14th September the 3rd M.G.Bn. was placed at the disposal of the 1st Division who, along with the 4th Division were to make the attack. The 9th and 10th Companies were detailed to take part in the initial barrage and the 11th and 23rd were to go forward with the attacking infantry.

At 5.20am on 18th Sept the barrage began. 43 minutes later it ceased. The 9th M.G.Coy had expended 61,000 rounds of ammunition and the 10th 45,000. 'Observation of fire was impossible but the infantry expressed themselves as well pleased with the barrage.' - 'enemy machine guns in trenches were found to have had their barrel casings pierced and their crews killed by machine gun fire'.

The 1st and 4th Division both achieved their objectives and looked down upon Bellicourt and the St. Quentin Canal. They had taken 4,300 prisoners for casualties of about 1,260. This was a loss they could ill afford as the numbers of all the Australian Divisions were severely depleted and not being supplied with replacements.

The effectiveness of the machine gun barrage provided by the 3rd and 5th M.G.Bns. was described by a captured German Battalion Commander. 'The small arms fire was absolutely too terrible for words. There was nothing we could do but to crouch down in our trenches and wait for you to come and take us.'



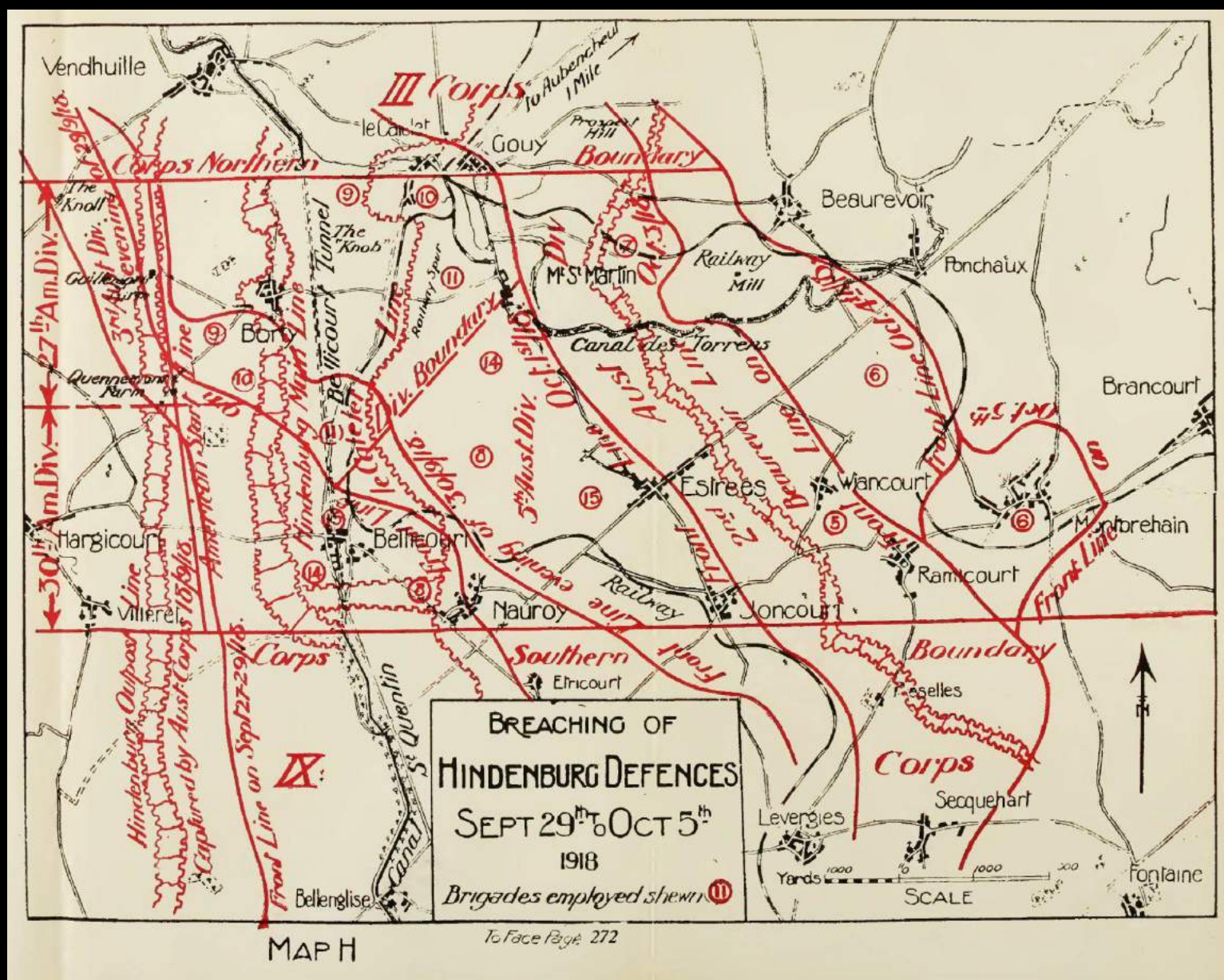
Mutiny in the 1st Battalion D Company 20th September

