

Australia - South Africa 1916

June 1st

Left the West 9 pm on 1st June, 1916 by A 69, otherwise *SS Warilda*. Nothing of any importance till Durban was sighted at 9.30 am 16th June. Went alongside wharf at 1 o'clock. Route march at 3 pm, came on board at 5 pm. Marched through principle streets and down the Esplanade, which is a glorious place. The people of this town were most enthusiastic in the welcome given us. It was here we learned of Jutland Battle¹ and death of Lord Kitchener². No leave granted this night.

June 17th

Leave granted at 10 am. Went up Adelaide Street and bought views and Muff and posted same. Went for train ride to Beria and returned to boat at 3.30 pm.

June 18th (Sunday)

Left Durban at 7 am. Run into heavy swell. Kept up all night. Just about everyone on board sick.

June 19th

S till rough. Blowing a gale. The men who came on board late were crimed and irrespective of how late everyone fined £1 and all leave stopped at next port of call, which will be Cape Town.

June 20th

On Captain Lawson going to mens' mess table was counted out³. It has come to our knowledge Officers (if you can call them such), who censor our letters, laugh and make jokes of any terms of endearment in them. Sighted light house of Cape Town at 4 am.

June 21st

Went in the long side wharf or basin at 8 am. Went for route march at 10.30 am and got back to boat at 12.45. Putting some guns aboard here. The holes in gun carriage $\frac{3}{4}$ clearance and holes in the bed plate were 1" stud holes. A ship load of ar tillery are in the same port. Do not know if Mark Whiskin⁴ is amongst them. Three other transports beside our own. Armed merchantman *SS Lacona* (18,000 tons) our convoy. Table mountain very plain when we entered the harbour. Other three are A64 (*Demosteneas*), A11 (*Ascanius*), A7 (*Medie*).

June 22nd

Put out from Cape Town 8 am. *Lacona* leading, A7, A64, A69, A11. On 15th June had to be revaccinated and as Belmont⁵ dose did not take.

June 23rd

Have to travel with lights out. Pay day and got 12/-. Have next of kin down as James instead of Jabez which I am getting altered. Captain Hillman taking final evidence before submitting it for DCM⁶. This is for NCO's⁷ only.

June 25th (Sunday)

Church service this morning. Sought of memorial to Lord Kitchener. Took form of short biography of his life. Teeth aching very bad.

June 26th

Went to dentist this morning and had three teeth out, would not pull one as can save by filling (which he is doing).

June 27th

Had to go and get one of gums stopped from bleeding.

June 28th

Acting as escort to Sgt Hunter in a court martial held on board. The prosecutor and defender were well up to mud.

July 2nd

Buried one man off the *Medie* at 8 pm (Sunday). Engines of this ship slowed down for a few seconds only. Sgt Hunter reduced to ranks for AWL⁸ Durban.

July 6th

Sighted Cape Verde, 6.30 am. The point is very high.

July 7th

Anchored at St Vincent's at 6.45 am. It is a fair sized island. There is a small island right at mouth of harbour with lighthouse right at the very top. Use a stairway to get to top. The town of St Vincent's itself is a very barren place with no vegetation whatever. None of the houses have verandahs and they are painted all different colours. It was 15 days' sail from Cape Town. The inhabitants say it is the only town on the island. They bring water in from a small island some 30 miles away. The people say that it has not rained for some two years and then they only had one day's rain. By the way, the people show different

¹ First major battle between the British and German fleets.

² Field Marshall Kitchener, Commander of the British Armies who died in a storm at sea.

³ Punched?

⁴ His girlfriend, Alma's brother.

⁵ Belmont was where he was stationed on enlistment.

⁶ Distinguished Conduct Medal

⁷ Non Commissioned Officers

⁸ Absent Without Leave

things, this must be a most immoral place! Left here on the 10th July at 12 noon.

July 11th
Went into hospital today⁹.

July 16th
Discharged from hospital today.

England

July 18th
Landed at Plymouth at 10.30 this morning, taken straight from boat to station, not allowed to wander away, entrained for Salisbury Plain at 5 pm.

July 19th
Arrived at Tidworth 2 am and were marched from station to No. 4 Camp Perham Downs, no guides were sent along to show us where we had to go.

July 23rd
Walked to Rednham and Appleshaw, the hedges and lane were simply glorious. Appleshaw is a very quaint and pretty place.

July 24th
Les Blair was made Acting Sgt Major.

July 29th
Got orders to hold ourselves in readiness to move at moment's notice.

July 31st
Had to put all our surplus clothing the military had issued into the Quartermaster. Kept all personal belongings in Universal kit bag, which has to be sent to Greyhound Rd, London to be kept 'till we return for them.

August 6th
Went to Brigade Hospital.

August 11th
Discharged from hospital. Granted four days' sick leave. Pass was made out as soon as I reported back to Orderly Room. Left for London and arrived at twenty to seven.

August 12th
Went to Kew Gardens and had a look at them. While in London stayed at YMCA just near Aldwych underground railway station. One of the most

convenient places one could wish to find. Tariff was very low here.

August 13th
Went to Clovelly and had a very fine time, the country is one of the or the most pretty one could wish to see. Got back to camp 12 noon, 15th August, 1916.

August 29th
Left for France at 3 o'clock. Reached Folkstone at 9.45 am.

France 1916

August 30th
Put one night in at Boulogne. It was raining as hard as possible. Entrained for Etaples next morning.

September 24th
No. 6 Coy left for Front at 3 am. Have been transferred to Mechanical Coy.

September 26th
Left Etaples for Hazebrouck. Arrived 27th at HQs No. 1 Mining Coy in Mechanical Section.

Random Notes

The diary at this point makes a number of comments before dates are resumed, viz:

E.G. Dodd 4209 AIF

Sgt Marsh left for Camille October 7th 1916. Arrived at Hazebrouck September 28th 16.

4223 Sgt G A Williams, c/- Sgt's Mess No. 3 Australian Tunnelling Coy AIF France. Sent watch to Alma October 11th 16. Sent ring home October 11th 16.

Sgt Les Blair left for Moart Farm October 12th. 4206 Electrical Mechanical & Boring Section. Australian.

Left Hazebrouck October 11th for 254 attached RE¹⁰ Bethune. Went to Givenchy October 12th. No. 1 engine wants overhauling badly. October 22 Williamson. Reported from hospital November 11th. Carlton went to hospital 13th November. Steadman taken away to Hazebrouck November 17th. Sgt Moody after working one shift took ill and was sent back to HQ November 17th. Wrote to Lam¹¹ November 18th as to whereabouts. From Givenchy.

Left Givenchy November 20th. Went to No. 12 CCS November 21st. [His military records indicate "to hospital sick in the field for this date"]. Discharged November 28th.

⁹ Illness unknown, hopefully not connected with immoral inhabitants of St Vincent's!

¹⁰ Royal Engineers

¹¹ Pet name for girlfriend (later wife), Alma Whiskin

Diary Dated Entries Continue

December 11th

Saw snow for first time. Started in morning and kept up fairly heavy 'till dinner.

December 13th

Bought a table centre, handkerchief and a pin cushion and sent to mother for Christmas.

December 17th

Went to Bailluel for a joy ride in motor lorry. Should like to see this country in the spring. Sgt Viv Downie went out to Proto School to run small Austin set.

December 18th

Received letter from Alma saying she let some chap take home, no occasion for this in my estimation!

December 19th

Snowed very heavy this afternoon, had some fun tossing snowballs at some of the lads in the shop. It makes the toes and feet very cold when walking in it. Heard the news of a big British Victory up the Somme. This will give Fritz some more to think about. Put in two francs for a Christmas dinner.

December 21st

Woke up with a beautiful sore throat and had to parade sick this afternoon and left shop for billet. Shall certainly parade sick to hospital if no better in the morning. Just my luck to get crook right on Christmas. Had temperature of 103. Not bad to be at work with.

December 22nd

Came into No. 12 CCS. Temperature at 10 pm had risen to 103. Down this morning to 99.

December 23rd

Feel pretty good. Only have a diggens of a throat. Shall probably get up tomorrow. Have decorated the ward up very nice for the coming festivity. Holly leaves and pink artificial. By the tone of the papers this morning I somehow think a lot will come of this peace talk. Jim Carlton was knocked yesterday will get a Blighty out of it¹². Wigzell¹³ brought up *Sunday Times* last night. The nurse gave us a tin from the Australian Red Cross. It contained pipe, tin Havelock Tobacco, tin Havelock Cigarettes, thin Wades Butterscotch, pack of cards, envelopes. It's nice to know our troops get what Australians sent or donate to buy and send them. The No. 2 Divisional CCS was

blown in yesterday at Stienwerk and most of troops were sent to this station.

December 24th

The nurses and orderlies came in to the ward last night and sang three carols, "The Shepherd Watches", "There is No Hell" and "Come All Ye Faithful". It sounded very nice indeed! Got out of bed yesterday.

December 25th

On waking up this morning found that the old Father Christmas s till visits people. Was thinking last night of last Christmas Eve how Mum was kept waiting on the wrong corner and also her coming into the town with us in the evening. It seems rather strange to feel cold and see rain on Christmas day. Shall send a couple of cards received in gift parcels home. Went up to No. 6 Ward for dinner. Had a good meal and Christmas pudding. Went down to billet this afternoon and found majority drunk. They had some fine music. Brought Hector Mood from trenches, when in this state he can nearly make violin talk!

December 26th

Wrote to Lam. The boys in the ward had a sort of impromptu concert last night, did not go off too bad. Ward put into quarantine for four days. Do not know what for.

In another section of the diary, dated 26.12.16 he wrote: The verse by Hisscock has been in my mind all today:

Oh Saviour what is life

Is it a round of days to pass in quick succession

No! My one duty in life is to lessen

every vice and enlargen every virtue.

December 30st

Came out of hospital today and reported back for duty.

December 31st

Sunday and had to go to shop and work. Hard luck to go in on Sunday, also last day in the year.

1917

January 1st

Had to fetch small Aster¹⁴ set to Cassel to light up a Christmas tree, this morning and shall stay until tomorrow night, the Welsh Fusiliers are in the place where I have been told off to billet and have never met a more frowsy set in the whole of my life. The Christmas tree looks just the thing. Wigzell gave me his photo last night. Run set from 4 pm to 6 pm.

¹² Injured and sent to England

¹³ A later note in Hughie's diary states that A Wigzell was killed March 8th 1918.

¹⁴ Presumably an electric generator

January 2nd

Went up to top of Mt Cassel and had a look at the Casino. This is a very big place. Run set from 4 pm to 6 pm. One of the MT¹⁵ chaps told me I had to take it to Popperhinge for a picture show tomorrow night. Billeted in convent St Joseph's. Report to whoever is in charge of Talbot House, Popperhinge as this is where the cinema is to be shown.

January 3rd

Talbot House, Popperhinge happens to be a sort of soldiers' club run by the C of E for benefit of troops. Col. Anderson is giving a lecture on Dr Scott's trip to South Pole. I shall probably get back to Hazebrouck about 3 in the morning. Left Cassel 12 am. Ran engine from 8.30 pm 'till 10 pm.

January 4th

Ran engine last night from the motor lorry. Left Popperhinge at 11.15 pm for Hazebrouck and then the trouble began. Lorry broke down half way and took two hours to fix up. Got in at 3 am this morning. On leaving Cassel passed Chienwooke and Abeele and then on to Popperhinge.

January 8th

Unloaded two lorry loads of comforts for Miners Corps. 2nd Lieut. Norfolk has been shooting his neck about nothing in particular and everything in general. There is a big strafe going on tonight.

January 11th

I had an exceptionally big pay. Five francs = 3/7¹⁶ for fourteen days, working at rates of 2³/₄ per diem.

February 6th

Warned tonight to be ready by 9 o'clock in morning to put Dorman Set in at 170 RE Coys.

February 7th

Left shop for 170 Coy. Arrived dinner time at Nouise Les Mines and took set straight up to Vermelles. Put it in Saville Row Tunnel.

February 10th

Run bearing between generator and engine. Staff Sgt Moody took back to shop.

February 12th

Moody sent bearing up this morning which I put in a good engine running.

February 13th

Moody left to go to another job this evening leaving me on my own. Lieut. Williams RE refuses to allow anyone to sleep in Proto dugout. Slept in winch house at top of tunnel.

February 14th

Have permission to sleep in Proto dugout. Received a batch of letters from Lam and home and I think they gave me a fit of the blues. On Sunday 11th went for a bit of a route march to Hulluch and came back right through.

February 15th

Sapper Gibson and two other men came up this morning to take over the running of plant. Gibson seems to know his work. 170 Coy have sent no electricians along for the job. I suppose they think one man can look after engine and also keep his mains and lights o.k. This job could have been running two days ago, only no lamps have come along yet. Fritz came over last night but was driven back. They shot one poor little beggar in one of our communication trenches.

February 16th

Left Vermelles Tunnel this morning and came down to Nouise Les Mines to wait for lamps. I suppose they will come along tomorrow. Shall try and get a change of clothing and a bath this afternoon as I have not had a decent wash since going up to the trenches. Sgt Moody tells me that Capt Morse has gone to Nice for a fortnight's spell as he has a slight touch of pneumonia. In this morning's paper, Sir D Haig¹⁷ says that Fritz will be beaten this year. I hope that he is right.

February 17th

Met several of the old No. 6 Boys and they told me that Corp. Bill Mayne had been sniped a couple of days before.

February 18th

Went up to No. 3 Section this morning. Run about ³/₄ mile of cable.

February 19th

Slept in Officers' dug-out last night. Came back to Nouise Les Mines tonight.

February 20th

Lieut. Norfolk rang up to see Moody and told him to meet him at 253 Coy's headquarters in the morning. Shall be going up tomorrow morning, have some 166 P and 25 CP lamps.

¹⁵ Motor Transport

¹⁶ \$7.70

¹⁷ Field Marshall Haig, Commander of British Armies

February 21st

Brought 100 lamps up and also Sapper Gibson, Neilson and Noels. Put 15 lights in Saville Row tunnel and 12 in New Cut. Started up 4 o'clock engine and ran until 10 o'clock. Ran fairly well.

February 22nd

RE have started to make dug-out for us. Ran engine all night and closed down at 8 am.

February 23rd

Went back to Nouise Les Mines this morning for lamp guards. Of all the messes imaginable this company's officers takes beating.

February 24th

Norfolk came up today in a big stew. 170 Coy rang Hazebruck to say all their lamps had burnt out. Lieut. Woods RE told them absolute lie, which was proved when set was given a run. They put volt testers on and it was proved conclusively that I had not been running at more than 200 volts. Soon a man gets away from this Coy the better as the fools know nothing about this work at all. Had to hop in and alter all the lights in Saville Row. Moody came up this morning.

February 25th

Altered all the lights in New Cut Tunnel and ran the cable through Elephant Tunnel.

February 26th

Altered all lights in Quarry Alley Tunnel and all along the mining galleries.

February 27th

Put up lamp guards on all lights in the whole system.

