



ROBERT HAMILTON SCOTT

1889 – 1944

Introduction

Bob Scott was the second son of a family of eight. Both his father and grandfather had been professional engineers. His father's sudden death when the youngest child was less than a year old left the family in difficult financial circumstances. Most of the children were unable to continue their education beyond standard six, but throughout his life Bob was interested in improving his knowledge and his diary shows how he used his leave periods to advantage. Bob had three brothers also on active service, Murray, Lindsay and Hedley whose names occur in this account.

The diary begins at the end of 1915 when the forces were resting in Egypt after Gallipoli. No diary of the Gallipoli period has survived although Bob served through this campaign.

Relatives referred to include cousins,
Leslie (second son of Will Scott born 1895)
George (second son of Bob Scott, born 1890)
Allen (Allan third son of Bob Scott, born 1891)
Lindsay (fourth son of Bob Scott born 1892).

Also Uncle Robert (Thomson, brother of Grandfather Peter Thomson).
and Aunt Gertrude (Thomson, widow of Murray, another brother of Peter Thomson).

Also Irvine Stevenson, brother of Bill Stevenson who had married Bob's sister Grace in 1911.

Transcribed by Mary Skipworth (daughter)

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**Diaries of
2/1524 Bombardier Robert Hamilton Scott
N.Z.F.A
4th. Reinforcements
N.Z. Expeditionary Force.**

The Great War

Friday 31st December 1915. Spent the evening in Cairo with Geo. Webb. After having some refreshments we walked through the quarter where the native shops are situated. The streets at night present a wonderful picture of lights and colours. In all the shops the goods for sale are on benches exposed to the street and tradesmen while at work sit on the pavement or in the entrance to their shops. At intervals along the street old buildings and mosques are seen, all with little shops built into them on the street level. These old mosques are interesting and beautiful.

Saturday 1st January 1916. Afternoon on leave. Caught 1.30 train from Cairo to Barrage about 20 miles down the Nile. Arrived there at 2.10 and took a trolley ride from the station across the big dams and through the gardens. The dams are used to govern the flow of water making it flow through irrigation canals to the district where it is required. The Nile seems to have three separate channels here and in addition there are several canals across all of which there are dams. The gardens at the Barrage are prettily laid out and there is also a museum containing some interesting models. Each dam has locks to allow of boats passing through. The locks are similar in principal to those on the Panama Canal. The boat going upstream enters the lock, the gate shut behind it and water allowed to flow into the lock until it reaches the level of the water outside then the top gate is opened and the boats sail away. Boats are numerous, all being the curious barge-like affairs with tall masts, that are peculiar to Egypt. Returned to Cairo at 5.30, had some refreshments and went out to camp where Schofield started quarrelling with me. The mounted rifles and a few artillerymen have just arrived from Anzac and they say the final of the evacuation was a complete success there being only four casualties. The day following the evacuation the Turks attacked our empty trenches and were repulsed by gunfire from the warships. In the afternoon they again attacked and captured our empty trenches. What a fall in to find the trenches empty after losing hundreds of men capturing them. The balance of the N.Z. artillery are stated to be in a new camp at Ismalia and it is rumoured that we will all shift to that camp very shortly.

Tuesday 4th Jan^y 1916. Last night and all today heavy rain has fallen. This is quite an unprecedented event for Cairo, which enjoys a very dry climate. None of the boys have seen real rain in Egypt before. Our tent is good and has kept us dry.

Saturday 8th. Off duty so went into Cairo and had a look round, out to Citadel. It is good to get into Cairo and have a real good meal and some wine. I have plenty of cash at present so am able to run a few luxuries. I am keeping very healthy and have put on some weight since returning from the peninsula. We have a good time in camp, groom and water horses before breakfast then either flag signalling or mounted drill. I enjoy a trot or a gallop on my black horse and we have been out often lately. Lieut. Lewin takes charge and we go out into the desert where he drills us. I like riding and enjoy wheeling etc at the trot or gallop. Some of the horses are hard to control and are apt to get out of line and even to play up when we get some amusement.

Wednesday 12th. Afternoon holiday. Dudding and I went out to the Pyramids. We got a guide and two donkeys but after we got started the nigger asked us to pay 3/- each for himself and donkey so we dismounted and told him to emshee. He wanted some payment for taking us as far as we had gone but we refused and he kept bothering us until I had to use a stick on him when he emsheed quick. It served him right as the price he asked was fair robbery. After having a look round the sphinx and pyramids we had some refreshment and returned to town. I was shown a tomb cut out of solid rock and inside a coffin cut out of one piece of stone with another slab for a top.