On the northern flank of the 1st Division were the British III Corps who had failed to keep pace with the Australian advance. As further advance would depend on coverage of their flank, a request by General Butler for assistance from the Australians was issued. The 1st Bn. was just about to be relieved when they were ordered back into line for another attack. This was not well received by the Coys. A, B and C Coys complied with the order but D Coy, with the exception of one man, refused and walked to the rear. D Coy had been on the right flank during the battle on 18th Sept and had performed well but lost all platoon officers and about 20 other ranks. They felt they were 'not getting a fair deal' and 'were doing other people's work' supposedly in reference to the underachieving British III Corps on their flank. Except for one, all 119 men who disobeyed their officers were later found guilty of desertion rather than mutiny and received prison sentences. General Monash failed to confirm the sentences and the men were eventually pardoned.

Harry Russell joined D Coy 1st Battalion at Gallipoli and remained with them all through 1916. One wonders how many of the originals had survived until this.

Breaching of the Hindenburg Line 29th September - 2nd October

All of the 3rd M.G.Bn were involved in the final breaching of their allotted part of the Hindenburg Line at Bony. This was a totally different operation than the previous battles during the '100 day Offensive'. The Germans had retreated to their final defensive positions which were well established and fortified.



Little Artillery Support and Hand to Hand Fighting

Involved in this battle were two inexperienced American Divisions under their own command. One of the mistakes they made was the failure to 'mop up.' Mopping up meant the seeking out and destruction of any enemy positions after the main offensive front had passed through. This was to prevent any hostile fire from the rear and flanks after the enemy had remanned their posts. The Australian Headquarters were often unsure as to the exact location of the Americans which further hindered the use of artillery. The nature of the battle as it unfolded, also meant that many of the individual units had to proceed under their own initiative making their own decisions. There were no mass surrenders by the Germans and often the advance involved fierce hand to hand fighting.

Harry's 9th M.G.Coy was assigned to the 11th Brigade which consisted of the 41st, 42nd, 43rd and 44th Infantry Battalions. The M.G.Coy was divided into 4 Sections each of which were assigned to a battalion. Fighting was such that the two sometimes became separated, as described in the diary during the attack on Bony on the afternoon of the 29th.

From the former of these positions enemy machine guns were used in order to save our ammunition and fire was kept up on the outskirts of BONY. About 4 p.m. an enemy party attempted to work down TOP LANE and were repulsed by machine gun teams after a sharp hand to hand encounter. Up till 9 p.m. when a platoon of the 42nd Battalion moved into the trench with them, this section was wholly dependent upon itself for protection. About 11 a.m. on the 30th

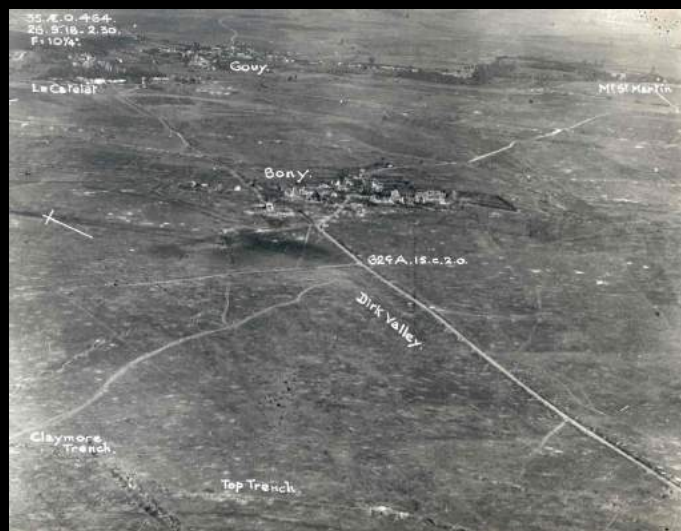
Such was the confusion the Command of the 3rd M.G.Bn decided to intervene to have more control over it's Companies.