February 28th

Ran engine for four hours today with load, found a few earths which were taken off. Went for a walk along to Vermelles and then through Philistof. Vermelles is an absolute ruin, not one solid house standing. In Philistof the women and children go marching around, it's hard to credit there's a war on, yet only 3/4 of a mile away lays the front line. The French citizen must be having a rough time of it. While writing this our guns are giving Fritz "what-oh!" just on our right. Our chaps in the line sent up a few red lights. Fritz is playing a machine gun right onto the entrance to the tunnel.

March 10th

Have not had the time to write up anything the last few days as engine has been given much trouble. Brought another Dorman up the trenches last night, had it up by 1/4 past three and went to bed. The first

time I have closed my eyes for five days and nights and am feeling dead beat.

March 11th

Put set together and put switchboard up, everything ready only waiting for 170 Coy to finish the hole through to top of roof for the exhaust and also a rabbit hole to let hot air get away and so cool engine room somewhat.

March 12th

Got up at 11.30 and did very near nothing at all for the day.

March 13th

Left the trenches this morning for billets and shall stay down 'till the 15th. Slept all day and went for a bit of a walk during the night. The town is like the rest, nothing to do in it but watch people drink beer.

March 14th

Been writing letters all day long.

March 15th

148545 Sapper L W Gibson 170 RE BEF France. Our lads went over tonight on a bombing raid and got in and blew up eight of his dug-outs. The Coy also blew a small mine. The losses on our side were very slight. Fritz's casualties were pretty severe according to all reports. The bombardment preceding our lads going over was something terrific. I only had two tins of petrol to see me through the night, so closed down from 7 pm 'till 11.30 and so was able to keep lights going when they were most wanted.

March 16th

Ran new set for 16 hours and old one for four hours, the miners are driving a vent to allow hot air to get out and so couldn't work half and half until they finish.

March 17th

Running new set again tonight and on 'till the morning when the vent should be finished.

March 27th

Had a note from Moody yesterday that no work was to be installed unless instructions came from our own people.

March 31st

Moody up today and could find nothing wrong. Polarity on switchboards correct. Brought amp metre up and she only shows 9 amps' load. Shall only be able to get about another two lamps on. The Manchesters took over the line from the Leicesters three days ago and about a dozen men could walk

through the whole lot of them. Moody tells me Morse has been made a Major. Sent a note to Blair asking him to send my clothes out to me as I was only supposed to stay three days. It is now two months since first coming here.

April 1st

I don't know if Fritz was playing April Fool's joke on us or no, but he sent over tear shells for about three hours today and incidentally put the top of tunnel in right in front of No. 27 set. Broke four head trees and two side trees. This is just a bit too close to be nice! This engine room could not be in a worse position if they had tried to find one. About a week ago one of the long head trees in No. 37 Engine Room gave away right over the generator. Found out a couple of days ago that 170 Coy had put some of their Sergeants on spying for when lights go out. This is only to see if I report the same as they do. Have asked Moody to see the OC 170 Coy about it. I suppose they think that I should never close my eyes, I'm afraid they are much mistaken.

April 2nd

Some of the Manchester came running up to Engine Room saying that Fritz had put Vigo Street dug-out in. On going down to the place I found two stretcher bearers looking at the place not even attempting to get them out. This seems to be the usual thing with any of the infantry, run away when any of your mates get buried and see if they can find any miners. There were two buried. We got one out alive but there is not an earthly for the other. I heard the remark passed "he doesn't belong to my platoon, let him stay there". This is nice, isn't it. Shows good comradeship amongst the conscripts. God forbid that Australia should have to resort to this to get men. This mob have the "wind up" proper. We have had about three "Gas Alarms" this morning.

April 3rd

There were seven men buried yesterday, three were got out alive and four were dead. I took down cylinders of Set 27 last night and put together again. Found pistons carbonised very bad, also tops of cylinders. An earth came on at about 10 pm and told one of the electricians to have a look at the far end Vigo Street. He came back and reported that it was o.k. This chap and myself then went right round the job and could find nothing wrong, so I went to where I had first told him to look and sure enough there was the trouble. This is the usual thing with these blokes of mine. It's a one man job from the word go. God alone knows what they would do, if someone wasn't here with them. There was one man killed and two wounded of 170 Coy this afternoon. Pilkington, the

chap killed, had only just won a bar to his Military Medal.

April 4th

Fritz put in another place last night and nipped four more men. Two killed and two wounded. 170 Coy are going to put iron girders up instead of head truss and just about time too. Shall go down to Nouise Les Mines tonight. Had a bit of an argument with Gibson this morning, the usual thing with us is the shift coming up. Sets the water and petrol, this chap's shift generally misses such things as this and of course I opened out on him. He didn't like it at all, s'till while I'm in charge here, he has to do his cut, or get out, whichever he prefers.

April 14th

Got half a dozen letters this morning. Lam was saying it was her birthday. A coincidence.

April 16th

Moody up today. Fritz evacuated Colonge and Morock. Our plant in both places were closed down. I wish he would turn it up altogether.

April 17th

Fritz has started to shell Nouise Les Mines again today, he's always at this game now. Gibson has been shifted off my job and sent to Bethune on motorcycle. I have an idea Fritz is going back from Vermelles before very long.

May 6th

Have not had time to write up before so will try again. A number of days ago, Fritz shelled Vermelles very heavily, knocking an advanced hospital about, so as nothing was left standing, right opposite here was a graveyard and I can tell you there wasn't much of it left when he stopped. He has also been shelling Nouise Les Mines off an on for the last few weeks with 9.2 armoured piercing shells. Last night he was putting them into the Rue de Arras and killed a couple of 3rd Australians, two women and wounded a couple of kiddies. The bombardment at Leur and Arras are magnificent to have a look at, but to be under them is a horse of another colour. Moody tells me most of our chaps working down that way have been recommended for devotion to duty. Have had several boils on neck and a few days ago a beaut came on the back of my left hand. It has broken now but the hand and arm is s'till up about twice its normal size and also pretty painful too. The weather is just grand now, could not wish for better.

May 12th

Lieut. Wood has taken all my drivers away and replacing them with mugs who don't know how to

start an engine. I've taught these other chaps all they know and now have to start over again! Some of these Saturday afternoon mechanics who get a pip are beauts. I wish to God it was all over and finished with.

May 16th

No. 1 and 4 Sections have gone over to the Brickfields taking over 251 Coy's work. This Coy 170 were going to build me two engines but after starting they found they could only build one. This is Tres Bien from their point of view but it doesn't correspond with me. The engine rooms we are now in have not the least bit of air in them, with the result the two middle bearings on each engine are very hot indeed, in fact, I shouldn't be surprised if they run. The crank case gets that hot one can't keep their hands on it for more than a couple of seconds at a time. It's Bon running a plant like this and then someone wakes up. Our ar tillery are s till slogging away at Fritz, but it's taking a long time to move him much. Our crowd put Phosferine shells over to him a couple of nights ago and it was pretty to look. Nothing but one sheet of flame.

June 2nd

Have not had time to keep this written up. Shifted both sets from Saville Row tunnel back to Barts Alley Tunnel, this is a considerable distance from the front line. Had to run new mains about 340 yards. By being here, brings us about centre of the job and so we have less drop of voltage at terminals of circuit. Have had no letters for about three weeks, I hope some comes along shortly.

June 3rd

Hazeldine had me out of bed a couple of times. One of the plugs was not firing too good. Put up 2" exhaust on Set 37 but had to take one length off as the gas was turning to water too quick. Stan Closs is just straightening switchboard mains and is making a fair job of it. Put up exhaust pipe 2" on Set 27. No petrol came up last night and have only seven tins left.

June 4th

Went down to Nouise Les Mines this morning.

June 5th

Had double pole switch and tin off BB oil brought down from Vermelles last night and sent on to Munster Tunnel where we are installing a new plant, also sent up Baffling Bore and pipes for the set. Sent magneto to Robinson Tunnel by shift. Viv Downie is going to be attached to this Coy. He is a hard do-er, comes from Tasmania.

June 6th

Came up this morning and found everything o.k. Ted Roots has whitewashed walls and roof of engine room and it looks just the thing. Shall rewire Vigo St tomorrow.

June 7th

Wired up Vigo St pulled old wire from old tunnels and put in new. Put on seven new lights also wired up headquarters and put in two lights. Worked 'till 12.30 pm.

June 12th

Norfolk and Moody came out today. Norfolk very pleased with job. Someone in my crowd keeps doing something to the carburettor. Perhaps they are trying their knowledge with my own. Shall be going to Hazebrouck tomorrow to get some clothes out. Fritz was sending over some gas shells yesterday. He got 46, 16 of whom died from the effects. Finished off an ink well made from 18 lb nose cap.

June 14th

No letters have come along yet but hope some come shortly. There is one of blokes, pulls one of the bells from top of carburettor float, so as float won't work up. Then goes around shouting that he can always get the engines to run well when he's on. Seems to forget that they are always left and overhauled before he comes up. I have set a trap for him on Set 37 and if he plays with carburettor he'll be for it!

June 15th

Did not go to Hazebrouck. Had a tired feeling on this morning. We opened up a heavy bombardment from around Nouise Les Mines early this morning so did not have too much sleep as this lot woke us up. Shall probably go down next time I come from the trenches. News this morning of air raid on London by aeroplanes. We want a lot more machines for Home Defence. They haven't an earthly in the air with us out here. Should like to see the Russians make a push on the Eastern Front, then it would be look out Fritz on the Western. Received parcel from Mona, have brought the fruit and cream up to the trenches, but the biscuits were all broken up. Have had to send two of my men to Robinson Tunnel to give them a hand over there. These men were duds when I got them.

June 16th

Have to bring switchboards out from the wall about another 4" so as to make the back more accessible. 170 Coy have sent up another man to learn how to run an engine and electrical plant. Should like to be able to open my mouth a little bit wider to some of this Coy's officers. I've already been told off by Norfolk for speaking a bit too plain to one of them.

Only told him to get a job he knew something about and not worry himself about things he was ignorant of. The war will finish one of these days and then there may be some straight talk. This Air Raid on London may wake some of the heads up a bit. Why should our women and children suffer, haven't we the same means of dealing out retribution. It can't be brutality if we do. What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

June 17th

Altered mains on E and W yesterday. Made a double pole fuse box at Saville Row main. They are sending petrol up in four gallon tins. Had governor trouble on Set 37 last night, the clutch has worn so as it won't engage in ring. Rigged up governor rod and she worked "Tres Bien", hardly a flicker in the lights. If Jerry doesn't know where these engines are he ought to as I am exhausting in the open and can be plainly seen emitting a fair amount of smoke.

June 18th

Went down to Nouise Les Mines thinking it was pay day but was put off on account of horse show. Jack Penn going to Boulonge Rest Camp. Downie coming down on Wednesday.

June 19th

Blue up a bit of a storm today, any amount of dust. Paid today. Wood sent note 120 gallons petrol every Sunday. Moody rang up to say he was coming up tomorrow.

June 19th

Moody did not come up. Put T pieces in exhaust. Altered switchboard.

June 22nd

Something doing in Sergeants' Hut tonight. Some of them kept pelting Old Gadget 'till about 12 o'clock and then the Old Man kept it up 'till Revielle went this morning and the chaps that started it were going very sore, one chap packed his bed and slept outside.

June 23rd

Moody out this morning before lorries went up, Old Chidley has had a breakdown and Moody is going up north. I think there is something coming off up that way again and it won't be very long in coming. Am driving a shift tonight, one of my chaps has a septic leg and has been excused all duties.

June 29th

Smith reported back for duty today. Shall send him up tomorrow.

June 30th

Oliver came to hut and reported Smith and Chamberlin had gone up to Engine Room. Chamberlin takes the place of Closs.

July 4th

Percy Piper came out to have a look at job as S Sergeant. I came down and left him. Lieut. Cobbett told me some lights were out. My men say everything o.k. Piper also says o.k. Jake Tighe says it was in his sector, No. 253 runs this lot. Capt Brown says to scrub engine room floor out, don't know whether he's gone mad or no, but it won't be done.

July 28th

Young Oliver finished this pair of Jerry's shell cases and finished them o.k.

July 29th

Tried to get cases censored but 170 Coy's officers won't do it so you will have to wait a while for them.

July 29th

Jock McLeod ordered to go to Lens, going over with infantry. I hope they take their objectives. The big do has started up north and the guns are speaking very plain indeed, and the guns are also busy at Lens. If you could only see the number of guns massed here at Vermelles you would say it's goodbye Jerry.

July 31st

Jack Penn is going on leave tomorrow morning. I should say it's just about up to me to go. I can see something doing here in the near future. Jerry was slinging over some big stuff today and put a dug-out in where we used to sleep and also one of our old engine rooms. I'm not sorry we're away from there. He brought down one of our aeroplanes the day before yesterday, only fired four machine gun bullets at it. Landed right on top of Vigo St Tunnel. I'm open to bet a few shillings we go over in this position before very long. Our guns are replying very vigorously and seem to be tickling him up somewhat. Have had no letters for goodness knows when. Suppose they will come along some time or other.

August 3rd

Had radiator 27 off and cleaned it out, she was pretty bad. Only about 3" of mud in the bottom. It seems as if fate is against us in this war, rains like the diggins when we start to push.

August 5th

Into fourth year of war. Papers today seem very optimistic that it won't last another four. Here's a bit I culled from the *Times* today and it is very near right:

*It isn't the foe we fear
It isn't the bullets that whine
It isn't the business career
Of a shell, or the burst of a mine
It isn't the snipers who seek
To nip our young hopes in the bud
No, it isn't the guns
And it isn't the Huns
It's the Mud,*

Mud,

Mud.

This evening about twenty past nine, someone fired a shot across the square and Jack Tighe went across to see who it was. It panned out to be a regular Roughie called Jock Hall. He pulled a revolver out and put it to Tighe's breast and shot him. This Hall has told the OC to take him out and shoot him, as he didn't care what happened. I don't think he will shoot any more men as he will be well looked after now. What I can't make out of it, he wanted to get a Sergeant no matter who it was.

September 5th

This chaps got seven years by Court Martial.

September 9th

Received instructions to send all attached men back as they were wanted. After a lot of fighting, I managed to retain one of them. Sid Hazeldine. I was extremely sorry to have lost Ted Roots.

September 12th

Had two Canadians sent out today to run 19/16 cable through the main mining lateral. Shall be giving them a list as to their capabilities in the course of a few days. Have an Australian called Barnes on this job with me now, I believe he is not too good as a mechanic but time will show. Had news today, that no leave was to be granted to anyone arriving in France after 31st March in the 2nd Army so don't suppose I shall get it for some time yet, worst luck.

September 13th

The attached men left this morning at 11.45 for Bethune where they will get trained to the Base.

September 20th

The 170 Coy have found that Annequin Cole Pit, one of the drives¹⁸ goes several kilometres behind the German lines and in this way have been securing a lot of information. They have put a guard on the Bosche end.