Thursday 13th Jan^y. Spent the evening in Cairo having another look round the wassa etc. as we leave the camp for Ismailia on Saturday. Returned to camp about 11 p.m. all very happy. The weather is good, not hot and not cold. Sometimes windy. I wish it kept like this all year.

Saturday 15th. Reveille at 5a.m. Watered and fed horses and struck tents and packed up ready to shift camp to Ismailia. Breakfast 7a.m. Kits and tents taken to station by wagons. Saddled horses and left Zeitoun camp at 9a.m. After a long wait at station entrained horses, left Zeitoun station at 12 noon, a lot of time wasted. Railway-line runs through cultivated country where date palms are numerous and with irrigation canals flowing here and there the country is a picture. Passed through a big Australian camp at Tel-el-Kebir. Arrived at Ismailia at 6p.m. just at dusk. Detrained horses and took them to water and then fed them. A good stew was waiting for us so we had a good tea for which we were all very thankful. After tea erected tents and then turned into bunk. Luckily it was a fine moonlight night and we were able to see to work.

Sunday 16th Jan. Reveille 6a.m. Took horses down to canal for water and fed up. After breakfast saddled up for a review by the general commanding the canal defence forces. This is the first time I have been on parade mounted. It was a big parade of six batteries and some thousands of infantry and was a fine spectacle when they were all lined up for review. Being on the headquarters staff I was right in front and looking back could see the long line of horses guns and wagons when we moved off. This is a big camp of the N.Z. and Aust. Division situated alongside the railway line and a fresh-water canal and is close to the Suez Canal. We are camped on the sand and have plenty of space. The N.Z. Division is here for training and it is rumoured that we will proceed to France in March but I am doubtful. We are having plenty of signalling and mounted drill. An aerodrome is situated just at the back of our camp and from it airplanes go up every day. We get a very good view of their manoeuvres as they are flying very low upon passing over the camp just after ascending.

Saturday 22nd Jan. On leave this afternoon so paid my first visit to Ismailia town. It is a fair sized town on the shores of Lake Tismah and on the Suez - Port Said railway. The Suez Canal passes through the lake so boats are to be seen steaming across it and some warships (French and British) are anchored in the lake. A fresh-water canal passes through the town and the avenues of trees along the banks give it a pleasant appearance. The town is for the most part filthy. In the shopping quarter it is cleaner but there are no good buildings with the exception of the railway station. Near the station is a small reserve very pleasantly shaded by tall trees - a welcome spot on a hot day. The cafes close at 3 p.m. so there is no drunkenness. They are well patronised by the soldiers and sailors up till closing time. The camp rules are strict in several ways besides this.

Wednesday 26th. Paid another visit to the town and visited the gardens which are pretty and very cool as the place is well shaded by trees. All the cafes in town shut at 3p.m. so very little drink is obtainable and the troops in town are strictly sober.

Sunday 30th. Church parade this morning. Afternoon off duty so had a ride on my horse. The weather is very good. Some heavy showers of rain have fallen and it is very cold during the nights but the days are perfect.

Monday. I have played in a practice football match tonight and although I was very short-winded and out of form, I enjoyed it. Legs stiff next day.

Saturday 5th February. The money in circulation about here is varied and often amongst change I receive French and Italian coins. 5 coppers (English 1d, French 10 centimes or Italian 10 centissimos) count as 2 piastres.

Friday 11th February. I have had the luck to be granted a weeks leave. By pushing my barrow I secured one of the first passes granted. I left camp this morning by the 10.15 train for Cairo. The guard (a Gyp) on the train was singing a song in Arabic the tune of which sounded familiar to me and on questioning him he answered Salvation Army Hymn in Arabic. Arrived Cairo 2p.m. Dinner at Cafe du Nil and then fixed up a little business matter. Had a ride on the tram to Gheziah to fill in time, tea at Cafe du Nil and left Cairo by train at 8p.m. I secured a small compartment all to myself and so was able to sleep comfortably until 6a.m. when the compartment was required for a lady. It is breaking day now and I can see that we are travelling through a well cultivated and fertile country, close to the Nile.

