
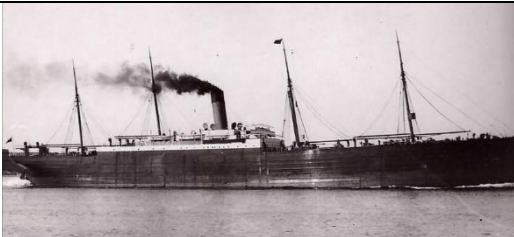






V R YEOMAN - WWI DIARY

1915

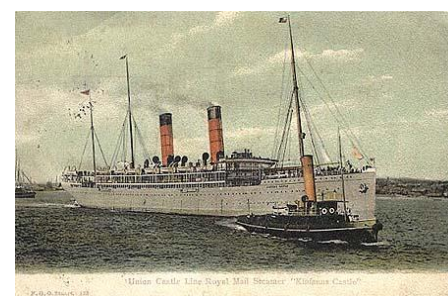
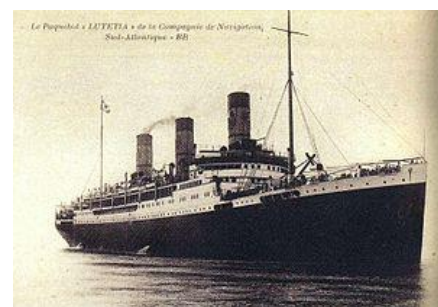
7-May		Went into camp in Broadmeadows	
7-Jun		Shipped to Seymour Camp	
16-Jul		Embarked on T S Demosthenes , left port Friday 4:00pm. Rough sea next day, rough all the way to Fremantle.	
23-Jul	8:00am	Arrived Fremantle, left again at 4:00pm	
24-Jul		Making NW. Calm sea, mild temperature.	
26-Jul		Close in doors last night, overcast skies all day, rain towards evening. Warm temp.	
27-Jul		Clear sky, warm in sun, calm sea.	
1-Aug	Sunday.	Last few days warm with cool breeze, rain about sunset.	
2-Aug		Crossed the line today, some ceremony.	
6-Aug		Fairly rough today and yesterday, sighted first ship this evening.	
9-Aug		Approached Red Sea.	
10-Aug		In Red Sea.	
12-Aug		Calm sea, no land in sight.	
14-Aug		Anchored off Suez about 2:00am	
16-Aug		Disembarked and entrained for Cairo Zeitoun arrived about 12 midnight.	
11-Sep		Entrained for Alexandra 8:00am 4 hours run. Embarked on T S Kingstonian 6:00pm for Dardanelles.	
16-Sep	6:45 PM	Steamed out of harbour (Lemnos Bay) at 4:30 today for ANZAC on HMS Sarnia	
10-Nov		Transferred to signallers	
15-Nov		Bombardments by our battleships further south towards C Helles.	


26-Nov	Left Gallipoli for Lemnos
28-Nov	The first few days on the island very cold and wet. A light fall of snow
12-Dec	As time goes on events lead us to think it more and more certain that the intention is to evacuate the peninsula.
20-Dec	Last batch of troops arrive from ANZAC
30-Dec	Had a bathe in the sea (Lemnos) during the morning.