September 26th

The Germans exploded several kinds of gas cylinders down the mine tonight and as far as can be ascertained there is not much hope for the seven men who were on guard when he did it. The gas masks which we are issued with are no use whatever as the gas is that strong that it burns the rubber clean away, this is a new kind of gas which he is using, called "Mustard Gas" on it so being like mustard to smell. A Proto or gas life saving apparatus is no more use than our gas helmets, so there is no chance for these chaps that are down the mine.

September 29th

Received word this afternoon to report back to Hazebrouck by the 1st October. I have connected my plants up with Hulluch job so am cut out for a job. It would not be believed if anyone out there was told that you could walk almost 10 miles underground from Givenchy to Loos but seeing is believing.

October 1st

Reported back today and find I'm booked for rest camp Boulonge tomorrow. Met Les Bingley of 44th Battalion tonight. Major Everett turned windy and had to be sent back to Blighty.

October 2nd

Left Hazebrouck for Boulonge by motor lorry this morning. The country between the two places is rather pretty, it is all hills and dales. It's a pity it was not in June or July, then the flowers would all be out. Passed through St Omer en route. The rest camp is situated right on the sea front at a village called Amblitside, this is one of France's famous bathing and seaside resorts. Between here and Boulonge is a place called Wimeraux, it is here where a large number of Khaki Girls have their work to do and by the number of them, they certainly let a lot of Base scroungers get to the front. These girls look a fairly efficient lot. On getting into conversation with some of them, I was told they have the same rations as we have, the only difference between our military life at the Base is they are much better housed than the troops.

October 7th

It has been extremely bad weather. We have hardly seen the sun since coming here and wind and rain galore. The Cliffs of Dover are plainly discernible from this rest camp and one is sorely tempted to try and swim it. It was rather amusing, the last lot of Australians who were here pinched a Froggie fisherman's boat and started to row to Blighty, after getting to within three miles of the English coast one of our destroyers picked them up and returned them. So much for the three of them, but they had bad luck

¹⁸ Smaller tunnel going off the main tunnel

not getting there, they deserved it. I have been told that leave opens up for August 1916 men again, so may touch lucky and get leave right on top of this. I won't be sorry if I do. The Australians have been distinguishing themselves again in this new push up North. I'm mighty glad that up to date I've been down South. After all the good things which English critics have said about us, Beach Thomas in the *Daily Mail* puts the cream on it. He wrote:

"The whole Army, are talking of the way the Australians took their objectives, had them and were waiting for the others to come up. Without a doubt they are as good as any we have".

So that's not so bad.

October 15th

Left Ambletuese for Hazebrouck last night and got in in the wee small hours of this morning. Left Hazebrouck at 10 am for Vermelles. Found things all anyhow, will straighten them out before long.

October 25th

Lit a fire in Barts Tunnel to cook some tea (steak and onions¹⁹). One of 170 Officers came on the scene while operations were proceeding and went off a treat, we were out on the job from 9.30 am 'till 7 pm with nothing to eat, we told him this but that didn't matter. The fire had to go out. About half an hour after he sent a Lance Jack up to take our names, so do not know how things will go off, when we are able to go down and what's more I don't care very much.

October 26th

Nothing came of the matter so all's well. Fred Belcher (Canada) had to return to his battalion.

October 27th

Sandy and Slim Jim reported back from Hazebrouck this morning. Sandy got 21 day 2nd FP and Slim Jim McGuinness got 28 days 1st FP. These two got into Holts with Military Police some two nights ago and it took the whole of 170 Coy's Sergeants and Nouise Les Mines MPs to run them in.

October 29th

Viv Downie came back from Boulonge today. Went over to Munster to see him. Curtiss, our SM was telling him he was going on leave shortly. I wonder where I come in. Kiddled Downie to come over to Barts with me and he stayed all night.

October 30th

Downie and myself went out this morning. Sent cable gram home for £20. Met Ted Newton tonight and had some joy in a fish and chips shop. Never laughed so much in my life! Made some enquiries re: claiming Norm and found out a younger brother can claim to be with elder, only in case of like units, but if he can show he is a skilled tradesman, on his OC's recommendation, the transfer is possible, so do not know how we will get on.

October 31st

Run new mains from Mains Lateral to fuse boxes in "W". This gives a much better voltage than at present.

November 1st

Sanderson and myself went down to Vermelles for a bit of fresh air. Sandy shot a rat in the Engine Room tonight.

November 2nd

Sent Sandy and Newton to Munster for some wire, but they brought Downie back instead and he slept here instead of going back.

November 3rd

Put a light in Signals dug-out today. Had some fun around there. Took Darkie Marriott with me and we got arguing the point and the Tommies could not understand it at all. Sent Newton to Munster for a pair of fuse blocks and he came back with two boxes complete. He is not a bad slight of hand man at all. On going along the mains last night I found that some dope had pulled one wire clean away from the socket or coupling. On the 30th there was a fall of ground, it pretty greasy on the top in most of these tunnels, caused some soakage and moreover nearly all clay, which does not take much shifting. I have seen Minnies²⁰ penetrate 15'. This fall caught a couple of men who were working there but did no serious damage, suffering from shock. It was rather humorous, one chap was easily got out and the other kept singing out that the top kept coming in and we had to keep brushing the dirt away from his mouth.

November 4th

Came out this morning to Nouise Les Mines. Went up and seen some of No. 3 Tunnelling Coy's boys.

November 5th

Jerry shelling Nouise Les Mines with 9.2's. One shell caught two little kiddies and killed them.

¹⁹ Probably tinned

²⁰ Large German mortars

November 6th

Jerry caught seven French civilians while he was shelling last night. It makes one's blood boil to hear a shell come over and then see the French kiddies and women with babes in arms cutting off down the road to the dug-outs provided. I had to laugh, when he put a shell into a house at the cross roads, a little boy and girl came running over to Downie and myself, the girl holding a piece of red hot shrapnel weighing about three pounds and she said "*Allemand No Bon!*"²¹ So that's about all the fright Jerry can put into these kiddies here.

November 7th

Met Ted Bird tonight and he told me Harold James had gone down the line with sciatica, so he's out of it for a while. Percy Piper came out today and told me I should be going on leave shortly.

November 8th

Moody out today and told me he had sent cablegram which I had asked him to do for £10 to be sent to a Mr Sharp, a friend of his, I have not seen Moody for about a month so did not know if he had sent it or not, but I made doubly sure and sent for another twenty a week or so back. The Big Game hunters are out tonight looking for rats so there should be some blood on some bayonets tonight. Came up to the trenches this morning. Jerry put some gas over on our left this morning but got very little here. Have just been telling Ted Newton my first trip to the trenches and haven't got it in here. Went to Kemell Hill with Frisco Standard set on September 30th 1915 arriving back in Hazebrouck some two days later. I remember how I laughed on going into the trenches to think men were such fools as to want to kill one another. It was at Kemell Hill where I saw the French man laying in No Man's Land, who had fallen before the British arrived on the scene. There has been an enormous number of men, lost their lives up around that part. Just a little out of Hazebrouck (about 2 kms) is a little village of Borre where the Bosche shot the priest because he refused to give up the keys of the church. This affair caused a lot of comment when it happened. There are things omitted when told about. I met a chap (French) who had been a prisoner at Leurs for 19 months (yesterday) and got speaking of the shelling of Nouise Les Mines. He said it was nothing to what we sent over, but Jerry had holed through from cellar to cellar making a subterranean town. Under the ground he had his canteens and such things. He said there was not too much that was any good on top of the ground. It will be hard to get people out there to believe some things which we may tell of, if we have the luck to get back, here's

²¹ German no good!

one. From Givenchy to Hulluch, there is a 6' gallery running the whole way (about 8 miles), branching off this, is all the listening tees. These are used for blowing mines. About 800 from 100 to 400' running to Jerry's line. Then there are 12 infantry galleries varying from half mile to two miles in length, all lit up with electric light and the whole of the excavation has been done since the war and the whole of the dirt has been brought out in sandbags, and there are not many dumps to be seen, small at that. It should not do to have bags piled sky high or Jerry would soon be over to see what was doing.

November 9th

Cleats lamp guards and wire came up tonight, so shall be able to get on with some work tomorrow.

November 10th

Tapped "E Tunnel" direct off the mains with 7/16th cable, put in protected "cut-outs". Altered mains running back through switchboards by running from Saville Road Tunnel cut-outs which will enable me to bring Elephant and Barts Tunnels direct to mains when Saville Row is altered.

November 11th

Moody came out today. Sent Newton across to Downie. Altered Saville Row mains and rewired it. Moody came out to tell me to go on leave, but money had not come along so had to cut it out. He told me he sent the cable to be sent to a Mr Sharp, a friend of his.

November 12th

Wired up the Quarry Tunnel and run new mains for it and also for "W". Put in 18 lights. Cheshires went on a raid tonight.

November 13th

Jerry chased the Cheshires back last night, went over in a fog leaving two machine gunners in a shell hole in No Man's Land, with nine of Jerries. We have been strafing the place proper all day long. Got our chaps in this afternoon. Have heard a rumour the Jerry is on the run Ypres but do not know how true it is. Hope it's right.

November 14th

Had a lot of trouble with mains running through the West Face. Some of these miners keep breaking the couplings, causing terminal ends much trouble.

November 15th

Mr Piper out today to take me back for leave but it's no go, as I have no money. Took him round to see the Quarry Tunnel. Very pleased with the job.

November 16th

Worcesters took over position today. Shift coming up tells us shell landed in a hut in the Billet killing Lance Corp. Paddy Phillips and wounding Trev Smith, they only went down this morning. The shell lifted bed, Phillips and blankets about 100 yards.

November 17th

Came back to Nouise Les Mines this morning and the first greeting was one of Jerry's 9.2's close handy. Didn't take me long to beat it. Put the wind up most of the old soldiers (Mons Heroes). They don't stand shelling too well.

November 18th

Went to Bethune for a change with Sanderson and Downie, tried to find the skating rink, but it has been pulled up.

November 19th

Came back to Barts this morning and sent Marriott down.

November 20th

Went to Givenchy to try and get some photos from Wigzell but it did not come off as he had none. The mob there haven't altered much.

November 21st

Marriott missed this morning's bus, but came up tonight.

November 22nd

Crawford, Welch gave us a dog, but someone pinched him the same night. Doing a bit of revolver shooting at a half penny in the tunnel, getting some expert with one of these things.

November 23rd

Worked pretty hard today. Fixed up any bad places in Saville Row. This Somme advance, must be some stunt and should relieve Italy a bit. Jerry putting shrapnel over Nouise Les Mines.

November 24th

Finished Saville Row today.

November 25th

Started to go over "W Tunnel" today, found some very bad joints. Marriott went to Miners for a couple of candles, which they refused, so borrowed three or four off an infantry officer, rather a descent chap.

November 26th

A couple of letters and Home hand from home this morning. Finished W up today. Put two lights in Stokes Gun dug-out (Quarry). Fired a couple of

rounds to Jerry. Paid the candles back with interest as infantry do not get very many. Put up a fairly lively bombardment all day, culminating in Drum Fire tonight. Gave him 1,000 gas cylinders at 8 pm when 100 men went over on a raid. Only a blind, in my opinion, or a big do at Lens. Black Dog today, left without leaving address. Jerry put B shaft in at entrance to Saville Row.

November 26th

Trev Smith died on 23rd, buried with full Military Honours (only a new regulation). Before there was no firing party for anyone who was not a commissioned officer.

November 27th

The man who was missing when Jerry put B Shaft, was found underneath it. Piper and Moody out today, and to take charge of whole of maintenance from Old Kent Road to Hulluch. Can get leave any time I ask. Have to shift to Munster.

November 28th

Put beds out of Barts and brought across to Munster, this is a cold old place compared to my own place.

November 29th

Went to Brickstacks with Downie, find things anyhow. Six men buried at Quarries last night at Stand To, all machine gunners. Jerry making things willing. Walked to Barts for rations.

November 30th

Went to Brickstacks today, but no wire had come along, so marched back to Munster. Went to right half tonight, found wires broken in mining lateral, Jerry had put a few Minnies on top, and put the infantry W Gallery and also mining lateral in. He's getting pretty warm around this quarter now, put three lights out where the gallery was in, measuring about 20' of tunnel had been blown in, very near time this was done away with. Saville Row has not been fixed up yet.

December 1st

Went through Wilsons, Robinsons, Keith Walk, Mills this morning and found things rotten, most of the wiring will have to be done again. Left Munster this evening for Barts job and on the way down Jerry opened up proper with a Minnie and shell strafe. The timbers were dancing around to some order, on reaching Quarry Tunnel found all the infantry withdrawn to the deep gallery, only the posts holding the line (went to Barts with Newton. Pretty good in heavy stuff). The Bosche had put up a barrage at 3.30 in the afternoon and had come over, leaving one killed behind him. He was in our front line, between

two entrances to "W Tunnel". I found "W" had been put in to some extent, 16 consecutive settings in one place, a machine gun post in another and a platoon headquarters in another. Went to "E" or "New Cut" and found steps leading up had been knocked in so couldn't see what damage done. Went to Saville Row and Vigo St everything Jake. Landed back at 3 am.

December 2nd

Went to Quarry this morning, clambered through a hole big enough for a rat with some wire and so got lights on to most of tunnel. Cut out four lights in "W" and brought straight off mains so only cutting out one that was blocked up completely. Found "W" had been blown in, in five places so did not do so bad. Went on to "E" and got in gallery and found about 40' closed, so had to bring mains round another way, this way has only 12 side trees and 16 head trees bashed in, it only needed about two bullets on top and I don't think I should be writing this. Got this fixed up and went to Saville Row, while going up here, some whipper snapper of an officer said "The lights are out in the right half". Asked him had Vigo St been blown in and he said "yes". Asked was it very bad? "No". On going to see I found at least 50' in place was down and couldn't see 2' into it. I found out that Jerry had been over the night before, and had fired a Very light²² down in amongst some machine gunners in a dug-out and had got back without losing any men. It's simply marvellous how these Minnies penetrate. I been under a few strafes but never anything like this one was, s till he got no prisoners and we raked in one killed, so saves us making a raid to find out who is in, while he has to make another to get one of our's. Viv Downie, Newton and Marriott have been rewiring Old Kent Road today. It was a bit funny yesterday, Downie said he would go to Candbrin to see where some of our stuff had gone and while there promised to act as Push Party for 170 Coy that night to Old Kent Dump, he went to Candbrin with Sanderson, Hollingsworth and Marriott and got caught in the tail end of this strafe. Old Kent Tunnel is right under the Brickstacks in the world famed Brickfields. If he had not promised the chap at the dump he would do this, none of the men, would have gone with him as I do not believe in being a Push Party for any Coy but our own.

December 3rd

Went to "W" this morning, but had not holed through, so could not connect the mains up. Went to Saville Row and wired up old Engine Room, which the Leicesters are using as a Coy HQ, as their old one is blown in. Wired up our old dug-out, put a light in their officers' cook house, some tin pot officer in

the Quarries was shooting his neck about kicking up too much row in front of his dug-out. Only rolled a drum of cable down about 16 steps, bag of tools and our working kit. Too heavy for me to carry.