Saturday 12th Feb^y. Arrived Luxor 10a.m. A perfect day. Driven to Family hotel a respectable looking place, where I had a bite of breakfast. The people of the hotel are arranging everything for me, as they are agents of the Cairo Express Coy. My guide took me round to the Luxor temple or rather the ruins of it. A wonderful place of great columns and statues. The illustrations carved in the stone walls are interesting especially one of the God of

Nature. These carvings are of all manner of people, animals and things but they have been badly knocked about. My guide says that the early Christians did a lot of this damage. The temple is over 3000 years old and until recently was completely buried. The people of that age must have been intellectual to build this place, as the large blocks of stone must have taken some skilful handling. Had dinner at 1 p.m. and then rode on a donkey to the temple at Karnak, which is even grander than the Luxor temple. Outside the great massive gateway are two lines of sphinxes, which make the gateway all the more impressive. Inside is a courtyard, then another gateway into the temple. Inside the temple are 124 great stone columns 20 feet in diameter and 100 feet high all carved and there has been a stone roof but most of it has fallen down. This temple is a great sight and must have been magnificent in its palmy days. Beyond it again are several obelisks and some statuary. The obelisks are each one solid stone the highest being 166 feet and 10 feet thick - an enormous stone to raise to the erect position it is in. The walls of the temple are covered with sculpture of all manner of scenes and objects. Gardens, boats, processions, chariots and fights are all depicted in the sculpture. After tea at 4.30 I went to the Winter Palace one of the convalescent homes for soldiers and found George Thomson one of my mates who was sent off the Peninsula sick. George is looking pretty well but is in bed at present with a bad throat. Dinner at 7.30. A fine moonlight night so rode on donkey with S. M. Price - an Australian staying at this hotel - to the Karnak temple. It looks more impressive and mysterious in the moonlight and the soft light hides all the roughness of the broken stones and the places that have been patched up with cement. A great part of the temple is still in ruins but is slowly being rebuilt as much as possible. It is a pity so much of the fine sculpture is broken.

Sunday 13th Feb^y. I slept very well - it is a treat to sleep in a bed again. The hotel meals are also good, 5 courses for dinner. Crossed the Nile at 9a.m. with my guide "Hassan" and then rode a donkey 6 miles to the tombs of the kings. These are great vaults cut out of the solid rock in the sides of a valley. All the mummies of the early Egyptian kings were placed in these. Some of the tombs extend 200 feet into the hill the passages sloping down to the chamber. All the walls and roofs are decorated with paintings and drawings which are excellently preserved considering their age. The paintings in beautiful colours are of the Kings, their wives and the various gods they worshipped. The life history of the kings seems to be depicted on the walls and the ancient writings would no doubt tell some interesting tales if I could only read them but that is a difficult job. The drawings are beautifully done and must have taken a long time to execute as the walls are completely covered. We had cold lunch at the rest house and then looked at the ruins of two temples. In one, is the broken remains of an enormous statue said to have weighed 1000 tons all one piece of granite. Out on the flat stand the Colossus - two great statues about 70 feet high but they are in very bad condition. Whilst sitting in the ruined temple I tried to imagine what the place was like when it was in all its glory. It must have been magnificent and imposing and no doubt the people dressed in gorgeous robes, in keeping with the building. One cannot imagine the present Egyptian people building anything like these. The ancient Egyptians must have been a different race altogether and they must also have been highly religious.

Monday 14 Feb. Left at 9a.m. Crossed Nile and then took donkey to Tombs of the Queens. In these tombs all the paintings on the walls are beautifully coloured and are of excellent workmanship. Everything here is beautifully preserved and the colours have kept well, not a bit faded, although they are thousands of years old. After this we visited the Menita Abhu a large temple now partly in ruins. The pylons, columns and gateways are all covered with carved illustrations and what is left of the roof has stars painted all over it on a blue background. No doubt this has been a magnificent temple when it was in all its glory. Even now it is grand and imposing. Back to hotel for lunch at 1 p.m. Afterwards I went up the Nile in a boat and saw a garden where bananas, oranges, orans, lemons etc were growing in profusion. Dinner at hotel at 5p.m. and caught train at 6p.m. for Cairo. Secured a whole seat and slept well during the trip.

Tuesday 15th. Arrived Cairo 7.20a.m. Left again at 7.30 for Alexandria arrived 11a.m. I got into conversation with an A.S.C. man on the train, so went to Windsor Hotel with him had some breakfast and drinks and then took taxi for Mex Camp where Jock has a friend. We met his friend on road so turned back to wharf. Afternoon I visited the Catacombs and strolled through the native quarters where I got some good snapshots. Dinner at 8p.m.