At the commencement of operations, as the various companies of the battalion had been allotted to Brigades, Battalion control was unnecessary, but when the advance was held up by large bodies of enemy which had not been mopped up by the Americans in their advance it was found necessary to have more control over the units of the Battalion. To this end, on the 30th, after the 11th and 23rd Coy had been

As well as facing heavy artillery and machine gun defence by the Germans, the infantry and supply had to contend with heavy rain and an abundance of old wire. This was no well-planned advance behind an artillery barrage. In the words of Monash - the battle became 'slow and methodical hand to hand fighting in a perfect tangle of trenches.' The 3rd Division gradually worked forward towards their objective, Bony. This they achieved on 1st Oct and they were withdrawn from action the next day - the last Australian Division was withdrawn on 5th Oct.



The long black waves of wire in front of the Hindenburg line, near Bony.



The End of the War for Harry Russell

With the withdrawal of the 3rd Division, Harry's war had come to an end. He had survived. He was however both mentally and physically scarred. In all probability Harry was awarded his 'Order of the Day' for 'successfully delivering a despatch under heavy shellfire to Brigade H.Q. thus preventing many casualties' during the confused fighting for the capture of Bony at the Hindenburg Line. His diary of 1916 makes no mention of gas burns, so he probably received these during his time with the 3rd M.G.Bn in 1918 also. He went on to live a fairly normal life, passing away in 1959 aged 62.



Harry in 1920 wearing his 'Returned from Active Service Medal'



Harry's gas burns circa 1940

3326 Corporal Oliver Roy Gibbs MM

Harry's cousin Roy Gibbs was not so lucky. He ran out of his on 30th Sept when he was killed in action just days before his 53rd Battalion finished their war. His 53rd Bn. was fighting with the 5th Division also in the Battle for the Hindenburg Line near Bellicourt. He had survived battles at Fromelles in July 1916 where he was wounded, second Bullecourt May 1917 and Polygon Wood Sept 1917. He received a Military Medal for bravery during an attack by his 53rd Bn. on 28th/29th July near Morlancourt. His 53rd Bn. also played a crucial role at Anvil Wood during the taking of Peronne.



11. A Family Affair

'At almost 65%, the Australian casualty rate (proportionate to total embarkations) was the highest of the war.'
Patsy Adam-Smith 'The Anzacs'

58,961 dead, 166,811 wounded, 4,098 missing or prisoners of war and 87,865 suffered from sickness. This enormous loss of almost a generation of Australia's young men in WW1 is said to have left hardly a family or person unaffected.

My grandparents Harry Russell and Clarice Manuel were such people. Harry no doubt lost many mates in action as well as his cousin Roy Gibbs. Clarice's life was inextricably linked with men involved in the Great War. The loss of her brother Glen was undoubtedly a huge tragedy in her life, but quite a few others were involved.



circa 1920 Winnie Manuel (with a young Roy Manuel), Harry Russell and Clarice Manuel (see page 6)