December 4th

Came down to Nouise Les Mines this morning, Jerry shelling with shrapnel all day. Learned this morning, that four Germans came over at "E" New Cut and took a machine gun away with them. One of the infantry captains shot one of our men in mistake for a Bosche and immediately after the Huns shot him through the head. New Cut was put in in another place last night. Harry Ayres was telling me that Harry Ralph was killed a few days ago. Piper came out today and told me to send Downie to Wings Way (Hulluch) and put in a new switchboard. Wanted me to be up tomorrow to ballot for conscription.²³ Jerry over with a Gotha bombing machine²⁴ tonight and dropped two bombs.

December 5th

Left Nouise Les Mines this morning 7.30 for Munster tunnel. Very cold indeed, well below 0. My toes were not alive when I reached my destination. Piper and Moody out this afternoon, they want Old Kent Road engines out as soon as possible. Brought out ballot papers and there are four Australians on the job and you can take my word for it, we all voted "Yes" with a big X. Jerry was over again today at Saville Row and wacked a machine gunner on the head with a cudgel and took machine gun, the whacked man and another wounded man back with him. It appears as if he can come over opposite Vermelles just any time he wishes to.

December 6th

Went down to Quarry Tunnel and wired up a half of the New Gallery which 185 Coy drove. Sent Sanderson around to Vigo St to see if it were possible to get through to get Vigo St on. He came back and said it wasn't. While in Coy headquarters his hands fell on two suits of Burberry overalls. They are made of rubber and just the ticket to keep the wind and snow, rain out. These things are worth about £6, so we are not doing so bad. The infantry use them for raiding purposes. Ayres reported back to me two days ago. Sent Sanderson, Marriott and Ayres to Old Kent to finish up wiring. Myself and Ayres put in five lights in the New Gallery that 185 drove.

²³ Australian Government had a ballot over introducing conscription, which failed.

²⁴ German flying bomber

²² Flare

December 7th

Newton, Sanderson and Ayres went to Edgeware to spy out the easiest way to bring Potter engines to Cambrin dump. Feeling a big crook.

December 8th

Fuses blown in Quarry Tunnel, could find no reason for it (light fuses). Givenchy is closing down pretty frequently and so making a very poor light as Bulluch cannot run at the same voltage as Givenchy. My throat is swollen and very sore.

December 9th

Givenchy still running anyhow. Sent Newton and Hollingsworth out tonight for rations. They had some joy finding the dump. Sent Sanderson to HQ to go on leave. He has taken my pen to get new plunger put in also a letter and diary to post to home. Gerry put up another Minnie strafe knocking main lateral in at two places. One is about 50 yards past Robinsons and the other is about 200 past Munster (Barts side). He paraded at the Quarry but at present do not know how he got on.

December 10th

The place knocked in to the right of Munster is showing daylight, through a hole of about 15' diameter and is about 20' from Jerry's barbed wire so our chaps have the wind up. Throat much better today. There was a chap wounded at the top of the steps last night, had only been out three days and his first time in the line.

December 11th

Went to Cambrin Dump to make arrangements to have truck left at Old Kent Dump. Our guns busy while we were going down, the lads went over to see how he was at Hulluch, have been told they took four prisoners. Marriott and Hollingsworth cut out RS in a petrol tin. We have put a red background and have our colours in the two top corners. Newton and I went to Annequin and had chips and eggs. I often laugh, this seems to me to be the most staple diet of the pommies! Brought up our rations. Jack Fowley at dump and came up with him.

December 12th

Went to Old Kent to take Petter engines out. We had the assurance of 170 that all bags and timber would have been cleaned out. On going over found we had been sold a pup as Piper seemed a bit crook on it, we decided to go on with the job. 170 officers gave us no assistance whatsoever. After getting to the bags, we then went for a truck and they gave us one with a bad eye bolt. While we were pulling the first generator to the top, the bolt gave way with the result it chased us up the gallery. After getting generator, engines, two

radiators and muffling boxes to the dump, Fritz put up a strafe knocking a length of rails up so we had to put camouflage over what we had out and left it. On reaching home we were told that main gallery had been put in on Barts side. He was putting Prussic Acid gas over. Newton and Marriott were giving the lads in Coldstream a cheap Jack show.

December 13th

Went up to Old Kent again and got both engines and generator out to dump but as we missed the mule and it was too heavy for us to push, so had to camouflage again. Got back to Munster at 2 am. 170 Coy had started to shift the bags away from Edgeware, they went from bad to worse, only filled the trolley line up from mouth of tunnel to dump, so found it necessary to shift them before we could take anything to the dump.

December 14th

Sent Ted Newton to Nouise to make arrangements to have a mill brought up to dump tonight. Rest of us went round at 5 o'clock, I waited 'till 8.30 for Ted. He put his head in mouth of tunnel and sings out "Come on you chaps, here's the donk!" We hooked the mule on and got to Cambrin and Jerry hardly fired a shot, we came over about 2 miles of top, not even any grass growing and never had to duck once. Back to Munster at 10.30.

December 15th

Went to New Cut. Fixed up lights, went out 6.30 am. Harry Ayres found that coupling had been broken at Barts' End. Got back at 10 am for breakfast. Went to Quarry all Jake. Found main galleries in at "H". Coupling broke. Fixed it up. Left Hollingsworth home, the rest of us went to Cambrin and loaded up engines. Self and Newton went down with them. Jack Penn got a smack in neck and shoulder with shrapnel, will get a Blighty out of it.

December 16th

Went to HQ (170) to give engines a bit of a clean-up, while there Jerry started putting 9.2 Whizz-Bangs over. Newton was walking down the yard when one pitched and burst within 6' of him knocking a Proto store out of existence and scattering a lot of debris about. I was in the lorry and was just getting out to see if I could find the pieces of Ted, when I noticed him chasing a couple of horses that had bolted. He is pounding away at the place. We had only just got out of the yard, when he put another three yards away from the other and put a De Dion engine and saw bench out of action. There was a length of light railway line hit which landed half a mile away. He has dropped notes in Bethune saying he is going to level the place on the 27th. I noticed while shelling all

the decorated men were conspicuous by their absence. Only Windy.

December 17th

No lorry from Hazebrouck. Piper out today. No need to wait for lorry to come up for engines. He was telling me that Johnny has been shelling Hazebrouck, the past few days, and that there was 100 casualties. This is with 17" naval gun. Jerry shelling Nouise at 4 pm and s'till at it when we left. Snow for first time yesterday. I was feeling pretty heavy this morning. Brought up my kit as it is much safer up here.

December 18th

Ayres and Marriott went to Nouise for pay. Expected them back by ration lorry but did not turn up. Sent their kits up this afternoon. Jerry gassing tonight.

December 19th

Ted and I went to Barts side today and on arriving found that Saville Row had been blown in, also another part of Vigo St. Hollingsworth went down for pay.

December 20th

Able to get to Saville Row and Vigo St burning again today. Somebody was talking through their hats last night. They only wanted cables shifted from one gallery to another. Marriott and Newton went down tonight. Only took us through about a mile of trenches so nothing doing.

December 21st

Went to Old Kent today. Nothing doing anywhere.

December 22nd

Hollingsworth put five new lights in Stokes Gun position. I went to Quarry and Saville Row and got all lights burning. Ayres and Hollingsworth to Cambrin for rations. Heard today the Jerry put three motor lorries and bath house at HQ yard Nouise out of action.

December 23rd

Went to Barts this morning and found last three lights in Vigo St out. One of the main joints had come away - mended this. Went up to No. 2 Post, they had recovered the corpse of a Lance Corporal who had been buried there. He was unlucky, as he was only caught by right foot and left hand. Never had a bone broken. While working here I got a smack over the left eye, made a bit of a cut along the eyebrow. Ayres, Hollingsworth and myself went to Cambrin met Ted Newton and Marriott with most of our Christmas stuff. Only had four sandbags full of it. Marriott up, Newton back. Had four Walleys sent

out from Australian YMCA, also some comforts from W.A. Miners' & Tunnellers' Fund.

December 24th

Harry Ayres and myself went to Cambrin dump to meet Ted Newton with rations and goose. While going down Railway Alley, we opened up with a strafe and of course Jerry replied. This was at 10.30. While at the dump Jerry started again. We were putting over gas. While we were on the road back Wilsons Way we got caught in another pretty severe strafe, the worst for the night. He had put the trench in in four places. It was Jackaloo scrambling over this part. Just at the end of Wilsons he dropped an aerial dart, one piece hit me on the shoulder, while two hit Ayres, luckily neither of us got cut. Went round the whole of job and made sure all lights were correct. Put three new lights in. Shall go over the whole lot of it again tomorrow morning.

December 25th

Jerry and our people kept strafing 'till the early morning hours and then things quietened down somewhat. Got up at 10 o'clock. I shaved and did up like a sore toe. Hollingsworth and Ayres went up through job to Old Kent. While Marriott and myself went through to Saville Row. We got back at 2 pm ready to do justice to goose and things. I think the five of us had a regular blow out. It made the lot of us let our belts out. We lit up the outside of the dug-out with five 25 CP lamps, about 5" away from one another, while inside we had three lamps on an adaptor and brought down through a cigarette tin, this was in the centre of the room, in another corner we had a 25 CP over a small table where we do our cooking, then we had another where it would show up the rising sun we have in the door.

December 26th

Got out of bed at 12.30 this morning. Harry Ayres, the cook. Hollingsworth, Newton and myself went up to Old Kent as the lights were very low. Ayres and Newton have gone for rations tonight. This is Boxing Day and we have spent it very quiet. The thoughts of another Boxing Day have been with me all day. Should have liked to have been able to go on the river.

December 27th

Ted Newton and myself went out to Nouise Les Mines. Missed the lorry and had to walk down. The snow had frozen and it was some walk! We stopped at Saily La Bouse and had a cup of cocoa at the Church Army Tent, it went down pretty well. Rang up Hazebrouck and had to tell them I could not go on leave.

Sergeants' Mess - Engine Room

Schooner on the rocks
Grilled Steak fried in engine oil
Rooty & Porry
Petrol & Oil Pudding
(fan grease flavour)
Jardines on Toast
Char & Cocoa au lait
Beaucoup Salad
Bon Jour - Tea Roots Catery

December 28th

Stanley came out today for two Petter Engines, which Newton and I loaded. Wire etc. was brought out. Came back to trenches tonight. Sat playing cards till 12.45.

December 29th

Some 7/16 wire came up last night, so decided to rewire Wilsons South, as it is in an awful mess. Took Newton with me. No. 1 Section are still ripping and while we were there, the top started to run with him and hang me, if they knew how to catch it up. This held us up for three hours. Eventually we got the mains run out. Sent Ayres and Hollingsworth to finish up Coldstream and deaden the switchboards. They arrived back at 8.30. I had just started out to look for them.

December 30th

Got up at 9.50 am this morning. Hollingsworth, Ayres and Marriott went through to Old Kent and then on to Cambrin dump where they picked up 75 lamps, 50 lamp guards. Told Charters to have wire sent up to Munster. They got back about 4 o'clock. Marriott and Newton were acting the fool, when Marriott slipped and split his head, about 2½" of a cut being the result. Had he not been blessed with an extraordinary thick skull, he would have most assuredly fractured his nut! Sanderson has not come back, but am expecting him back any time now.

December 31st

Newton and myself went up to finish Wilsons, while we were there, met one of the Divisional Signallers, who had short on, but which he could not find. They had sent a complaint into 170 Coy. We cut everything for him and then it was still on so we stopped them with that. We managed to get most of the lights burning. While we were here we struck an officer who was telling us he was going out on a patrol. Let the birds who want prisoners get them. I know of a couple of shell holes where I can keep the cold and wind away and I don't think the boys will

worry much. While we were in here our own trench mortars were dropping short and knocked a couple of our own men. We got back about seven o'clock. We then stayed up playing cards to see the New Year in. At two minutes to 12 we opened up with a machine gun barrage for five minutes and that was all that actually happened here, although on either side there was a pretty severe straffe. Some of the Infantry were out in front of us and wished them the Compliments of the Season. I did not think this time last year we should spend another in France, but lets hope for a better next time.

1918

January 1st

We started another year. Got up this morning at 9.30 but decided not to do anything, so spending the day in the dugout. The news came across this morning that Jerry had tried to get to Hulluch Tunnels, but had one reached our barb wire. Givenchy seems to be having a lot of trouble, the lights are very poor. Newton and Ayres have gone over to see what is wrong. Our people are pasting Jerry with trench mortars pretty heavy just now. Ayres and Newton came back, with rations. Givenchy having magneto trouble.

January 2nd

Nobby Hopkins and Wright came into the dugout at 2 am this morning and kept kicking up a row till 3 and I had to tell them off to some order. Marriott and Hollingsworth went to the Barts job. Newton and myself finished Wilsons. Jerry put up a strafe from 9.15 till 10 am. Put an entrance in at Munster burying three machine gunners. Newton went out to try and get them out. Nobby Clarke tells me the officer is looking for the Australian Tunnellers so Newton must have taken complete charge. There was two men killed, one got away light. They had to heave off as a lot of timber is pinning them by the legs. One man jumped down a vertical shaft 35' deep and broke his ankle. I think the strafe was a bluff for somewhere else.

January 3rd

I suppose Norm knows what France is like now and I'll bet he doesn't think too much of it.

January 4th

Went to Nouse this morning. Viv Downie came out to relieve me to go on leave, but had to refuse. He was in Scotland. He had a good time while there. Harry Curtis our erstwhile S.M. was caught in Popperhinge. Tom Dowling came back from Blighty. Downie tells me he had all the swank and bounce in the world. Jimmy Franklyn is concerned in it. Curtis and Jimmy got away with £150. Dowling has been faking the acquittance rolls. Been putting 10 francs

in pay book and 40 in roll. Caught in Blighty with three passes from such a date to (no date at all). Put up for desertion and very nearly got away with it. Court Martials come up tomorrow. They should get lively time of it.

January 5th

S till in Nouise. Piper was coming out today. Didn't come as arranged. Downie should have gone back to HQ. Marriott and Ayres walked back to trenches 3 am this morning.

January 6th

Came up this morning with Newton. Hollingsworth up last night. Gun pasting Jerry. Robertsons knocked in last night. Jerry put up a beautiful Minnie strafe from 3 pm 'till 6. Do not know what he is up to. Suppose he is body snatching again. Knocked the support line flat. Much more damage in Reserve than front. One place between Robinsons and Wilsons 30' deep. The main lateral in to tune of 40' (approximately 15 sets). Hulluch running right half, Givenchy the left. Struck fine officer (42 Div) one of the finest I've met in France from English regiment.

January 7th

Had them out at 7.30 this morning. Ayres and Marriott went to Barts. Newton and I to where lateral is in. They have not holed through yet. Two of the Hulluch boys over this afternoon. Hobbs takes Buckingham's (on leave). Hobbs some boom. Told them to go back and tell him, he had enough to look after his own job and not take the wind and send men out to another job. Downie took over paybooks to HQ on account of faked rolls. Morse has £150 pay in his book. I'm told all the officers are putting £25 in each to help him out. Ruff 170 draftsman being recalled Patented Gas arrangement.