Wednesday 16th Feb. Had a look round town and secured some snapshots. Alexandria is wonderfully clean for an Egyptian town and the people seem cleaner and healthier than those in Cairo. The horrible smells of the Cairo streets are not prevalent in Alexandria. After a tram ride to Victoria I left Alexandria at 4p.m. reaching Cairo at 7.30. After tea I visited the wassa and strolled round watching the fun. The place is very lively at night as a lot of Tommies are camped here.

Thursday 17th Feb. Visited the Tombs of the Mamaluks and climbed Mattacan Hill from which a fine view of Cairo is obtainable. Visited the N.Z. hospital at Pont de Kubbeh where I saw Galbraith and left Cairo at 7.15. Arrived Ismailia 10.30 after a very welcome weeks holiday.

Sunday 20th Feb. Last night I received orders to join 2nd B.A.C. so this morning I packed up and shifted camp. Sorry to leave my old friends but glad to get away from the N.C.O's of the headquarters staff, especially McDonald.

Saturday 26th Feb. The new batteries are being formed so the B.A.C. are shifting camp to new lines at the back of the old lines. I hope to get transferred to one of the new batteries, as I would prefer that to a B.A.C.

Wednesday 1st March. Swimming parade this morning. Marched to Lake Timsah at 9a.m. and had a very enjoyable swim.

Wednesday 8th March. Had a swim in the lake this morning. In the afternoon a number of mounted rifle reinforcements who were drafted into the artillery arrived at the 2nd B.A.C. for duty so most of the B.A.C. men were transferred to new batteries. I was told off for the 9th battery. Packed up and shifted camp to the lines of the new battery. Our officers in the new battery are Capt Rogers O/C. Lieuts Robinson, Downie and Holben all out of the 5th Battery. The men are drawn partly from the old batteries and partly from mounted rifle reinforcements so are a mixed lot and will have to start at the bottom of the drill, which will make things a little monotonous for a while. At present I am doing gun-drill. We have the 5th Battery guns as the 5th Battery gunners have gone to the trenches to man the Australian guns and allow the gunners there to have a spell. The N.Z. Infantry have all moved out to the trenches and relieved the Australians.

Wednesday 15th March. The Number of our battery has been changed to the 11th. We are out in the desert every day doing field manoeuvres. I am on the battery staff so have a hack of my own to ride. The new men are making good progress in learning. A lot of gambling is going on in camp. Crown and anchor and two-up.

Sunday 19th March. The weather has been very windy lately and horribly dusty. The dust gets into ones eyes and ears and mouth and all our food is gritty. General Johnston addressed the 3rd Brigade today and told us that we go to France in about a fortnight's time. In our tent we often have arguments at night, our favourite subject being Tommies, that is, the men of Kitchener's army. And all are of the opinion that those we met at Anzac were an inferior crowd of men. If they are a fair sample of Englishmen then I am sorry to have the English flag over me. The Scotch troops are a much better class of men and more reliable. I have just read Kipling's "The English Flag" and it seems that the Englishman of the past is a different man to the one of today. The race must be deteriorating fast. I think we ought to get a flag for the British Empire and let the Tommie keep his flag to play with. Another illustration of the deterioration of Englishmen is the British Parliament. What a mess they have made of this war. No doubt the majority of Members of Parliament are Englishmen and from what I have seen of the race I can easily understand why such a bungle was made of the management of the Dardanelles operations. Let us have an Empire Parliament to take charge of Imperial affairs and perhaps it would be as well to do away with a flag called English. Again look at the trained soldiers of the army, they were 10 years behind the Germans. Most of the manoeuvres and tricks used by us now were learned from our enemy and a lot of the instruments used by us now were made in Germany. Englishmen could not make them. But England must be given credit for the splendid Navy. No doubt there are good men in the shipbuilding and engineering yards, better men than the MP's.

Wednesday 22nd March. The 2nd Infantry Brigade came in from the trenches yesterday so last night I looked them up and found Lindsay with the Otago 2nd Batt. He is keeping well now. We did some firing today with fair results. Bathing parade this afternoon. While walking alongside the lake someone called me and I looked round but did not recognise him

for a minute and then it struck me that it was cousin Leslie. He has grown up since I saw him last and is now a fine big fellow and looks fit and healthy.

Thursday 23rd March. The battery is out firing again today. The days are getting very hot now. We will be leaving shortly so will miss the great heat of summer thank goodness.

Friday 31st March. Weather is terribly hot and yesterday we had a sandstorm. We often go down to the lake and swim which is refreshing. Parade hours have been cut down there being no drill between 11a.m. and 4p.m. I have transferred from the specialists to the gun detachment.