1208 Lance Corporal Herbert Leslie Prior

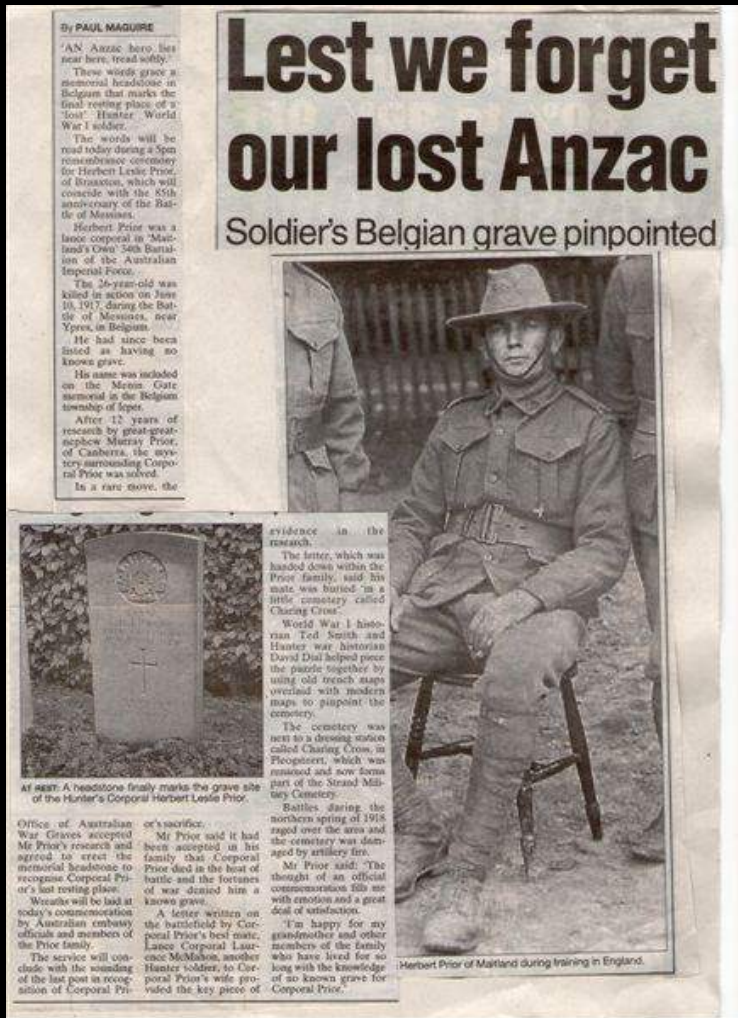
Harry's brother in law, Lance Corporal Herbert Lesley Prior enlisted at West Maitland, near Branxton, on the 31st January 1916, aged 26 yrs, his occupation given as a 'Wheeler'. Assigned to the 34rd Infantry Battalion his first action was in France in November 1916, surviving until he was killed in action on June 10th 1917 during the Battle of Messines in Belgium.



Family Photo cropped (see p 7)

This photo was taken shortly before Harry embarked for the front. Next to Harry is Herbert 'Bert' Prior and his wife Gertrude 'Gertie'. Seated at front is Harry's parents George and Eliza.

Research by his great grand nephew Murray Prior, resulted in the pinpointing of his burial spot in Belgium in June 1917. This subsequently led to the recent placing of a headstone at the site by the Office of Australian War Graves. Previously his only memorial had been at the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, which lists Allied missing with no known grave.



Lest we forget our lost ANZAC Soldier's Belgian grave pinpointed by Paul Maguire

"An Anzac hero lies near here, tread softly." These words grace a memorial headstone in Belgium that marks the final resting place of a 'lost' Hunter World War 1 soldier. The words will be read today during a 5pm remembrance ceremony for Herbert Leslie Prior of Braxton, which will coincide with the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Messines. Herbert Prior was a lance corporal in 'Maitland's Own' 34th Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force. The 26-year-old was killed in action on June 10th 1917 during the Battle of Messines, near Ypres, in Belgium. He had since been listed as having no known grave. His name was included on the Menin Gate memorial in the Belgian township of Leper. After 12 years of research by great-grand-nephew Murray Prior, of Canberra, the mystery surrounding Corporal Prior was solved. In a rare move, the Office of Australian War Graves accepted Mr Prior's research and agreed to erect the memorial headstone to recognise Corporal Prior's last resting place. Wreaths will be laid at today's commemoration by Australian embassy officials and members of the Prior family. The service will conclude with the sounding of the last post in recognition of Corporal Prior's sacrifice.

Mr Prior said it had been accepted in his family that Corporal Prior died in the heat of battle and the fortunes of war denied him a known grave. A letter written on the battlefield by Corporal Prior's best mate, Lance Corporal Laurence McMahon, another Hunter soldier, to Corporal Prior's wife provided the key piece of evidence in the research. The letter, which was handed down within the Prior family, said his mate was buried in a little cemetery called 'Charing Cross'. WW1 historian Ted Smith and Hunter war historian David ? helped piece the puzzle together by using old trench maps overlaid with modern maps to pinpoint the cemetery. The cemetery was next to a dressing station called Charing Cross in Ploegsteert, which was renamed and now forms part of the Strand Military Cemetery. Battle during the northern spring of 1918 raged over the area, and the cemetery was damaged by artillery fire. Mr Prior said "The thought of an official commemoration fills me with emotion and a great deal of satisfaction. I'm happy for my grandmother and other members of the family who have lived for so long with the knowledge of no known grave for Corporal Prior."



Les Todd

Several years after Harry's death, Clarice became friendly with a Les Todd – a friendship that was to last for the rest of their lives. Les Todd was my 'adopted' grandfather for well over 20 years.