January 8th

Marriott, Ayres to Barts. Myself and Hollingsworth to Blow Miners have put in two sets since it happened, 48 hours. Could do more myself in three hours. Old Gadget pretty mad. The Bosche put in two listening Tees badly. Closs in today, Lloyd George's peace terms in paper. By what he said I'm wondering why England came into the war, Ayres and Newton dopey. Want to sleep whole time. Closs saying Lieut. Woods is trying to get Hollingsworth absorbed by 170. Downie landed out with two men (Doyle and Clarke) to take out Barts engines. Downie saying Hollingsworth has to go. Ayres and Hollingsworth had to go to Old Kent as lights have been out all day (blown fuses).

January 9th

Newton and myself went to lateral (blown in). Cannot get through yet. Came back and went down to give Downie a hand with engines. God alone knows what some of these chaps would do if they never had someone else to rely on. Marriott and Newton did most of the bullocking. Viv could not even make arrangement for mules to pull him down. Eventually we got them away and we (Munster) came back. After being home for an hour one of our Saville Row Tunnel Wardens to say lights were out. Marriott and Newton went down. Wire broke.

January 10th

Newton and myself went to main lateral which is knocked in and was told Robertsons was in darkness, but as main lateral is in on the north of tunnel also it is impossible to get juice through. The first appears to be more of a blown (mine) to me than anything else. Hollingsworth and Ayres went to Barts to pull out cable which has to come down now that engines have been taken out. Downie and his two men left at 2.30 pm to load engines at Vermelles. No water in tanks today. Jerry bumping a bit today.

January 11th

Marriott and Ayres went down to Barts side. Pulled out one length of cable. Newton and myself went to Robinsons. Found we were able to get in between the two falls. Got the mains clear of any stuff on them. Found the leads supplying Robinsons were broken off and had been shorting. Mended this and got the line connected up, but found Givenchy had cut out. Went up further and found Mills was out blown fuse. Got to Old Kent and sent message through signals that mains were cleared. Jerry put up a strafe at Cambrin dump. Did not do very much damage. The main lateral appears to me as if Jerry has got in over on the top and has blown down and caught the gallery. The water tanks are out of action again and we have to bring the water from Wilsons, where they have a well. Givenchy cut in about 6 o'clock.

January 12th

The miners could not hold the top at Robinsons and so brought the top and sides in with it with the result that Hulluch was running half and Givenchy the other. Robinsons was out for 10 hours. Hollingsworth and Marriott went to Saville Row. Pulled out all the 7/16th cable from the old engine room. Ayres and myself went to Old Kent, we found about 40 lamps out. While here, Mr Roges 170 Coy officer said something about 25, but I did not know what he meant and told him so.

January 13th

Up all last night. Had another fall last night near Robinsons. Broke the mains in two places. Could do no good, got back at 9 o'clock this morning so hopped in to bed. At half past 11, Charlie Walker came over with Jack Nancarrow and Scotty Parker. Don't know what he wanted. He told me that a chap called Doyle was coming to take Hollingsworth's place, who is being absorbed by 170 Coy. This Doyle has only just come back from doing 56 days' FP in Wandsworth. I have heard of him and he is believed to be one of the worst characters in the Coy. This was Walker's first trip to see me since he got his rise (Staff Sergeant). Managed to get Givenchy on at 7.30 pm tonight. The lights are showing up pretty bright. Marriott reckons he can't sing. The motor lorry which came out to take engines away has been held up on account of roads thawing. The 170 Coy have been getting strafed to some order in Nouise. Their camp has come under some ar tillery fire at different times, but the climax was reached yesterday when he put seven huts out of existence and catching the rest of it on fire. They are moving No. 3 Section to Bethune and the rest are moving somewhere else, excepting HQ and No. 2 Section who are staying in the camp. This is like the heads with Red Tape, the camp should have been moved months ago!

January 14th

Harry Ayres went to Nouise. Newton and myself went to the Brickstacks, found several new lights that we did not know were there. Main gallery is s till impassable, but the cable are not damaged. Hollingsworth went to Saville Row.

January 15th

Newton and myself went to Brickstacks again today. Givenchy is running anyhow. Marriott went to Saville Row. Munster fuses blew about 12 o'clock tonight. A terminal light was shorting and a lamp guard was also doing the same. No rations up last night or tonight, but made a complaint to Mr Barclay, so presume something will come out tomorrow. Some clothes came out from Hazebrouck.

January 16th

Marriott and myself went to Brickstacks, everything o.k. Hollingsworth went to Saville Row. Had a letter from home stating money had been sent me. Have not heard anything about it up to date. Doyle and Ayres came up tonight.

Givenchy s till running very bad. The main lateral (sides) have started to come in where the top has been in. Have not heard nothing re: Hollingsworth leaving the job, but the sooner the better, as he's a pest where he is with me. Jerry has been shelling

Nouise pretty heavily again. Headquarters are s till there. Beaucoup rations up tonight.

January 17th

Hollingsworth reported back to 170 Coy today and am now short of any men, who they every procured. Thank the Lord! Went to Saville Rd with Harry Ayres, Newton and Marriott went to Old Kent Rd. Givenchy s till running anyhow. Magneto trouble s till I believe.

January 18th

Went to Brickstacks. There is about 3' of water in Coldstream Tunnel and its bon. In low lateral leaving to Old Kent, mud is well over the ankle. The trenches are in an awful mess. This is on account of no revetting have been put up and so the clay sides are falling in.

January 19th

Ayres and myself went to Saville Row end. Found a joint²⁶ had been made and taped up with sandbag strings. Didn't forget to be rude to some of them. Newton and Doyle went to Brickstacks. They were showing the whole of a Stokes trench mortar and also fired a few rounds over at the Bosche.

January 20th

Marriott and myself went to Old Kent side. Found lateral in an awful condition. From Mills Tunnel to Old Kent is pretty. Along Coldstream to No. 12 Brickstack there is at least two feet of water. No. 1 Section are making a sniping base to same stack. Doyle and Ayres went to Saville Row. They found the fuses in the Quarry blown out to a dug-out coming in. Newton cook. About 6, Doyle and Newton went out to Churchill Cut to find a first aide post as Doyle knows some of the boys in the line. 42nd Div. They were in Egypt.

January 21st

Doyle and Marriott went to Barts side today, they wired up a new dug-out, which No. 2 has made for themselves. Put three lights in. When Newton and Doyle were at Givenchy last night, they were asked to break a coupling this side of Old Kent Road. They did this and when Givenchy cut in, they petered out very quick, so they connected Hulluch up again. Newton and myself went to Brickstacks and found a beautiful light there, Givenchy lads had been down and broken the coupling. Left a note to say who it was. We put two lights at No. 3 Brickstacks. The 11th Div relieved to 46th in this tunnel yesterday morning and last night took a prisoner, one of the

²⁶ Presumed an illegal join had been put in to run some power off.

32nd Prussian Guard, who have just come from the Russian front.

January 22nd

Ayres and Marriott went to Cambrin dump to see if any lamps were there but there was nothing there for us. Newton and myself went to Old Kent Rd. Givenchy is running that far. Hulluch taking the rest of the load. While in Old Kent we met Morse, Walker and Wigzel. It appears as if one of the engines had broken down completely so with two engines they have enough without us on. We are putting a pump in Coldstream as there is about 3' of water in the tunnel. They are just beginning to take a Jerry. This present system is rotten. When the idea is first mooted, I turned the idea down. Now they talk of installing my system.

January 23rd

Hollingsworth slept up here last night. He was up before any of us and got the breakfast on. Ayres and myself went to Barts job. Found cable saturated with water in Vigo St. Doyle and Newton went to Old Kent, they found the lights had been out since "Stand To" 4.45 pm last evening. It appears Jerry landed two shells on it at that time. They sent a telegram to Givenchy telling them because once we do repairs over the top, the Givenchy crowd will swing it on to us always. This measly crowd to whom we are attached forgot purposely to bring our rations up tonight. Had to send a couple of men down to the dump for them.

January 24th

Marriott and myself went to Barts side everything jackaloo. Main gallery squeezing in and it appears to me as if the miners do not know how to stop it. Barts gallery is knocked in just up from 170 Coy officers' dug-out. Doyle and Ayres went to Givenchy but they had another engine broken down which had been replaced by one I took away from them more than 12 months ago.

January 25th

Newton and Doyle went down today. They should have been back tonight but have not yet turned up. They will get our pay books. Marriott and myself wired up a 6" Stokes position which has to be firing by the 27th. Preparing for the Kaiser's Birthday. No rations with Push Party. Ayres and Marriott gone to the dump. No. 3 Section's cook took them up to me. Have been mixed up with section's rations. Any amount of activity in the air today and also tonight. Both sides very busy indeed.

January 26th

Newton and Doyle came up very early this morning and brought a big mail for me with them and I found out the money had been sent but do not know where. Ayres and myself came out to Nouise Les Mines. I rang Hazebrouck and told them I was ready to go on leave. Jerry put over four shells today.

January 27th

I shall stay down here 'till I hear when I'm to kick off for Blighty. About 10.30 tonight Jerry had the audacity to come down to within 50' of the huts here and open up with his machine gun. He again did it somewhere around 1 o'clock. This time he chased an engine on the railway line. I'll bet he put the breeze up the driver and fire man. It is the first time that ever I've had the wind up proper! I don't mind his bombs, there is only one or two at the most of them, but I bar machine gun fire.

January 28th

Piper out today. Shall be going on leave on the 4th February. Morgan is taking over from me. At present he is at Loos.

January 29th

Morgan came over today, he will be going up on the 1st.

January 30th - 31st

S till in Nouise Les Mines. 15,000 prisoners. Italians getting some of their own back.

February 1st

S till in Nouise Les Mines.

February 2nd

Walked from Nouise Les Mines to Bethune to catch train for Hazebrouck. Arrived 3.30. Blair is Billet Sergeant. Works in 2nd Army Workshop.

February 3rd

Nancarrow Jack came back from Blighty this morning. Says the place is not too bad at all. Seems to think the war will finish inside three months. I hope he is right, but I'm doubtful.

February 4th

Left Hazebrouck this morning for Calais. Caught the boat at 12 pm and landed in Dover at 2 pm. Hit Horseferry Rd about 4 o'clock and had a change of clothes and got away from them about 5. Stayed at the Strand Palace for the first night. Wired Norm stating that I had hit Blighty.

February 5th

Stayed in London today and tonight met Chalmers. Went out to Belvedere with him and stayed and few days with him. He had a few away from work.

February 6th

Went and had a look at the Revue called "Bubbly". It was not too bad at all but I do not go nap on the Revues.

February 7th - 15th

Going around having a look at the different places of interest. Saw the King and Queen and Prince of Wales at the opening of Parliament on Tuesday, 12th. Met Norm on Friday night, 15th. He hardly knew me! He has filled out a bit but is still the same old stick.

February 16th

Norm and myself had a good tour around. Went to several different shows together. On the 18th we booked two seats for Chu Chin Chow, but the show did not get on the boards. On the 16th Johnny was over London on a raid, they dropped a couple of bombs pretty close to Woolwich Arsenal, killing several people. He was also over on the Sunday and Monday nights as well, so I thought I was back at the war.

February 19th

Back to France. Norm came down to Victoria Station at 7.30 am, as I had to be going back to France. This was the only day I felt a bit down. We got away from the station about 8 am. Landed at Dover about 8 am. Got on the boat at 2 o'clock and hit Calais at 4 pm. Marched up to the No. 6 Rest Camp. Got up at 11 in the night to catch a train up to Hazebrouck.

February 20th

Got to Hazebrouck at 5.30 this morning and had a couple of hours sleep. Reported to Office at 10.30 am and found I was due for inoculation against Para Typhoid which gave us 48 hours excused all duty.

February 21st - 22nd

S till knocking about Hazebrouck. Asked today to be sent out to the line.

February 23rd

Left Hazebrouck for Nouise Les Mines. Going to 170 Coy again. Landed out at 10.30 am. Shall be going up in a couple of days' time. While passing Bethune I noticed Johnny had been tickling the place up to some order. The people here seem to have the breeze up to some order over this coming German offensive.

February 24th

S till in Nouise Les Mines. Shall be going up tomorrow morning.

February 25th

Dave Morgan came up to see me this morning before I came up. Got up with No. 2 Section and walked through to Munster. They have the galleries cleaned up pretty well.

February 26th

Dave Morgan came up this morning. Doyle and myself went to Old Kent. Found everything o.k.

February 27th

Marriott and myself went to Old Kent and Coldstream, got an Austin pump working, but she did not seem to make much impression on the water, this is a gallery and five listening Tees full to the head tress.

February 28th

Time is flying. Marriott and myself went to Old Kent and get on to pump again. We got it away at 12 noon and left it in charge of one of 170 RE's listeners. When we got back to Munster found Charlie Walker was out. Morgan went to Saville Row. At 7.30 pm Doyle and myself went over to the pump again and found it running Tres Bien.

March 1st

Marriott went to Saville Rd, Doyle and myself took Walker out to pump. The chap who was looking after it had just stopped, but she had taken the water down a foot, which is approx. 20,000 gallons. On going up to see how delivery was going, I found the weight of water had knocked a trench in, much better than if a trench mortar shell had hit it. Haven't heard from Norm since I came back from Blighty.

March 2nd

Doyle and myself went to Old Kent and found the water had come down about a foot. Not much for a 12 hours' pumping. Marriott went to Saville Row.

March 3rd

Marriott and myself went to Old Kent and found pump. Water had gone down another foot. We then dropped the pump down another 3' and then found the pump would not throw to the top of the parapet. So we had to put another length of suction and increase the lift and reduce the head. We eventually got it away o.k. Dave Morgan went to Saville Row. Wrote to Lam tonight.

March 4th

Met Charlie Calf and P J Smith from Givenchy at Old Kent and they told us Arthur Wigzell had been wounded, having an eye knocked out. Went to Newton Gun and watched them putting 6" over to him. Ted Newton landed up this morning. Came back from Blighty.

March 5th

Newton and myself went to Old Kent. I told them to put more delivery on but they would not do it so pump is standing idle. Doyle and Dave Morgan went to Cambrin. Johnny was shelling the place last night. Newton gave the sleeping dug-out a regular cleaning up, and not before it was wanted. Got my pen back yesterday, also a lot of mail from home. It was not bad at all.

March 6th

Newton and myself went to Old Kent. Pump s till standing. Doyle and Marriott went to Saville Row.

March 7th

Doyle and myself went to Old Kent. We put two new lights in Robertsons. Dave Morgan and Marriott went to Saville. They met a Brig. General who wanted to know when some new lights were going to be put in Vigo St.

March 8th

Doyle and myself went down to Saville Row and the Quarries. Found a Newton gun position ready to wire up. Newton went to Brickstacks, Morgan went down to Nouise. Three of us went back to Quarry and wired it up.