Monday 3rd April. A review of the complete N.Z. Division was held today when General Murray inspected us. Over 20,000 N.Z. men were on parade and it was a sight to see them all march past. In the evening I looked up cousin George and had a yarn with him.

Wednesday 5th April. The Howitzer Brigade are entraining today and we probably go tomorrow. This morning we had a practice kit packing all ready to move off. Last night at the pictures I struck George Frame who is now with the A.S.C. 1st Bakery.

Thursday 6th April. Packed kits and all ready to move by 10a.m. Last swim in lake this afternoon. Entrained at 7p.m. although we do not leave until 8.30. We have to travel in open trucks, 20 in each, and they are very uncomfortable, as there is not room to lie down. I dozed a little but was too cramped to sleep properly. The most uncomfortable ride I ever had. Arrived Alexandria 5a.m. and went alongside our transport the "Menominee". I was put on guard on the wharf and managed to get into town for a few hours and have a look round the town. Pulled out into the harbour and anchored at 5p.m.

Saturday 8th April. There are a lot of horses and 1100 men on board. The tucker is pretty good. I sleep on deck, as it is too close down below for me. Started on our journey at 6a.m. with a submarine destroyer escorting us. The weather is cool with a breeze. Goodbye to Egypt. I never wish to go back to that land of sun, sand and sin.

Sunday 9th April. We are passing some land today, possibly Crete. A number of steamers are passing us. Every man must wear a lifebelt on board as there is a scare of submarines and every boat is armed with a small gun

Tuesday 11th April. Arrived off Malta at 10a.m. and anchored in Valetta Harbour at 11. At the entrance to the harbour are big stone forts with numerous guns. The harbour is beautifully sheltered with a narrow entrance, the shore being steep rock. The town is built at the top of the cliffs and so overlooks the harbour. Great stone walls and stone buildings being in evidence. We are all chafing at being unable to get ashore and have a look at the town.

Wednesday 12th. Left Malta at 9a.m.

Friday 14th. Blowing hard today and the sea is rough. Passed Sardinia this morning.

Saturday 15th April. Arrived at Marseilles and tied up to wharf at 8a.m. We can not see much of the town but green trees seem very numerous. So much greenness about a town seems strange but it is a welcome sight and will be a pleasant change to sand. We have arrived in the land of the Frenchies at last and I trust we find it as pleasant as we anticipate. Disembarked at 2p.m. and camped in the wharf shed. At 4p.m. Tom Lorenz and I managed to dodge the guard and got up into town. Marseilles is a large clean town and in many of the streets are fine avenues of trees which beautify the place and which no doubt give pleasant shade in summer time. The people are pretty and amiable especially the girls. Immorality is rife as there are said to be 12,000 licenses issued in the town. We got back to the wharf without any trouble by 9p.m. and turned in to bunk on the rough stone floor of the shed.

Sunday 16th April. Up at 1 a.m. Packed and marched to station. Loaded stores and horses and left at 5a.m. Soon we are out of the town into beautiful country. The finest country I have ever seen. It is springtime and everything is fresh and green. Trees are dotted about and vineyards are numerous. Farmhouses and villages are numerous and picturesque always being amongst trees. Stopped at Orange for breakfast at 10a.m. The people everywhere wave and smile to us as we pass. Stopped at Valance for tea and passed through Lyons towards dusk. We are travelling alongside a beautiful river, which winds through Lyons. The plains have given way to hilly country now and the air is cold. I managed to get a little sleep but was unable to stretch right out.

Monday 17th April. Breakfast at Macon. Cold and showery. The country is flat again. At 5p.m. when within 12 miles of Paris we branched off for Havre. Cup of tea provided by Red Cross nurses at Versailles.

Tuesday 18th April. Reached Havre at 6a.m. detrained and marched 5 miles to camp on outskirts of town. Weather windy and cold and I feel it very much after Egypt. They say we only stop here for a few days to get equipment. There is also a strong rumour that the 2nd Bde. artillery were torpedoed. I trust the rumour is wrong. We were lucky to get safe across.

Wednesday 19th. Windy and cold. Managed to dodge the guard tonight and got into Havre for a look round. Not a big town and not pretty.

Thursday 20th. Full equipment for the battery was drawn today. Guns wagons, horses and stores.

Friday 21st. Very busy morning getting stores packed on guns and getting harness fitted. Packed up and left camp at 2p.m. in full marching order. Entrained at Havre and left at 5p.m. travelling east, destination unknown.