161 Trooper George Leslie Todd

161 Trooper George Leslie Todd enlisted in the Light Horse on 22nd August 1914 aged 20, very shortly after he had the opportunity to do so. Les had been a labourer at Cessnock, a coal mining town in the Hunter Valley. He first saw service at Gallipoli with the 1st Light Horse Regiment.

'The Light Horse were initially considered unsuitable for the Gallipoli operation, but were soon deployed without their horses to reinforce the infantry. The 1st Light Horse Regiment landed on 12 May 1915 and was attached to the New Zealand and Australian Division. It played a defensive role for most of the campaign but mounted an attack on the Turkish position known as "the Chessboard" as part of the August Offensive on 7 August – 200 men were involved, 147 became casualties. The regiment left Gallipoli on 21 December 1915'. (AWM)

The 1st Light Horse Regiment served the remainder of the war in the Middle East. It is commonly thought that the Light Horse had it very much easier than their counterparts on the Western Front. No doubt true – but the Light Horse suffered severe trials of heat and thirst in the deserts, and were instrumental in the defeat of the Turks in the Middle East campaign. Les's service record gives little insight into his activities, the only items of note being:

'Allowing a horse to follow to water' and 'Insolence to an NCO of the MMP' – for which he was deprived 2 days pay.

Les was only 5ft 4in tall at enlistment, and recalled sometimes his landing at Gallipoli. When he jumped out of the beaching boat, he thought that he may have been a little eager, as the water went over his head.

'The Battle of Dead Man's Ridge'

The virtually unknown 'Battle of Dead Man's Ridge' took place at Gallipoli on 7th August 1915. On that morning the 1st Light Horse Regiment attacked the Turkish trenches opposite Pope's Post. At the same time the 8th and 10th Light Horse Regiments attacked Turkish trenches across the level ground now known as 'The Nek'. 'The Nek' has gone down as one of the great Australian military tragedies with the attackers slaughtered before they could get more than a few yards from their trenches. What seems to be little known though, is that at 'Dead Man's Ridge' the 1st Light Horse suffered a greater proportion of casualties than those regiments which charged at 'The Nek'.

Regimental Diary

'August 7, 1915, Pope's Post - General attack by our forces along the whole line. Our attack was made at 0430 from Pope's Hill on the Chessboard Trenches N of Bloody Angle. The attack was gallantly led by Major J.M. Reid. The storming party reached the third line of trenches, occupied about 30 yards of them and held them for 2 hours but the enemy counter attacked in great force. They severely bombed the forward party and forced them to retire.'

The Regiment left Gallipoli on Dec 21 1915.



The Middle East (AWM)

Back in Egypt, the 1st Light Horse Regiment joined the ANZAC Mounted Division. Between January and May 1916, it was deployed to protect the Nile valley from bands of pro-Turkish Senussi Arabs. On 14 May, it redeployed with its parent brigade to join the forces defending the Suez Canal. The 1st Light Horse Brigade played a significant role in turning back the Turkish advance on the canal at the battle of Romani on 4 August. In ensuing days the regiments of the Brigade participated in the immediate follow-up of the defeated Turks, but were soon withdrawn to rest.

The 1st Light Horse Regiment rejoined the Allied advance across the Sinai in November 1916 and was subsequently involved in the fighting to secure the Turkish outposts on the Palestine frontier - Maghdaba on 23 December 1916 and Rafa on 9 January 1917. A stint of protective duty along the line of communications through the Sinai followed. The 1st Light Horse Regiment's next major engagement was the abortive second battle of Gaza on 19 April. Gaza finally fell on 7 November, after a wide outflanking move via Beersheba, in which the regiments of the 1st Light Horse Brigade played a part.

With the capture of Gaza, the Turkish position in southern Palestine collapsed. The 1st Light Horse Regiment participated in the advance to Jaffa that followed, and was then committed to operations to clear and occupy the west bank of the Jordan River. It was involved in the Amman (24-27 February) and Es Salt (30 April-4 May) raids and the repulse of a major German and Turkish attack on 14 July 1918.