March 9th

Marriott, Newton and myself went to Saville Row and Vigo St. run new 7/16th mains through the whole lot. We tapped on about 43 lights and finished up about 9 pm.

March 10th

Doyle went to Saville Row end. Marriott went to Brickstacks. I had a day off. This afternoon Johnny got a bit vicious and was pounding pretty heavily. The boys seem to think the Bosche is going to bring something off by way of an attack.

March 11th

Newton and myself went to Nouise Les Mines. No. 2 section have been relieved on dug-out work by No. 3 section. Met Dave Morgan as he was coming up by second lorry. Johnny is getting very unpleasant with the shelling around Vermelles.

March 12th

Newton and myself walked into Bethune this morning and walked back. This is about five miles from Nouise. Johnny was over about 8 o'clock and brought two of our balloons²⁷ down. I believe we brought the machine down before he reached his own lines. Met George Williams tonight.

March 13th

S till in Nouise. Johnny has been pasting Vermelles and Philosophe with big stuff. Been searching for our batteries I suppose. Newton went sick this morning. Sent to hospital. Serg. Johns went a bit mad this afternoon firing his revolver in the hut.

March 14th

Johnny is s till sending heavy stuff into the villages as far as Saily Labrouse. S till searching for our guns. Met our late WO of No. 6 Tunnelling Coy, Rogers. He spent time in Blighty. We give the Germans some shells during the night time.

March 15th

Went to Robinsons to have a look at some dug-outs. Marriott went for rations. Doyle went out to go to Ypres to see his brother. There was a man killed and another wounded at the entrance of Munster.

March 16th

Dave Morgan and myself went through to Robinsons and put in five new lights. One of 170 Attached men was killed at Marlybone Tunnel this morning. Main lateral knocked in between Munster and Quarry, about eight settings coming in.

March 17th

Marriott and myself went to Old Kent. Light out in No. 11 Brickstack. Broken cable. Marriott and Dave have to go to Barts for rations. Newton gunners say Johnny may be over on a raid in the morning as the wire is cut in two places. "Wind Up" about gas.

March 18th

Dave Morgan went to Old Kent and while there found that two metal filament lamps had been replaced by two carbon filament. Coldstream was out. Cause blown fuses. Mills was out, same cause. I went to Saville Row and pulled out all our wire that was not in use. Main lateral knocked in between Munster and Quarry tunnels.

March 19th

Went to Quarries and Saville Row. Marriott went to Old Kent Rd. Last night they sent up a sandbag full of papers for me. Ted Newton reported back from

²⁷ Probably observation balloons

hospital today. Doyle came back from visiting his brother at Ypres.

March 20th

Dave and Ted went to Old Kent. Marriott and myself went to Saville Row end. When we arrived back found that Morse and Piper had been out. They have received three complaints in a week that lights were out. This job knows nothing about it. This present system, which is in here now, is a failure and the heads do not know which way to get out of it. Newton started an argument about the capabilities of the different sports of Australians. Mostly Vics on this job. This lasted about four hours. Honours even. Johnny strafing and sending over gas shells.

March 21st

Charlie Walker here before we were out of bed. He came out to debit AIF War Book. Some of us were on leave when it was being canvassed for so did not get the opportunity of procuring one. He told us that a report had reached HQ that only one man was up on this job at one time. Flatly Refuted. Ayres came back from leave today. Norm wrote a couple of days ago, stating he may be coming away shortly and he would receive leave. "Did I have any money?". "Yes, £5 sending him £2/10 of it".

March 22nd

At 12.10 last night, Johnny opened up with a very heavy barrage. Newton was doing some writing, the rest of us being in bed, so we had to hop out quick. Left Dave Morgan and the rest to look after an entrance to our dug-out and Newton and myself went up to the front line. On the road up, we met an Infantry Sergeant who wanted to know where some bombs were as there were none up at the tunnel post, so we installed ourselves as bomb carriers, when we had a stock up, I had a look round to see if all entrances were guarded and found three that were not held so I watched them respectively until Newton sent men along. Johnny held our front line entrance for a while but eventually mizzed off. He got back to the officers' dug-out in the reserve line and took two batmen back with him. He rounded up all the men in the front line, taking 20 men back with him, killing another and taking 8 prisoners. His barrage was between our front and reserve lines. I thought that we would have a bit of a scrap with him, but he was too shrewd to come down the tunnel. Doyle went to Old Kent. Newton and myself went to Saville Row. Morgan and Marriott went out this morning. Larry Doyle came home and says "Johnny made an attack at St Quintin but had only reached our front line loosing many prisoners and many killed". There is something fishy about this raid last night. Too many prisoners being taken.

March 23rd

Ayres and myself went to Saville Row, Newton went to Old Kent. We have been told that Johnny may attack on Monday morning. The night of the raid he knocked out a few down at the reserve line. Have been a bit crook tonight.

March 24th

Newton and myself went to Saville Row way everything Jack. Doyle and Ayres went to Old Kent. Things very quiet here. Everyone very much awake.

March 25th

Newton and myself went to Saville Row everything Jake, Marriott came up tonight. Things quiet, same as last night. When we went for rations, saw Jock Robertsons of No. 2 Section. What to do.

March 26th

Percy Piper out today, want some more lights up somewhere around Old Kent. What a beaut Fritz has put up on Paris, somewhere around 75 miles. Some gun.

March 27th

When Piper was out yesterday he told us to wire and light up Crater Post somewhere in the Brickstacks. I suppose it is over near where the Givenchy crowd have their pumps in. Today Marriott and Ayres went over to Brickstacks. Found fuses blown in Mills Tunnel. We shall be going down the other tonight.

March 28th

Dave and Harry went to Old Kent. Marriott and myself went to Saville Row. We wired up another tunnel entrance from a front line post. There are some very conflicting reports coming up from scene of present battle which started on the 21st, but we are now holding him I think.

March 29th

Harry and myself went to Saville Row. Ted and Dave went to Old Kent. The news came up tonight that we have turned him at Albert and have regained immense booty gains, the report is we have knocked him back two miles. I hope it is correct. I think this battle is the finish of any big hostilities anyhow. Let us sincerely hope so.

March 30th

Dave and Marriott went to Old Kent. Everything o.k. Newton and myself went to Barts. While reading the paper in No. 2 section's dug-out, Hulluch hit the voltage up, result blew out 12 lamps. Marriott, Newton and myself went to Barts with Wilson to

have a look at their gun position. They have a fine place.

March 31st

Ayres and Marriott went to Old Kent. Newton and myself went to Saville Row. No news of big battle coming up. In the evening, Dave, Newton and myself went for rations and found one of the wires pulled away from the coupling, could not find who did it.

April 1st

Another month gone past and the biggest battle in history is taking place. Marriott and myself went to Saville Row. Dave and Harry went to Old Kent. Three raiding parties going out tonight some time. Found signals had tapped on to terminal light at Munster Steps, put up on us during the night. They had rather a good scheme working and deserved better luck, but they should put it up on new chaps at this kind of work.

April 2nd

Harry and Newton went to Old Kent. I was feeling very weary, so did not go out. Newton and myself went for rations in the evening, got a bundle of letters. God alone knows where they have been! This morning, 1 am, some of the boys were to go on a raid, but when they got to Johnny's²⁸ wire with a Bangalore torpedo²⁹, they found it was too thick to get it under, so had to give over the idea. When they were coming back he got on to them with a machine gun wounding three and killing one.

April 3rd

S till doing the rounds. Big battle s till on. Johnny is certainly loosing a large number of men.

April 4th

Things s till the same.

April 5th

Ayres and myself went out to Noeux Les Mines. Missed bus down.

April 6th

Johnny opened up with a barrage this morning, up around Givenchy.

April 7th

Repeat

April 8th

The bombardment died down a little this morning.

April 9th

We got up and caught a lorry to new camp at Verquin and from there caught a bus for the trenches.

April 10th

Knocked Marlybone Tunnel in Givenchy. Engines have not been on for a few days past. Came on this morning at 12 o'clock.

April 11th

Things fairly quiet but our guns are giving him no respite, keeping at him all the time. Believe he took Neville and Bailleul, when he opened up with his Flanders push.

April 12th

S till travelling the mains on the job. Don't know how long Johnny will allow us to keep it up.

April 13th

Repeat yesterday. Found Mill Tunnel knocked in. Coldstream and Old Kent.

April 14th

Same as yesterday. Old Kent s till coming in.

April 15th - 23rd

Repeat yesterday. Been some heaving fighting, up around Givenchy. On the 20th Johnny raided at Mill Tunnel killing five of our men and we got the same number of his. On his men we found two Iron Crosses³⁰, so they must have been special troops.

April 24th

Charlie Walker out today. He has been down south (Arras). We lost eight plants up north. Nancarrow, Geydon and Charlie Calf are missing from Givenchy job, so they have a new personnel.

April 25 - 26th

Nothing unusual doing. Am expecting a plant now. Have been in 170 Company's new camp at Verquin. This is just behind Bethune, right on top of a hill, these people have the wind up, proper!

April 27th

Brought a 17 hp Aster set³¹ out tonight and proceeded to Cambria dump, where we put it on the light railway for the tunnel. Working all night. Three new chaps came out with it. McLean, McDonald and Murphy.

²⁸ The Germans

²⁹ Bangalore Torpedo was an explosive device used for blowing up barb wire defences.

³⁰ German military awards

³¹ Presumably a pump

April 28th

Had the pleasure of erecting this engine and then having to turn it round. This was after my telling Piper that she wanted to be turned around. Three men were buried at Old Kent the other day. All killed.

April 29th - May 5th

Johnny put over gas a couple of times. Everything else normal.

May 6th

Broken flange for water delivery on Aster. Nothing unusual.

May 7th - 14th

Any amount of wind owing to our people sweating on Johnny coming over. Ran a big end on bearing tonight, the trouble being someone had smashed an electric globe in the crank case and neglected to remove several pieces.

May 15th

Met Austin set at Cambria tonight and brought it up the line. Working all night.

May 16th

Got new set away this afternoon. She runs fairly well.

May 17th

Found generator bearing had moved half way around, causing some heat and we were very lucky to find out. More good luck than good management.

May 18th

Nothing unusual. Things fairly well. Losing polarity pretty often.

May 19th

Sent new big end out. Pin on crank worn and they sent out a half round 2nd cut to file it up with. Should be turned. Shall have to do the job with emery paper.

May 20th

Nothing unusual. McLean and Marriott reported to HQ Verquin for Bethune fire.

May 21st

Aster working o.k.

May 22nd

The lads went on a raid. Took five prisoners. Left three with him. Had 20 wounded.

May 23rd

Nothing much doing.

May 24th

Doyle, Fernandez and Cain relieved Morgan, Newton and Marriott. Gone back for a spell.

May 25th

Trouble with both engines. Also polarity. Getting things fixed up.

May 26th

Everything running. Good Oh!!! Shall go out tomorrow if nothing goes wrong.

May 27th

Came out to Verquin this morning and went into Bethune. I got a bag of files and different, also helped to get a piano.

May 28th

The town of Bethune is knocked about considerable. Nothing much of the houses left. There are some fine souvenirs in the place, shall try to get a few of them.

May 29th

Went to Bethune tonight, but the souvenirs are much too heavy to carry away. There is some fine china and silverware of all descriptions there.

May 30th

Nothing of any consequence doing. Johnny put the Verquin camp out of mess today, put HE³² and gas shells into it. We had to sleep in the wood just over from the camp. Not so bad either.

May 31st

Shifting to Labussiere, a few Yanks billeted down this way, the country is very pretty indeed, all hills and valleys with the different villages at the bottom.

June 1st

Johnny seems to be going pretty well down south. Getting well away with it.

June 2nd

Built a fine bivouac and made four beds today in the wood we are in so didn't do too bad. Shall be going up in the morning.

June 3rd

Came up trenches this morning, everything going on well. On the road up Johnny was well over our line with his planes very low, only five of them. He must have been searching for our batteries³³.

³² High Explosive

³³ Gun batteries

June 4th

Johnny pretty busy all night and all day with his guns, putting over gas for about an hour. Division is get windy.

June 5th

Johnny pretty quiet, our guns have been giving him some stick all day. The Glosters³⁴ are going over³⁵ tonight. A very heavy bombardment now on (10 pm). Going on 'till 10.45.

June 6th

The Glosters took four prisoners last night, supposed to have killed numerous Germans who wouldn't come out of their dug-out.

June 7th

The Infantry told us that Johnny was going to attack last night, but he never, so they say it is sure tonight. I think it is breeze³⁶ more than anything. He won't get crowded out, if he does come over.

June 8th

Received a telegram to be at 170 Coys HQ at mid-day tomorrow for purpose of proceeding to Assingham, our HQ.

June 9th

The lorry picked us up at 5.30pm and we then went to 251 RE³⁷ and picked Downie up and then beat it for home, after passing Anchele we got away from where he has been shelling Anchele, is at least 20 kms away from the line. The drive down was beautiful, nicely wooded hills and valleys most of the way. Arrived in at 10 pm.

June 10th

Downie and myself went to a place called Lumbres, in the afternoon we went to a cricket match at Hillfeanse, walked home. This is lovely country and wouldn't mind putting in a few months here.

June 11th

Shall report sick tomorrow morning as I'm not feeling, or have not been too good for somewhere near three months. What with Johnny's ar tillery preparation and the gas he was sending over at the time, I got a month full or two of it.

June 12th

In hospital today. Not so bad. The doctor gave me a good overhauling.

June 24th

Been in bed up 'till today. Shall try and get out tomorrow. The papers are full of the Austrian offensive and the way we or our people have held him up. The Austrian food situation seems to be very critical, but I'm sceptical of the most part of it.

June 25th

Reported back for duty this morning. Norfolk told me to take things easy. I'm just wondering if they are going to take a Jerry and give me a spell. Blair tells me that he put in an application for a Commission a few days before Sergeant Sinclair, but the Major is going to push Sinclair's through and is allowing him to drop through. Sergeant Marsh is now Acting QM³⁸ Sergeant to this Company. Suppose I shall be going back to the line in a day or so. Had a bit of an argument with regards to the morale of the British troops. Should the Bosche keep on pushing he has the British army at his mercy, because it has been proved that on more than one occasion they have broken and run during these offensives. Just for example, the five Australian Divies were rushed down in front of Amiens. Johnny found out and pushed up north, result being Aussie 1st Div rushed back and on the motor lorries this was stuck up in big letters "Stand and Fight Tommie, The Australians Will Be Here Shortly". I think this proves conclusively how near a thing it was during the first three Bosche drives. So much for that but I must look up. On the 21st March 5th British Army ran and would not stand up to it. Result being widely known over the world now. The Yanks are pouring into this country pretty fast.

June 26th

Nothing doing out of the ordinary run of things.

June 27th

Had a short note from Norm. He seems to be doing fairly. Sergeant Sinclair has gone out to Munster to put baffling plates into stop engine using such a large quantity of oil.

June 28th

RAP DAY today. Some of the boys got pretty drunk and called Moody and The Adjutant some nice names. Woody (SM) hardly knew what to do.