1916

1-Jan	Saturday	Left Lemnos Harbour this morning at 7. Passed close to the hospital ship Britannica anchor in the bay. Counted six decks above the waterline. Our ship (The Grampian) has an escort of an armed merchant ship and a cruiser or two.	
3-Jan		Daybreak, pilot boat meets us off Alexandria Harbour which we find our entering is crowded with ships and in manoeuvring at anchorage the Grampian goes within a few feet of a collision with another ship at anchor.	
	8:00 PM	Entrained for Tel-el-Keber camp. Arriving there Tuesday morning 4:00 am. March 1/2 mile to camp, and take shelter till daybreak.	
4-Jan	4:00 AM	Arrive Tel-el-Kibir march to camp 1/2 mile and take shelter till daybreak.	
14-Jan		Met Eddie and Leon.	
24-Jan	Monday	Midnight. No. 3 section wakes up, has a cup of tea, marches to the station and entrains. We travel in open trucks with sides only 18 inches deep. The wind is blowing hard and icy cold as we travel along. And we crouch down to the floor of the truck. Arrive at siding near Serapeum W Bank of Suez Canal 1/2 hour before daybreak.	
25-Jan		Cross the Canal on a barge and march 1 1/2 miles to Asia camping ground. A dixie of tea is made for us and we have breakfast which in my case consists of a tin of McConachie's rations , bread, butter and jam, which I had carried with me. The wind is rather cold and rain falls at intervals, so we take shelter in a redoubt till our tents arrive per camel. Have stew for tea and retire early.	
26-Jan		A cold day, a little rain about tea-time, lay phone wires and shift tents.	
28-Jan		A few heavy showers today.	
29-Jan		Fine and warm.	
30-Jan		Same.	
10-Feb		Brde. HQ and Sig. Section move out to a new position close to front line, 8 miles from Canal. The march over loose sand is very fatiguing. (We are camped a mile from the Cana East side before this.) Had a heavy march through the sand. Had to use some determination to stick it out as I was not in the best form when we started having done a lot of walking the previous 4 days carrying despatches.	

12-Feb		Rested as n\much as possible yesterday, felt out of sorts, headache, etc. Went to doctor this morning and got some medicine. Met Fred Bevan (Gebal Habieta is 10 miles from Serapeum)
13-Feb		Have no mail for a month, also none from John. Don't know how to account for his silence.
6-Mar		Crossed from Asia to Africa at 8:00 am. Travelled by train through Ismalia to Tel-el-Kebir, back to the old spot (transferred here to 4 Div. sigs. In the afternoon had a shower, Oh! What a treat.
12-Mar		Received a note from J. He is at Gebel-Habieta, or near there.
30-Mar		The 1st div. left for France a few days before we got here (Serapeum). If I had not been transferred would have gone with John.
31-Mar		An aeroplane alighted nearby this afternoon, ran over and inspected it.
13-Apr		<p>Camped right against the Canal W Bank under the trees. Have seen British, French, Dutch, Norwegian, etc. vessels pass. Two transports passed with Russian troops aboard. "Lutetia" auxiliary cruiser passed, saw 5 motor launches (submarine chasers).</p> <p>The 1st Division left for France or elsewhere a few days before we got the relief. I had not bee transferred would have gone with John. As it is I didn't see him however we expect to be following the 1st and 2nd Divs in about 6 weeks time.</p>
21-Apr		Saw the Prince of Wales yesterday.
25-Apr		ANZAC Day. Sports on the Canal. The Prince arrives in a motor patrol boat.
1-Jun	Thursday	<p>The last march through desert sand of Egypt, only a mile, from camp near the Canal (West Bank, Serapeum) to the railway siding, where we entrained at 6:30 pm, moved off at 8:00, travelling all night in open trucks. How strange is the sight of an Egyptian city at night as seen from the train, glimpses of long narrow streets, and men and women in quaint costumes. A fine night, settled down and slept from about 11:00 till daybreak. Arrived at Alexandria before 8:00 am, right against the wharf. Our ship is the "Kinfauns Castle". Take our gear on board, come off and load three trucks. Ship leaves her moorings about tea-time.</p>



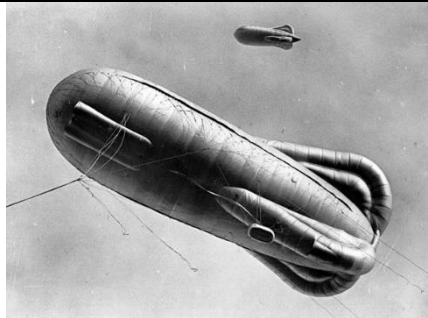
2-Jun		Anchoring in the harbour for the night.
3-Jun	11:00 AM	Leave the harbour with lifebelts before the boat starts.
4-Jun		There is a large steamer on the horizon to port. We gradually leave her behind, and come up with and overtake another steamer to starboard. Two destroyers accompany us during part of the afternoon.
5-Jun		Monday
7-Jun		Hugged the coast of Sardinia all day, going North.
8-Jun		The coast of France in sight. Made the port of Marseilles about 9:00 am. Had tea 4:00 pm, disembarked 5:30. Entrained and started journey overland 10:30 pm.
9-Jun	Friday	First stop Orange at 4:30 am. Dixies of tea were made and we had a hurried breakfast???
		We travelled in closed trucks with big sliding doors, 30 men to a truck, just room for all to lie down, and nothing to spare.
	10:30	Estressin
		Lyons about 1:00 pm
	8:00 AM	Melun
	10:00 AM	Jurrisky
		At one stopping place, where we branched onto another line, we were only 10 miles from Paris
	11:00 AM	Arrived Baileul and detrained.
11-Jun	Sunday	Marched to Merris, stayed three weeks, then on to Sailly July 3rd via Croix Du Bac, on a motor transport wagon.
3-Jul		Via Croix due Bac on a motor transport wagon
7-Jul		Sailly. The night before last there was a gas alarm near midnight. I was on duty at Sig. Office and had to bike down the street and rouse the billets by blowing a whistle. No gas came over, however (this town is near Armentieres). While here we have seen a good deal of firing on our arrival by the Germans.
12-Jul		Left Sailly 12 noon, travelling back to Merris by cycle through Estaires.
		