The final British offensive of the campaign was launched along the Mediterranean coast on 19 September 1918, with the ANZAC Mounted Division taking part in a subsidiary effort east of the Jordan aimed at Amman. Turkey surrendered on 30 October 1918. The 1st Light Horse Regiment sailed for Australia on 12 March 1919 without their horses, which were either shot or transferred to Indian cavalry units.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

J06076

The First Light Horse Regiment returning to Romani from Katia





Les Todd and Clarice Russell

Unlike Harry Russell, Les Todd was a regular Anzac Day marcher. The photo at left appeared in the Newcastle Morning Herald.



Clarice's half brother (see p 86)

32070 Gunner Ernest Russell Manuel

Enlisted in Sydney on 4th October 1916. Stated on enlistment that he was born at Uralla, NSW and 26 3/12 years of age. Served in France with the following units: 6th (Army) Brigade Australian Field Artillery, 4th Australian Field Artillery Brigade. Wounded in action on 22nd March 1918. Returned to Australia 17th August 1919.



Artillery inflicted the most casualties and battle space damage and instilled the most fear among opposing forces. Its effect was both physical and psychological, with the term 'shell shock' coming into general use early in the war. Artillery required a Herculean logistic effort to keep ammunition up to the guns from manufacture to the gun line. It was also a very dangerous occupation, attracting the attention of the enemy, the general result of which was 'counter battery fire' designed to neutralise and destroy gun positions and ammunition.

A very interesting inclusion in the AIF soldiers in the direct family of Clarice Russell, is her maternal uncle Anthony Christian Smith, the youngest brother of Glen Manuel's mother 'Winnie'. Anthony and Winnie were first generation Australian's born to John Peter Christian Smidt and Franziska Doring, German immigrants whose families arrived on the same ship in Australia in the 1850's. Wikipedia says – 'From 1850 until WW1, German immigrants and their descendants comprised the largest non-British or Irish group of Europeans in Australia'. WW1 was not an easy time for Australians of German origin. Many were placed in internment camps.

Perhaps the surname Smidt had been changed to Smith for much the same reason as our famous General John Monash had seen his family name changed from Monasch. The photo below is of the family's Green Valley Inn/Wine shop near Bendemeer NSW.



948 Lance Sergeant Anthony Christian Smith

Anthony Christian Smith, farmer from Watson's Creek via Bendemeer NSW enlisted at Armidale on March 9 1916 aged 32 years and 2 months. He was assigned to the 33rd Battalion which had recently been formed in January that year. This battalion was unofficially known as 'New England's Own'. He embarked for England from Sydney shortly after on May 4 1916, first seeing action in France during the terrible winter starting that year. Anthony Smith led a charmed existence during the war. Wounded first in December 1916 near Armentieres, then again in March 1917 also near Armentieres, he scored a trifecta when, in May 1918 at Villers Bretonneux he suffered a severe gunshot wound to the lower leg, which saw him invalided out of action.

The gunshot wound fractured both the tibia and fibula and apparently gave him ongoing problems.

Tamworth Daily Observer 27 Mar 1920

Smith—Easterman.

A wedding was celebrated at St. John's Church, Tamworth, on March 24, Canon Fairbrother officiating, the contracting parties being Sergt. Anthony Christian Smith, inmate of Randwick Military Hospital for the past 12 months, and son of the late Mr. John P. Smith, of Bendemeer, and Olive Jane, daughter of Mr. A. Easterman, of Watson's Creek, Bendemeer. The bride, who was given away



Arms,
cleaning of

10.- In dusty countries, such as this, it has been found that if the working parts of the bolts of the rifle are kept oiled they rapidly become clogged with dust and sand which stick to the oil. Consequently these parts will be kept wiped dry and clean.

Damage to
Private
Property

4.- It has come to notice that a large number of posts used for supporting trees in Meadi town, have been removed.
All ranks are to be informed that private property is not to be interfered with on any account.

Fuel Wood - Officers Commanding must reduce the consumption of fuel wood as it is exceedingly difficult to procure in Egypt, being imported in ordinary times from Smyrna and the Turkish Islands. This source of supply is now closed and we are dependent on what we can get locally. There is no possibility of increasing the ration.

EXCESSIVE
SPEED OF
MOTOR CARS

4.- The General Officer Commanding, The Force in Egypt, has called attention to the excessive speed at which ~~many~~ many motor cars and taxi cabs are driven in Cairo and on the roads leading to the various camps. Officers and men of the Army Corps are warned that anyone who exceeds a reasonable speed, or allows the drivers of taxi cabs to do so, will be punished.