June 29th

Doyle got 28 days for last night's lot and sent to do his time. There were two others who received the same time but were allowed to do it in the shop.

³⁴ British Army Unit

³⁵ Leaving the trenches and attacking, hence the expression "going over the top".

³⁶ Getting panicky

³⁷ Royal Engineers

³⁸ Quartermaster

June 30th

Had to take on Sergeant of the Guard today. They would not put one of their old hands on it. Heard today that Marriott was well in the running for a military medal. This is very rotten as he is a very windy fellow and the man who was sent with him (McLean) has been in the country about 18 months longer than him. He is a mason so probably that accounts for it!

July 1st

Was to go to Winerause today but held over 'till tomorrow.

July 2nd

Got paid today, left Assingham today immediately after dinner. On drawing 100 Franc I was 11/3- in debt. Old Norfolk came down with us. The weather was lovely. Came away in a lorry, went through Lumbres and on the main Lille, Boulongne Road, not a bad drive down but very dirty. Arrived at the rest camp about 4 o'clock. The camp is situated between Ambliuse and Andresselles.

July 3rd

They had formed a sergeants' mess before we arrived. Sergeants Whitewell and Walker also 17 men came down.

July 4th

Went into Boulogne this afternoon and saw Jim Binney at the Star Boring Plant. They have a fine job down here.

July 5th

The water is Tres Bon and not too much undercurrent. The only thing wrong is there is no surf.

July 6th

Went for a walk to Gap-Gris-Nes, about a kilometre the other side of Winerause. There is an old fort here.

July 7th

Put most of today in at the beach. This morning there was an aeroplane flew over and gave a wonderful exhibition of flying. Machines now are safer than motor cars.

July 8th - 12th

Nothing much of any consequence doing. Johnny has not brought off his offensive yet. Wish he would get a move on. Just to see what happens, this is going to be one of the decisive things of the war and it can go any way at all but if we knock Johnny back it is Napoo fini for him.

July 13th

S till at the rest camp. A big crowd marched out last night. Suppose I shall be going tomorrow.

July 14th

No lorry came down today. The papers say Johnny has started another push down south of Rheims on a 55 mile front and had got a trouncing up.

July 15th

There was a beautiful thunder storm this morning accompanied by rain. It ran through the tent in a little stream. The lorry came down for us this afternoon. It was a beautiful day and I thoroughly enjoyed the trip back to Assingham. It is inclined to be hilly around this district and the road runs over the top of most of them and looking down into the green fields below was very nice indeed. There were some very quaint and pretty villages in some of the valleys. Came up through Harlettes and Lumbres to Assingham. Warned to take over Billet Sergeant. Later was warned to proceed to the trenches.

July 16th

Left Assingham in Bose car with Lieut. Anderson, Denton, Bailey. Got to Labussiere where we have a mechanical digger. They decided to change Bailey for Masewell who was here. At this place 170 Coy used to billet but have now shifted. Went to Nouese Les Mines (No. 3 Aust). Masewell and myself waited about four hours here. Picked the Bose car up again and set out to find 170 Coy. Eventually found them at a wood near Mairsdinal or something like that.

July 17th

Met Jack Penn who got back from Blighty about a month ago. They spent a month in hospital and five recuperating. McLean came in just now. He tells me the boys are not too satisfied with the way Morgan is handling them up here. Tells me he is making them line up and wait for orders before going on their rounds of the morning.

July 18th

The papers seem pretty optimistic about this new big stunt of Johnny's coming to an unnatural death. Hope their surmises prove correct.

July 19th

Came up to the trenches this morning with Masewell. Found Austin running. Morgan reported job ok. Found only one of the old hands left. Went to Barts Side this afternoon with Burn. Fuses blown in Barts. Started up Aster. She is worse than when I left. Knocking much more.

July 20th

Went to Brickstacks with Morgan. Found things pretty Jake. This Sussex³⁹ are up to hop-over at 12.15.

July 21st

Sussex went over but took no prisoners. They brought back four machine guns, never seen too many live Huns. We had four killed and 15 wounded. Morgan and Page went out this morning.

July 22nd

McLean and Rees came up from Maisnel-La-Ruitz where 170 Coy are now billeted. Rees and myself went to Saville Row. The SWB went over at Brickstacks tonight, 14 of them and only six succeeded in getting back.

July 23rd

Running a bit short of oil. Wired away for some. Dan McLaughlin and Paddy Long came up the line today. Have been at a school in Frujes. Rees and myself went to Hulluch and borrowed two tins of oil. Talk about sweat crawling through low galleries!

July 24th

Fry and myself went out this morning. On the way down, seen a building knocked down and several carcasses of horses that had been killed by a bomb at five. Morgan and Page did not go back 'till tonight.

July 25th

Wired away for more oil. Captain Barclay offered me a Clyno Motor Cycle. It has the back sprocket broken but could easily be fixed up.

July 26th

The SM gave me a wire, stating Morgan and Woolfe were to be picked up the following day. Sent up for them. Fry and myself went out tonight and sapped some Pomme-Au-Jers. When I got home Morgan had come down without Woolfe.

July 27th

Got out of bed at 5 o'clock this morning to catch lorry. Walking up from Annequire to Munster, the bag of spuds got heavy. Just as we got in the trenches one of our 'planes flew over at about 100'. Some shrapnel was flying about as Jerry was shelling pretty severely at this 'plane. Woolfe left before we hit the dugout.

July 28th

Things going smoothly. Very quiet here. Hardly a shell coming over. I think both sides have the "Wind Up".

July 29th

No. 1 cylinder on Austin missing pretty badly. Shall go over tappets when it closes down. The driver on tonight (Maxwell) could not get Aster to start up. Some things men don't know.

July 30th

Went over tappets on Austin and shortened valve stroke a bit. Made all the difference. Had all the load for a while tonight. Hullinch must have got a wrong polarity some how.

July 31st

Page and myself went over to Brickstacks and found a power of trouble. Some bird had been tapping on lights leaving bare wires everywhere. Took us four hours to put right. Jack Fernandez came up tonight. Only landed back from Boulonge last night. The RE⁴⁰ have blocked up all front line entrances to the system of tunnels.

August 1st

Page and Fernandez went to Saville Row telling an officer about the colonial life. Johnny putting over gas shells tonight. Serg. Millars' brother was gassed by one of them. He is in the Black Watch⁴¹. They couldn't start up Aster. Trouble in carburettor. Pilot jet locked up.

August 2nd

It has been raining all day and the trenches are pretty sticky. Page and Fernandez went over to Old Kent. McLean went sick but got medicine and duty.

August 3rd

McLean and Burns went out this morning. Page and myself went over to Wilson's. There was a broken wire there. Johnny putting over gas. Piper's out today just returned from leave. He didn't know Bailey had been taken away. He is going to try and get Aster replaced.

August 4th

This is the start of at least the finish of the fourth year of the war and I hope it will be the last. Things are very quiet here today. McLean sent up a note to say there was a crime awaiting Rees from the Red Caps⁴² at 170 Coy orderly room.

³⁹ British Army Unit

⁴⁰ Royal Engineers

⁴¹ Famous British Military Unit

⁴² Military Police

August 5th

Did not go out on line. Rubber couplings came up from HQ. Washed a complete change as the vermin was a bit wild.

August 6th

Rees and myself went around to Barts. Cut off about 16 lamps. Maxwell and myself had a argument on HP of petrol and steam. Things seem to be going pretty well down south.

August 7th

McLean and Burns came back from Maisnel this morning. Rees went out for four days. Page and Burns went around to Old Kent. The Jocks⁴³ are going over tomorrow morning.

August 8th - 10th

The Jocks went over and never seen any Jerries over there. McLean and Burns came back on the 10th. Had some trouble with the Aster tonight. Had to take up the big ends on both cranks. When we tried to start up, found jet of carburettor chopped.

August 11th

Got the plant running Jake this morning. Run for three hours. On starting up tonight the manifold became red hot. Had to take carburettor down again and eventually got away about five on the 12th.

August 12th

Went to Maisnel today. Fry went out yesterday. McLean came out with me. Had to report to Verquin to be picked up by our Bose car.

August 13th

Staid in Maisnel all day. Johnny over tonight bombing somewhere near Bruay.

August 14th

Fry and myself went to Bruay, today had a look at an aerodrome. Seen a 'plane come down and smash herself up. Johnny over bombing again tonight. Dropped one in the camp. No one wounded but one lad shell-shocked.

August 15th

Came up the line this morning and found Aster running at 6k. Jim Page tells me that Aster is going Jake. The Welsh went over at 10.30 this morning.

August 16th

Fernandez and Rees went across to Saville Row today. Welsh are going over to a crater and waiting

there until Johnny brings his troops up to man the post. Had a letter from Norm today. He has been wounded in the left side. In 22nd General Hospital. Morgan has left this job and gone down south to the Somme. Johnny got well onto the 3rd Australian Camp on the 11th. Killed five and wounded nine of them.

August 17th

Started to take Austin down this morning. Piper came out this afternoon. Fry to go on leave on Monday. Working all day. This engine is very dirty. Big End No. 2 cylinder very slack.

August 18th

Finished Austin at 6 o'clock this morning. The water pump is not too good. She isn't pumping at all. Couldn't sleep too well today.

August 19th

Fry went out this morning. No petrol came up last night and tonight. The push party have been sent back to their batts. There has been a big strafe on the left. The news came through today that we had pushed at Outtershank and taken 400 prisoners. Also that we have pushed at Merville.

August 20th

The Aster giving trouble on starting up. Found trouble in the magneto. Had a very jolly evening. Everybody in a good temper. Divisions changing over 16th taking over from the 1st.

August 21st

Fernandez and Rees went to Brickstacks. 16th came in today. Some of them were in a very bad condition, they had a proper creasing up on the road up. Austin giving trouble this morning. Carburettor trouble.

August 22nd

Piper came out today. Had Austin down when he landed here. There has been a pretty heavy strafe away down on the right. Happened about 3 this morning.

August 23rd

The strafe is still on down on the right. They are going over in the morning at Givenchy. Sent Fernandez out to get pump for Austin, brought it up to the dump and they (170 mob) left it there.

August 24th

Walker out today, Burns and Page are to go down to Minse on Monday. There has been a fair amount of shelling today. Woolfe and myself was out and getting some potatoes when Fritz spotted out and he

⁴³ Scottish Unit

sent about 50 over in quick order, made us move some!

August 25th

Took the Aster down today. Took up one big end. They sent a double issue of rum up tonight and there was some joy.

August 26th

There is a very consistent bombardment on today, the guns behind us here are going to beat the hand, seem to be firing away on the right somewhere. Have been going all day long. Fuses blown in Saville Row, Rees and myself went down and fixed them up. Charlie Walker was saying Morse had just come back from his month.

August 27th

Fritz was straffing pretty heavy last night. He is getting a bit busier than usual here and I think it's wind with him. Page and Burns went out yesterday to go to Boulogne Rest Camp. Walker was saying that they are going to take me in for a spell shortly. Something is going to happen surely.

August 28th

Have been expecting McLean up today but he did not get up here. Fernandez too over engine driving in place of Page.

August 29th

McLean came up this morning with Lithgow and Taylor. Lithgow is knick-named Piccanniny on account of his youthfulness. Has been in France two years and only just celebrated his 19th birthday about a fortnight ago.

August 30th

Taylor on driving today. Masewell on starting up Austin found the crank case full of water so we had to find out where it was getting into the case, went and took all cylinders down but could find nothing wrong. Eventually we found the trouble, it was in the pump, she was pulling the water through to driving shaft of the pump.

August 31st

Slept all day long but getting towards night I began to cough a lot, don't know what's wrong. There is quite a lot of good news from down south.

September 1st

Things going pretty well today. We are going to put gas projectors over to him tonight. These things are put over much similar to a trench mortar shell.

September 2nd

McLean and Woolfe went out to Annequin for rhubarb. Pick and myself went to Barts. Everything Jake. On getting home found Fernandez missing. He was eventually found buried in a latrine. Shall try for a congratulation for Pick and Taylor, both kids. Johnny shelling pretty heavily when these two and Maxwell went out and dug him out. He was not hurt very badly if all reports be true. McLean and Lionel put up a fine tea tonight. This division never put over gas last night but at 3.30 Maxwell was on shift. Came in with a "stand-to" as Johnny was over and at 4.30 we tried to advance our lines, and you never saw anything like it in the whole of your life! One great big mess. One platoon of Black Watch got over and could not get back.

September 3rd

Went out to Maisnel with Rees. Seen a couple of people knocking around Cambrai Village. Got paid about 5 o'clock.

September 4th

McLean sent a wire to say that Piccannin and Maxwell had been gassed and were in hospital.

September 5th

Rees and myself came back this morning and found that Morse and Piper had been out and Morse had roared about the engine room generally. He told McLean that we had to follow the infantry over. The Black Watch went over this morning and about 3 o'clock Johnny decided to knock them back which he did with about three men. They lost about 60 men on the road back.

September 6th

Piper out today and brought Darkie Davis up with him to have a look at the big end on No. 2 on Austin.

September 7th

Two new men came out this morning, a couple called Hillman and Christenson. Woolfe and myself went to Barts this morning. Davis going on with Austin. Had some trouble at Coldstream with blown fuses, could not find the trouble so had to cut half the lights.

September 8th

Hillman and myself went over to Coldstream today. Things pretty quiet up that way. Johnny brought down one of our contact aeroplanes.

September 9th

Hillman and myself went to Barts. Taylor and myself went over to Coldstream to have a look at this aeroplane but he had a gun playing across the spot. Fry came back today. Rees went out today.

September 10th

Went to Coldstream with Hillman. The K.R.R.C. went forward a little today.

September 11th

Cairns and Page came up tonight. The Welsh went over and took another line of trenches. Johnny is going back in his own time. They are just keeping in touch with them.

September 12th

Took Cairns up to the aeroplane to see if we could get the magnetos but could not unscrew the nuts. Woolfe and McLean went out to Maisnel.

September 13th

Chrissen came up today, Aster giving a fair amount of trouble.

September 14th

Aster run a big end tonight. Sent to Assingham for another. Fry took it out.

September 15th

Charlie Walker brought big end out this morning. Taylor and myself erected it and gave her a kick off about 11.30 tonight. Woolfe and McLean came back tonight. Johnny putting a lot of gas in Auchy.

September 16th

Fry came back this morning.

September 17th

Bill Cairns and myself went to Old Kent. Found everything o.k.

September 18th

Woolfe and Cairns went to Saville Row and everything Jake there although not too many troops knocking about.

September 19th

Jack Taylor and myself went out to Maisnel Les Ruitz today. Got paid. Went and had a bath. Went for a walk to Barlin.

September 20th

Heard today that Charlie Walker was out yesterday. Taylor and myself went to Bruay.

September 21st

We went across to Bruay this afternoon and the military police pinched us for being in the town without a pass. Rushed us before the APM who rang up 170 Coy to see if they had any Australians attached to them. They then let us go after taking our name and number and all particulars.