Saturday 22nd. Managed to get some sleep. Passed through Boulogne a big town. The country is flat, fertile and picturesque. Travelled along coast to Calais when we struck off south-easterly. Reached our destination at 1.30 (Steenbecque). Raining hard. Detrained and harnessed horses. Trekged several miles through flat country to the district where we are billeted. Raining still and we all got pretty well soaked. Our gun park and stable yard is a sea of mud behind an unoccupied house. Horses fixed up and fed by 5p.m. We are split into 6 parties for billeting and I am with 20 others in a barn at the back of a house. We have a little straw on the floor but might be worse off. Most of the boys have no change of clothes but luckily I brought some with me so am comfortable.

Sunday 23rd. Slept well. A fine day today so we are able to get our clothes dried. We were lucky getting fixed up before dark last night. Some batteries were busy most of the night. Cleaning harness today. It is terribly muddy in the yard and my feet are wet again. The wet and mud is strange after Egypt but the sunshine is fine today. This is a beautiful country small woods and avenues of trees are abundant and cowslips grow amongst them. The country is all green and the roads wind about, no stiff square corners. The houses too are picturesque with their thatched and tiled roofs.

Easter Monday 24th April. Route march with guns this morning through this beautiful country in pleasant sunshine. Little cafes are plentiful and wine and beer can be purchased for 1d per glass.

Tuesday 25th April. Anniversary of Anzac landing. We are living within sound of the guns and hear the reports all day. The front must be within 10 miles of us. The country round here is all closely cultivated, the work being done by old men and boys, and a few women. Their implements are peculiar. Almost every man of military age to be seen in France is in uniform or else wearing a badge.

Thursday 27th. We are going to Calais to do some practice shooting so packed up our kits and left our billets at 11.30a.m. and marched to Hazebrouck about 9 miles where we entrained for Calais. Arrived at our destination at 6p.m. and marched to our camp 1½ miles. This is a first-class camp on sand. A.S.C. labourers and bakers form the largest part and live in huts. The canteen is up-to-date and I was very glad to get a good feed of sausages mash and peas. Turned in early.

Friday 28th. Went out among the sandhills at 8a.m. and had our practice shoot. This is the first time I have fired a gun but it does not trouble me much. Finished at 3p.m. had some lunch and went into town which is nothing flash being merely a port.

Saturday 29th. We were shown through the Army bakery here which is a large concern turning out 122,000 loaves per day and using 105 tons of flour per day. Left Calais by train at 1.30 and arrived at Hazebrouck at 4. The battery drivers had brought all the horses into the town for us so we were saved the march of 9 miles to Cizeaux.

Sunday 30th April. Church service this morning in beautiful sunshine. Afternoon off duty. I heard that the 2nd Inf. Bde. had shifted camp to near us so in the evening I went down and saw Lindsay. He is well and moves on tomorrow. They expect to go into the trenches on May 20. Some of our battery are being granted 8 days leave to England.

Thursday 4th May. All day mounted parade. Proceeded to our rendezvous near Theinnes where we bivouacked for dinner and returned to camp at 4p.m. This road led us through a fine forest. The roads are good, some of them being paved with stone for miles. The weather is beautiful and I noticed this morning as we were traversing a lane where there were birds

whistling in the hedges, that almost every man in the battery was whistling in company with the birds.

Thursday 11th May. Still camped at Cizeaux doing some gun-drill and exercising horses every day. It is fine riding along the roads and lanes in good weather. I have received word from the Records Office that Murray is in Hospital at Cambridge so I am trying to get leave to see him.

Monday 15th. Reveille 3.30a.m. breakfast 4.30. Packed up and left Les Cizeau at 6a.m. Travelled by by-roads through Morbecque and La Motte then through a forest arriving at View Berquin at 11a.m. Here we are bivouacked in a paddock and stayed all day and night. Fine grass for the horses. We have barns to sleep in and are pretty well off for tucker. 2 Estaminets handy. I secured eggs.

Tuesday 16th May. An easy day cleaning harness etc. Broke camp again at 6p.m. leaving for Armentiers. A beautiful moonlight night so we are able to see what country we are passing through. We travelled near the firing line and saw a number of rockets used in the trenches. Arrived at Armentiers just after midnight and bivied in some abattoir buildings. Turned into bunk at 1.30a.m. and slept soundly.