Use of Cabs

5.- It is against the police regulations for ^{more} than four persons to ride in one cab in or near Cairo.
The Mounted Military Police will stop and report any soldiers breaking this rule.
Soldiers are not permitted to ride on the box seat.
The practice of ordering cab drivers to gallop their horses is to cease.
Officers Commanding Units will see that troops under their command are made acquainted with the above.

6.-

As many instances of theft of motor cars have recently ~~occurred~~ occurred in Cairo that have been traced to men of the Army Corps, the General Officer Commanding directs that the offenders be very seriously dealt with, as these occurrences are always accompanied by the greatest inconvenience to the owners of the cars, besides being a very grave breach of discipline which reflects great discredit on the Army Corps generally.

Should there be any repetition of these occurrences, The General Officer Commanding will seriously consider the advisability of placing Cairo out of bounds to n.c.o's. and men of the Army Corps.

HASISH

4.- It has been brought to notice that an attempt has been made to smuggle Hasish into Egypt through the agency of British Troops.

All concerned should be warned that Hasish is contraband and prohibited in this country, and that any attempt to introduce it, or to assist others to introduce it, will be severely dealt with. (Vide G.O. 194-125/3/15).

Sanitation

13.- Men must not urinate on the ground, but in the places provided.

Each man must cover his excreta with sand.


No rubbish of any description is to be thrown about the lines. It must be placed in the receptacles provided.

Men must wash in buckets and not under running taps.

After washing, the water must be thrown broadcast and not in pools.

And lastly a snippet from the Service Record of 4848 Pte Walter Scott Reid MM
(Author of the 'Somewhere in France' letter p 4)

CRIME.

Australian  Military Forces. C.M. Form A. 4.

CHARGE against No. 4848. Pte Reid W.S. Squadron, Battery, or Company.
15th Rein, 1st Battalion. Regiment or Corps

Place and Date of Offence.	Offence.	Name of Witness.	Punishment Awarded	By whom Awarded and Date of Award
Troopship A 15.	(a) Breaking ship.			
27/3/16.	(b) Riotous behaviour.	Lieut Burstal.		
Colombo	(c) Refusing to obey a lawful command. (not leaving Bristol hotel)	Pte Major.		
27/3/16.	(d) Stealing from Bristol Hotel one bottle of "Vermouth".	Sergt. Jenkins.		
	(e) Taking charge of and interfering with Tram car.			

Length of Service years. 222 days.

Number of Good-conduct Badges 28. 3. 16

Date of last entry in Conduct Book 20/12/15.

General Character Bad.

Date of last entry for an act of, or an equivalent of an act of, drunkenness 0.6

Number of cases of drunkenness 0.6

28 for fine of pay + fine of 5

M. Bonn

for Pte Reid

for Pte Reid

Jack A. Robertson Lieut

Commanding Squadron, Battery, or Company



BRISTOL HOTEL,
COLOMBO.

Best Cuisine in the East. Curries a Speciality.
La meilleure Cuisine dans l'Est. Spécialité de Curry.
Brennmeisteste Küche im Osten. Curries: besondere Spezialität.

Walter Scott Reid might have been guilty of some misdemeanours while en route from Australia, but he may have atoned a little for these sins with his bravery in action.

Sheet No. 3

14th Infantry Brigade. 5th Australian Division. 1st A.N.Z.A.C. Corps. 29th May 1917. Date of Recommendation.

Schedule No. (To be left blank)	Unit	Regtl. No.	Rank and Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
	53rd Bn 4848		PRIVATE WALTER SCOTT. <u>REID.</u>	<p>On the 13th May 1917 Pte Reid was on post as a bomber on the Right of the sector in the Hindenburg line near BULLECOURT. This was considered to be the most dangerous part of the line as the enemy were in the same trench with only a sunken road between. The enemy commenced shelling this part of the trench severely, inflicting heavy casualties. After the Commander of the Post and all his men had been wounded Pte Reid remained on post until he himself was wounded.</p> <p>On May 12th 1917 Pte Reid saw some Germans enter a dug-out some distance from our line. He proceeded to the dug-out & threw Mills Grenades down the entrance. It was seen that a number of wounded were carried out.</p> <p>Pte Reid has always volunteered for all patrols & has shown great coolness & courage when in the line.</p>	<p>Thomson Major Comm'd 53rd Bn, A.I.F.</p> <p>W. M. C. H. I. T.</p>		

'Private Walter Scott Reid - 53rd Bn 4848

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