September 22nd

Went to Barlin this afternoon. This is a mining town. Last night we went to a show in Maisnel. They gave a pretty good turn conjuring.

September 23rd

Came up the line this morning. Found everything Jake. There was a chap pretty near dead through drinking a jar of rum. They just saved his life by getting him to a doctor who very soon had the poison on the road out of him.

September 24th

McLean went out this morning to procure some stuff for the mess. Cairns and myself went over to the Brickstacks. The push in Palestine will just about finish the Turks.

September 25th

Went to Robinson's and fixed up a light in a battalion HQ. The magneto giving trouble on the Aster. Worked at it all day and could not get a spark from it. Went over to Wilson's and sent a wire to HQ for a fibre extension piece.

September 26th

Changed the field magnets on the magneto and she kicked off Jake. The carburettor then gave a little trouble which McLean eventually overcame.

September 27th

Things going fairly well. Good news this morning. Palestine and Macedonian fronts which should materially help to finish the war. News of a French victory at St Quintin with 13,000 prisoners.

September 28th

Had visitors this morning before I was out of bed. Young, Ayres, Jim Loughrey and McMurry came over.

September 29th

Page and myself went to Barts. Fry went out to Maisnel. McLean on driving. Woolfe cook.

September 30th

Page and myself went to Brickfields. There was two aeroplanes flying over Johnny's line about 10' above his trenches. The RIF went over this morning and

took 52 prisoners but believe they were knocked back.

October 1st

Went to Saville Row with McLean and dug up the bag of potatoes. Went over and had another scrounge about his trenches, nothing doing in our line over his 4th line.

October 2nd

Page and myself went over to Auchy and had a look around but nothing doing. The ar tillery are moving up. Gerry evacuated behind La Barsis at 4am this morning.

October 3rd

Page and myself went over to an aeroplane that came down near the Brickstacks and got two carburettors and two magnetos. Not such a bad haul. Someone had been and very nearly spoiled both the magies. Charlie Walker went out today. The Bosh have set fire to Salome.

October 4th

Page, Taylor and myself went out scrounging this morning. We visited three aeroplanes that had come down during the past four years, could get nothing off of any use. Went into La Bassee but the place is all knocked to pieces. He has several places mined over there. Some very fine dugouts along the canal bank. When we came back found that Piper had been out. Apparently they had heard something about our Bruay stunt.

October 5th

McLean and myself went out to Maisnel Les Ruitz and had a bath. Tried to buy some cigarettes and tobacco but there was very little procurable. Heard today that George Hogg was getting his commission. Came up by ration lorry tonight and as the weather is fairly cold we thoroughly enjoyed the tea that was on.

October 6th

Went for a walk to the Slag Heap. Came across several of Jerry's pill boxes⁴⁴.

October 7th

McLean and myself went for a walk to Salome, this is about three miles in front of La Bassèe. The fortification along the canal bank are marvels of engineering in their way, mostly pill boxes built of reinforced concrete. The town of La Bassèe has not one single house that has not been knocked about in some way. All the corners of the different streets

have been mined and blown up. One of the sights of the war and it's wonderful to me why Johnny went back on his own accord. We should never have been able to take this or these places by direct assault. Piper was out today. Brought some oil and also a crime sheet. Don't know what the heads intend to do. They may try to bring me a cropper but shall try and make them go.

October 8th

The 3rd Australian Mining Company took over the sector this morning in place of 170th Coy. Suppose we shall become attached to them now.

October 9th

Page went to Nouise Les Mines today to fix up about rations and petrol. He was told Captain Morris would be taking charge of the sector.

October 10th

McLean and myself went out looking for last night's rations, but could not find anything out about them. The news has come through today that Cambria had been taken. There are two CCS in Cambria village. Saw a few of the nurses today.

October 11th

Some good news in the paper today. Doing a bit of rifle shooting.

October 12th

A couple of nurses up passed our job today so it must be about time we put stamps on our letters⁴⁵.

October 13th

McLean and myself went over to Vermelles job. Raining pretty hard. Went up and had a look at a Steel Tree that is standing as an observation post.

October 14th

Chrissen and Woolfe went out this morning for a few days. Luke Olsen came just after they had left. Fry and Chrissen to go in. Changed him a Burbury for another coat.

October 16th

McLean went out to Nouise Les Mines to buy stuff for the mess. Borrowed my coat and Woolfe claimed it. Left it with Woolfe. Charlie Walker out.

October 17th

We shall probably start running 17 hours a day shortly. A runner has just been up to get all the attached infantry back to their Company. The peace proposals seem to have come a horrible cropper.

⁴⁴ A fortified position (usually concrete)

⁴⁵ French letters?

Woolfe came back from Nouise. Jack LeRoy came out to get Taylor.

October 18th

Woolfe and myself walked to Nouise for rations as none came up. Went and had a look at a patient digger. Scorgi I/C just been made an SS. Walked back Vermelles to Bill Davis's job. Found Cairns there. Hulluch cut out at 11 o'clock. Great war news!

October 19th

McLean went out this morning, got back about 10.30 tonight. Reakons he has been up as far as Lille in a suburb called Loos. Says the people say Fritz treated them pretty well.

October 20th

Cairns and myself went over for rations. None there so went to Givenchy and saw Bill Millar. Met McLean as we were coming back. He went to Vermelles and found Givenchy's and our rations were there.

October 21st

I went to Vermelles and got our rations. Cut out all lights on my circuit, the exception of Munster Tunnel. Can close down any time, as Hulluch can get 200 volts up to here with no other load on.

October 22nd

Bill Cairns went to Vermelles for rations. While he was there Piper came in. Cairns came back and told me that we were going to pull out. Piper came up here and told us to pull out. Starting at the Brickfields first.

October 23rd

Woolfe, Page, Cairns and myself went to Brickstacks and started to rip the job out. Page and myself down Marlybone and Old Kent, Woolfe and Cairns on Engine Room and Coldstream Tunnels.

October 24th

The same four on the job today. Have pulled everything out back as far as Mill Tunnel. Have very nearly a three ton load now. Are now getting our rations from 59th CCS which is in Cambria. They are some rations! The best ever I've had in France.

October 25th - 31st

S till pulling job out. Four new men came out last Monday. Viollette, Vickery, Mood and Forsyth.

November 1st - 6th

S till pulling out. Brought both engines up to the top. Raining the past two days. Some rumours of an armistice being sent to Fritz. Hope he accepts them.

November 7th

Lorry out today. Sent engines in. Another one for tomorrow. Piper out. McLean, Woolfe, Cairns and Page to go to Vermelles to give Bill Davies a hand out.

November 8th

Lorry came out, loaded up and went to our HQ at a place called Marveuil. This is about 6 klms behind Arras, rather a dismal looking place. We are billeted in what used to be a sugar manufacturing place.

November 9th

Blair came in from La Bassèè tonight. I went to Vermelles with the lorry. Davies had let the engine fall down the vent shaft breaking governor gear and breaking the back cover of the generator. All the brush gear was smashed, also the rockies.

November 10th

S'till at Marceuil. They are assembling the Aster I brought in to send to Montigny.

November 11th

The news came through last night that Johnny was going to accept the Armistice terms. All the joy bells were ringing for miles around! There was a particularly severe bombardment on this morning⁴⁶.

November 12th

Blair went on leave this morning.

November 13th

Marsh had a wire last night to say that his wife was very ill. He went on special leave this morning.

November 14th

Downie came back from Assingham this morning. Sinclair pretty crook, went to hospital.

November 15th

Harry Quince pretty crook this morning. The 'flu seems to be getting amongst them.

November 16th

Harry Quince went to hospital this morning. Charlie Scorgio came back from Blighty⁴⁷ today. Reckons they had a fine time on the 11th.

November 17th

Bill Davies and myself went into Arras today. It has been considerably knocked about but not so much as

⁴⁶ The Armistice was signed at the 11th hour of the 11th day and peace declared.

⁴⁷ England

Bethune. The cathedral is a ruin but has been a beautiful building. The town is built in squares and these have suffered.

November 18th

Downie had to go to Montigny to take over Aster set. I'm now Billet Sergeant⁴⁸. Don't know for how long.

November 19th

Moody crook today. I'm playing cards 'till past midnight.

November 20th

Slept in this morning. Never woke troops up until after seven. Moody came on parade this morning and roared a treat! Bad liver, I think. He hasn't said anything to me yet. Suppose my turn will be next.

November 21st

Things going along quietly. Three men a day going on leave.

November 22nd

S till doing my duty for King and Country. A good number of our chaps down with the 'flu.

November 23rd

Three deaths from the 'flu amongst our chaps.

November 24th

The surrendering of the German fleet seems to be progressing most favourably.

November 25th

S till in the Billet Sergeant's job. Nothing much doing.

November 26th

The only objection I've got to this job is that I have to get up too early in the morning.

November 27th

S till going well.

November 28th

Blank entry until the following.

1919

March 19th

Left for Paris. Rather funny. We paid fare from Marruiel to Etapeles costing 1 franc, 90 ct and when arriving at the Gare du Nord just walked through the

barrier looking extremely silly, so never paid any fare.

March 20th

Had a look round the boulevard and up to the Place de la Concorde. Up to the Invalides and had a look at Napoleon's tomb. In the night went to Follies Begeres. Rotten show. Paris is rather slow to my way of thinking.

March 21st

Went round to the Gare du Lyon and booked up for Nice. Went out to Nallois and had a talk with Claudel of carburettor fame about some work we are trying to pull on.

March 22nd

Left for Nice at 12.20 pm. Went through Dijon and Lyon and arrived at Marseilles at 5 am the following morning.

March 23rd

The country from Marseilles to Nice is wonderfully pretty. The train journey is something to talk about. The rails are laid right down along the sea front and you have the mountains for a background. Most of the houses are very pretentious and all white with paintings at the top for a border. Most of the places are built on the eastern style. Coming into Cannes is a wonderful sight and beats everything I'd ever seen, the colouring being gorgeous. The soil here is red and shows the other colours up to some order. Arrived at Nice about twenty to one. Book at the Tarelli Hotel which is a very nice place. The sea is very blue about these parts.

March 24th

When going for breakfast this morning we met a New Zealand sergeant and he put the day in with us. A very nice fellow, too. Went out to a place called Falicon Old Nice. On the road up we climbed to a fairly good height up the mountains. Up at one is what is known as "Canal de Nice" and had a magnificent cascade or waterfall, from here you obtain a very nice panoramic view of Nice which looks very nice in the sunlight. We reached Falicon eventually. It is situated on the top of a mount and the view obtained from here is also extremely pretty. We then went down to the gorge which is simply a track between the mountains and is very nice for wild scenery. In the gorge is what is called "The Grotte". This is a cave from which springs come and then the track the water flows down, must be more than at least 20' down and is wonderful for rugged scenery. In the afternoon we went for a train ride to Cap Terrat and it is rather nice going up the mountains and looking back on the different small clusters of

⁴⁸ In charge of camp

houses on the mountain sides and set in a great variety of different shades of green and flowers. The carnations in this place are something to make your mouth water at.

March 25th

Set out this morning with five others for a trip to La Grasse, for car and cost of 28 frs a piece. First of all we went out to the Nice Racecourse, which is very small, we then made for the mountains and eventually came to a place called Gorge de Loop, which is situated at the bottom of a valley. Here there is a bridge over a stream, must be 1/4 of a mile long. Orangeries on either side. Then we went to Mt Loop and I picked up a couple of mountain flowers, met some American nurses and one said "what pretty flowers", so I gave her some. There are some fine water views coming out from the mountain sides. In the distance there were several snow clad mountains. Very fine view. From here we went on to La Grasse and had dinner. Took a walk up the principal streets. Visited a perfumery and was shown around and had everything explained. Bought a couple of bottles of scent. Another very fine view. Leaving Grasse went down through Cannes and then on to the Nice cemetery, and had a look at one of our chap's graves. Eventually we finished up at Nice about 5.30pm. A day exceptionally well spent.

March 26th

Left the Taralle this morning in a fine big Delanay-Belevieu car with four others to do the Menton trip. Passed through Cap Ferrat, Beaulieu, Ville Franches, till we came to Monte Carlo. It was a bright sunny day and the view obtained was simply superb. The fine blue sea, on one side and the houses, on the mountain sides, on the other. We were shown through the Casino and four beautifully decorated rooms, well this beats anything imaginable. The rooms have a red carpet on the floor, with a design. The walls have all paintings by old masters and between the pictures is done out with brass work kept exceedingly clean. The roof is all sculptured work. There are five rooms for roulette, four being with three tables in, the fifth having four. In this room you must be an independent man before being allowed to enter. The room when the sun is shining shows up in a very delicate pink shade, and to see this blended with the paintings and the roof, makes it marvellous to look at. In the town of Monte Carlo, there are some very fine buildings and just in front of the Casino, there is a most beautiful park. From Monte Carlo we went to the Principality of Monaco. The drive up the Avenue St Martin is very pretty, got out and had a look at the Palace from the outside. We then went to the aquarium, which is also in a most

beautiful building and is considered to be the most complete aquarium in the world. From here went to Mentons up through the mountains, some very lovely views are obtained. Just out from Menton finishes the French territory. We went over the Italian border into a town called Ventimiglia, sent a couple of post cards from there. From this place a fine view of Menton, a bridge with 16 arches. Called Pont St Louis crossing the boarder. Was very hot in Italy. From Ventimiglia, we went on top mountain tracks, passing through Cap St Martin, to Avaran to La Turbie. Old masonry at La Turbie, fine view of Monte Carlo and Monaco. After La Turbie through Cap Ferrat, St Hospice, St Andre (at bottom of a ravine) to Nice. Had a very enjoyable day. Would like a month in this place.

March 27th

Went to Monaco by tram and some very fine views are obtained. Lunched and then went on to Menton, returning in the evening to Monaco. Had dinner here. Landed in Nice about 10 o'clock.

March 28th

Left Nice this morning for Paris. A great number of fine places are passed up to Marseilles and then you follow the Rone and a chain of mountains. All dark. Had two hours at Lyon and walked around the town a bit. Had dinner in Lyon.

March 29th

Arrived in Paris nine o'clock this morning, very tired and did not have much sleep in the train. Went and had a look at Notre Dame church, Tuilleries Gardens, Place de la Concord and The Arch of Triomphe. The Arch is a very fine piece of work and much more immense than one would imagine. This was built by Napoleon to perpetuate his victories.

March 30th

Went out this morning and had a look at the Eiffel Tower and Ferris wheel. These were both built for the Paris Exposition and were one of the few things left standing. The base of the Tower must be 80 yards between the base of each leg and stands 300 metres high. Ferris wheel is also a big thing and has railway carriages around it. This must be 280 ft in diameter. Had a look at Trocadero. Most of the Philamonic societies hold their concerts here and is a beautiful building from the outside. We then went down and lunched at the Hotel d'Inna, which is the Canadian YMCA in Paris and is also a very fine place. They serve up a fair meal in the hotel. After lunch we went to the Bois de Boulogne and spent the afternoon at La Superius and Lae Inferius. Saw President Wilson and wife drive up the Bois.