Wednesday 17th May. Reveille 6.30a.m. Stables. We are within the fire zone now and this morning the Huns are shelling a battery position not far from us. The town is not badly damaged by shells. Here and there a roof is broken or a chimney smashed up. We are a long way from Les Cizeaux and little Maria Meunier now. At Les Cizeaux the population was mostly women whereas in Armentiers only a few woman remain in the town, 90 percent of the buildings are unoccupied by civilians but large numbers of soldiers are billeted in empty buildings. This is a large town and has had tramways in some streets. The trenches are about 2 miles from the town but seem to run round it. Our battery goes into action today so the gunners marched out and took over the Tommy's guns. As I have a sprained ankle I was unable to walk so stayed with the drivers. On the road down I was knocked down by Lt. McKenzie's horse which trod on my ankle. The Tommy battery moves out of their billets tonight so we are packing up ready to move into them. At 9p.m. we moved off but as the Tommies were late moving we did not get settled until 12p.m.

Thursday 18th. We have a stable for our horses and sleep in an old brewery where we have bunks. The Tommies left the place in a filthy condition so we set to work today and cleaned it out. During the day airplane fights are frequent and it is interesting watching the bursts of shrapnel round the planes. Anti-aircraft guns are placed at different places in the town.

Friday 19th. Our daily routine is exercise and feed horses before 7a.m. 9-12 cleaning stables and feed. 2-5 cleaning harness. There are ample men for the work so we have things easy. In the evenings we are allowed up town till 8.30p.m. A number of shops are open and the place is full of New Zealanders. I came across cousin Allen tonight at the Union Jack club canteen.

Saturday 20th May. Strolled up town this afternoon where business is going on just the same as on a weekday. Bought some bananas at 2d each a luxury. Received orders to pack up and go up to the guns. Left the stables at 5.15p.m. The cart is taking our gear, as it is 2 and a half miles. Reached the right section and continued to the left section another half mile. The right section have very comfortable posies in an unoccupied house with tables chairs and mattresses. At the left section, which is within 700 yards of the firing line, we also have a table and chairs. The left section do no firing, it being held in reserve for emergencies. This part of the town, Houplines, is badly damaged by shellfire every building being damaged more or less. The house we camp in is a bit damaged but we have sandbag funkholes for protection in case the Huns find and shell us. I have just received word that I am being granted my furlough very shortly. The weather continues beautifully fine.

Wednesday 23rd May. I go on leave to England tomorrow. Packed up and shifted to the horse-lines where I spent the night.

Thursday 24th. The railway station Steenwereke is some miles away so we got the Cafe-cart to take us. 4 of the battery go today. Left at 2.30a.m. as the train starts at 5.15. Reached Boulogne at 11a.m. Had some lunch and a look round town. Our boat left at 4.30. A smooth sea. Landed at Folkestone at 7. Trip 1½ hours but there is the difference of 1 hour in time so I have to put my watch on 1 hour. Railway to London runs through fine rich country. Arrived Victoria St. Station at 10.30 and took the tubes to Holborn where the Veterans Club

is situated. It is pleasant to have English faces all round me again and to be able to make everyone understand what I ask them. After changing tubes 2 times I reached Holborn and with the aid of policemen found the Club, which seems comfortable. Turned in at 11.30.

Thursday 25th May. Strolled about town, which is an enormous size and so I have to be very careful I do not get lost. Policemen will always put me on the right track again. After some trouble I found the N.Z. Pay Office and got paid. I found that Murray was out of hospital so went out to Hornchurch camp, which is a very comfortable camp, situated in a picturesque village. Here I learned that M. was away on leave so I returned to town. Saw the Tower Bridge, The Tower, Parliament Bldgs, Westminster Abbey etc. Tea at Lipton's and then went to The Gaiety where "Tonight's the Night" is playing. An amusing and pretty comedy. The chorus girls' look pictures in their gowns and paint.

Friday 26th. Decided to go up to Harrogate today so caught train at St Pancras station at 11.30. Travelled through beautiful green country and arrived at Harrogate at 4p.m. Got a loan of a directory and found out where Uncle Robert lives (27 York Place). He was out just then but returned shortly after and gave me a good welcome. After tea I went for a stroll round the town which is picturesque. Avenues of trees are in nearly every street and parks and open spaces are plentiful. No cramped houses and everything clean and green. Bed at 10p.m. when it is barely dark. The gloaming is long and there is an hour extra through the daylight saving.

Saturday 27th. Breakfast 8a.m. I found the bed a luxury. I never slept in so soft a bed before. Had a swim in the baths and a look at the gardens where there is a band playing. I feel a bit lonely by myself so decided to move on. The old people did not want me to go but Mrs Thomson's sister, Mrs McFarlane asked me to go up to Edinburgh with her so I accepted and left at 2.30. Arrived Edinburgh 9p.m. Train to Colinton. The two McFarlane girls are lively and soon made me feel at home. Bed 12p.m.