14-Jul		Domart. Left Merris again yesterday morning, cycled to Baileul. Entrained noon, detrained at Doullens 8:00 pm, biked to this place, arriving just before midnight.

22-Jul		Another move this time to Talmans. Before leaving Domart the Coy was inspected by General Cox . He asked nearly every man if he was on the peninsular. We cyclists were lined up with our bikes and I was 3rd from the right. The first two said so did I. Good said the general, quite a number of you have been there.
28-Jul		A short journey ???? (cycle)
30-Jul		Rubempre
7-Aug		Still Rubempre. The brigade to which John belongs passed through here yesterday. Saw some of it all other but his.
8-Aug		Near Albert been here 2 nights, shells lob about the place each night. Iron shed blown away by shell.
14-Aug		In a trench behind the lines shells pass overhead both ways. The Germans put shells into Albert at night.
	4pm	The 6th Ba (John's) has just arrived near here. One of the men told me that J went away sick and left them at "Fleu Bay". We have the Argus of June 3rd.
16-Aug		Rode back to Rubempre arrived 1:15pm - paid next morning.
18-Aug		We go to Canaples through Talmas.
27-Aug		Return back to Rubempre for 2 nights then back to Tara Hill 29th
4-Sep		Tara Hill, we are going out this morning at 8am
		Yesterday morning at 5am after a bombardment by our artillery the Aust's advance taking Mouquet Farm but we shelled out of it during the day
5-Sep		Rubempre
		Received a cable from father
6-Sep		On to Doullens 2 days there and then entrained on Sept 9th. 9pm detrained.
12-Sep		2 hours slow biking to Ren-----
14-Sep		Transferred to No. 2 Sec
16-Sep		Moved out to Ypres salient
6-Oct		Walked to Ypres from Diskeabushse the remains of the Cloth Hall street of ruined shops and houses, no civilians in the city only a few soldiers.
8-Oct		Walked back to Reningelst about 4, camped outside the village huts.
10-Oct		Had a back tooth drawn today
12-Oct		March to Bedford house one mile from Ypres, stayed a week. Not troubled by shells here. One day a few dropped in a paddock beyond.

19-Oct		Rode in motor wagon from Bedford House to Reninghelst 9pm pitch dark. Stayed here next day.
21-Oct		Moved off again to Godewaersveld. Stopped for lunch halfway.
22-Oct		Two parcels and 5 letters arrived.
26-Oct		I am at the Sig office from midnight to 3am. After a cup of tea we move off at 4am carrying blankets to entraining station Castre? Arrive about 5:30 quite dark on the march.
		Entrain 8am travel all day through Boulognem Abbeville to Pontremy. 4pm and arrive at Bellancourt after dark, nothing to drink all day and only water on arrival.
29-Oct		Spent afternoon at Abbeville 2-7
1-Nov		Brucamps 5pm came here from Bellancourt this morning.
2-Nov	10am	Start on foot through Flixecourt to Bellroy arrive 2:30pm. Billeted in rooms over stables and coach-house of a fine chateau.
5-Nov		Issued with sheepskin vests.
8-Nov		Leaving at 8am we march 2 miles and were then conveyed by motor bus through Amiens to Ribemont 5 miles from Albert.
12-Nov		<p>The night before last was a very clear moonlit night and aeroplanes were busy. Our anti-aircraft guns were firing at enemy planes as bursts of flame could be seen is the distance high up.</p> <p>For 2 days now guns have been roaring continuously at times so many explosions occurred at once that the ground shook, I never before heard the sound of so many guns roaring continuously.</p>
13 Nov		On the road again 1pm marched to Dernancourt with a blister on one heel. Slept on bunks in a barn
14 Nov		<p>Up a 6am, fall in, 7:30am. Good road first few miles then after passing Albert to our left the road is bad, muddy and mud all sides. Feet very sore and painful to walk. Stuck it a few more miles and then during a halt took the right boot off find heel bleeding. Mr B says take my own time which I do and follow on another mile and a half. No dinner. Arrive at 2:30. Heat up a tin of tripe and eat it with bread. Go on duty 4 o'clock Sig Office no time to look at my feet till coming off at 8:30pm then to be.</p> <p>We are at or near Flers, on the right is Frones Wood.</p>
17 Nov		When we cam here first the mud was thick and sticky, very hard to walk in. The past 3 days has been fine though cold ground has dried up.
18 Nov		I am on a Sig Office got up at 4am very cold ground frozen a little snow falling.
27 Nov		Walked out though Delville Wood to a place 2 miles from the line. The road before Delville Wood in some places is a foot deep in mud. Every

	tree in the wood has been stripped and shattered with shell fire.
1 Dec	Still in the same place in a dugout. Fritz puts over a few g'zumps every day, some within 300 or 400 yards.
6 Dec	?artie from here after 9pm walked a mile of duck boards then road near Bernafay Wood along rail to quarry siding.
7 Dec	Arrived back at Rebemont this morning at 8:45 having left quarry siding in open trucks at 2:30am froze for 21 hours then marched from ??? to here.

24 Jan	<p>The day before yesterday a huge observation balloon which had been suspended a great height above us suddenly became unbalanced through some wires breaking one side. Envelope became deflated and started turning and rolling about being blown one way and the other by the strong wind. The men in the balloon were being tossed about and bumped against the sides of the balloon. Presently something white left the balloon and formed itself into a parachute with a man suspended from it and sailed away with the wind gradually coming to earth about 2 miles away. Later the balloon broke loose and was soon out of sight.</p> <p>Six of us sniped at the artillery coming here. 4 shots no hits closest 30 yards.</p>
7 Feb	Night of 3 rd and 4 th stunt by our chaps watched shelling from rear and advance.
9 Feb	Moved back to Mametz
22 Feb	Away again. Walked over part of the battlefield towards Pdsiares across Sausage Gully. Went to Albert through Becourt Wood.
26 Feb	Left Brigcourt Camp for Hot Cross Camp Bazentin. Stayed one night left 8am
27 Feb	Arrived Bapsaume noon. Slept 2 nights in damaged back room of demolished building then move ½ mile out of town to trenches running through open fields where we built dugouts.
2 Apr	All O K.
4 Apr	<p>This evening about 6pm a Fritz plane came over. Swooped down on a balloon set it on fire with phosphorous bullets then flew off to another balloon</p> <p>and did likewise to it. The men from the balloon parachuted down & Fritz flew away wounded.</p>
7 Apr	Moved up to the line where brigade gets many casualties. On the 4 th day brigade HQ was shelled heavily.
11 Apr	Near village of Nourael place shelled every day. Remnant of the Bge leave the line after dark going via Valux to vicinity of Bapaume. Six of us arrive at dugout near midnight spend remainder of night.
12 Apr	Afternoon move on to Bapaume entrain get to Albert about 6pm, walk to Mametz.
18 Apr	Move to Ribemont
30 Apr	At Amiens today
15 May	Left Ribemont 11 entrained, Beauouse 2pm, via Boulogne & Calais to Baillen arrive 2am 16 th
16 May	March to Doulieu
30 May	Leaving Doulieu tomorrow
2 June	Waterloo camp came here from Doulieu.

	Fritz sent one of our balloons down in flames last night	
7 June	On the La Plus Deuve farm. The advance on Messime Ridge and Messine started this morning. Same day back in Waterloo Farm for one night then forward again to Messine Ridge near Messine doe 3 days. We are in a German concrete dugout just behind the Fritz original front line. Every yard of earth is pulverised by shells, trenches battered to pieces. A few yards away is a half-buried Fritz which makes the air blue. Germans shell the vicinity and strafe the ridge.	
11 Aug	We are billeted at a farm, Lyle, have been there a day. Yesterday was very fine (the first 3 days here were very wet). Yesterday evening enemy aeroplanes came over several times. Our planes were very numerous an da anti-aircraft guns active. Counted 20 balloons of ours on this sector of front. This morning between 2 & 3 we heard planes overhead. We were in a cellar & heard explosions of a number of bombs. One was dropped 30ft away from the building. Another dropped 50 yards away wounding an officer and 2 men and killing 13 horses.	
25 Aug	All O K	
17 Nov	Lisbourg to Fruges	
18 Nov	Fruges to Royon Lebeiz	
20 Nov	To Douries	
21 Nov	Ligescourt	
24 Nov	Arrived Friville near Escarbotin	
5 Dec	By train to near Peronne	
6 Dec	Camped near Moislains	
20 Dec	Move on to near Templeau la Fosse	

1918

10 Jan		Left Templeau la Fosse 6 am entrained Peronne 9:30. Arrived Bailleul 11pm marched to billet 9 kilometres arrived 2:30am started again at 10am marched to La Clytte arrived 1pm.
20 Jan		Moved to transport lines 2 kilometres
7 ???		Pigeon Sehall
10 ???		Back to transport lines
23 ???		Still at transport lines manning a small exchange here. The front has been fairly quiet but the
Page 14		Missing, but following from handwritten diary
28 Feb	9:30am	<p>Near Kemmel, Belgium.</p> <p>It is a fine clear night a full moon has just risen. I have been thinking a great deal lately of home and loved ones. One in particular has been almost constantly in my thoughts.</p> <p>It is expected that the first round at what will most likely be the greatest battle of the war. Will open up anytime now. This part of the front has been very quiet for 2 months past. An hour ago there was a short bombardment on our left. We could see red and green flares going up.</p> <p>Tomorrow 1st March we move to Waterloo camp.</p>
31 May		<p>Moved up forward living in a big house in a deserted village.</p> <p>Received a letter from Ma and Auntie.</p>
8 June		<p>I have been all over the town of Corbie which is half in ruins. Fritz puts shells over our house occasionally.</p> <p>Night before last one struck 15ft from the house did no damage except blow away a part of a brick and iron fence.</p> <p>We sleep in a cellar.</p>
21 June	1918	Still in same place. Letters from Ma Lillie. Have a cold.
26 Jul		<p>Courieux Chateau came here from Corbie 2 weeks ago have been cook for past month.</p> <p>This is the Chateau of the Comptesse, a plain brick 3 story building with hundreds of rooms.</p>
6 Aug		<p>At another chateau came here yesterday.</p> <p>This morning the position was heavily shelled from 4 to 6am. Shells were whizzing over the roof and falling all around so after a time we decided to shift</p>

		into the cellar below. Soon after a shell burst through the roof we had just left. Two pieces went through my ground sheet.
9 Aug	8:30	Near Hamel. Just had a cup of hot tea first today. Met Fred Bevan yesterday & again today. Going further forward tonight to Morcourt.
10-11 Aug		Back to Sailly about 3 days there then through ?Hamel ?arfussee, Baincourtte near ?arbonieres. Brigade in line again.
22 Aug		Have been here abot 10 days.
23 Aug		<p>Yesterday I took some despatches to our advances Sig office per cycle.</p> <p>Just as I got to within 150 yards of the place 5.9's started whistling over and were bursting all around. So I hopped off the bike and took shelter in a trench. When the shelling eased off walked up to the gully where the dugout is but before reached it he put some more over. I took shelter again in another dugout for a few minutes and eventually got there 'avec' despatches.</p>
24 Aug		Came out from Harbonieres-Lihon by bus to Coisy.
27 Aug		Came to Amiens last night proceeding on leave. Left this morning 8:30.