Sunday 28th. Breakfast 8.30a.m. Went to Juniper Green church where Mr McFarlane is preaching and after dinner went for a walk with Flossie through beautiful country. Visited a 2nd line hospital, which was formerly a golf club house. The view from here is magnificent. Mayben is a nurse here. The country is a real picture, so green. Hills, woods and streams are plentiful. Went to Colinton church in the evening.

Monday 29th. Went down to Edinburgh with Mr McFarlane who took me round and showed me many historic buildings and monuments. It is a solidly built town, all stone, and very clean. Parks are abundant and beautify the town. Edinburgh Castle is perched atop of a rock and is surrounded by gardens and trees. Had lunch with Mr M. and met Flossie at 2p.m. Mr M. then went to the assembly meeting and I was left in the charge of F. We went all through the castle, Flossie explaining things and showed me "Mons Meg", an enormous cannon very ancient. Had tea at Mackie's and caught the 5 o'clock train for Glasgow. The McFarlanes' have been real kind to me and made me feel at home all the time. Arrived Glasgow 6.10. Went to Royal Hotel and had tea. After a ride in a tramcar I went to a picture show where there was a good programme. Came out at 10.15 when it is still light, so strange.

Tuesday 30th. Breakfast at 8. Took a car to Renfrew and saw something of the Clyde shipbuilding yards. Returned and took car to Uddingston and visited Tom Brown's brother where I had lunch. Then I went up to Bothwill Castle lodge to see Mr Donald a friend of J. Weir's. The Castle grounds are extensive and beautiful and the ruins of an old historic castle are there. Mr Brown caught me up and invited me to tea with him. He took me on the trams to Hamilton a pleasant ride, and back to his house where we had tea. After tea we all visited old Mr Brown and I spent an enjoyable evening there with Tom's sisters. Left at 10.30 dusk and returned to Royal Hotel.

Wednesday 31st May. Light rain. Left Glasgow at 10a.m. by Caledonian Railway. Arrived London 6.20p.m and went out to Hornchurch where I was lucky enough to find Murray. He was on duty and so had to remain in camp. He looks fit and I had a yarn with him until 10 then went to London and got a bed at a Catholic rest hut for 3d.

Thursday 1st June. Up at 6a.m. Left for Folkestone at 8 and sailed from old England at 12. Arrived Boulogne 1.30, had dinner and spent an enjoyable afternoon in the town. Left by train at 7.30 and arrived Steenwereke 1a.m.

Friday 2nd June. 5.30 started to walk to Armentiers about 6 miles, had breakfast en route and reached the stables at 7.30 where I have to stay at present.

Sunday 4th June. Back at the old work of grooming horses etc. I feel my bed on the brick floor a bit hard after the luxury I enjoyed in the old country. While I have been away the forward section have done some firing. We have just received news that the much-boasted-of British fleet has been knocked about. I am half glad of this as it will take some of the swank out of them and waken the cabinet into action which is badly needed in many ways.

Friday 9th June. News received that Lord Kitchener is dead. This is bad, as I believe that he was one of the few capable men at the head of the British army. We had a hot bath in vats at a factory this morning and were able to exchange our dirty clothing for clean. A real good army institution. I am on a job whitewashing our billets inside. It makes a great improvement in the lighting, as the ceiling was black before. A picture show is run in town and I have seen them a few times. It is a first class way to spend an evening, the pictures being humorous. The weather continues good with showers occasionally. I am keeping very fit and as healthy as I could be.

Monday 12th Jne. Packed up this evening and shifted camp to the rear section of the battery. We are very comfortable here as we live in empty houses where we have mattresses to sleep on. The guns are well sheltered and are obscured from enemy observation. We have a fine big messroom, which is a big improvement on the stable's mess.

Thursday 15th. On guard last night and slept very badly. The stand-to etc break up the few hours of sleeping time. Some of the boys are on a job building new gun empaulments. Yesterday I was on a job filling and carting sandbags for the telephone dugout. Every second day I am on duty at the guns or on aeroplane guard.

Friday 16th June. A lively night. At 11p.m. we started a bombardment of the enemy trenches for 45 minutes during which time our gun fired 76 rounds. Then after a pause of 1 hour we fired 10 rounds per gun in 1 minute. During the interval the infantry carried out a raid on the Hun trenches and secured some booty with very few casualties. All the batteries participated in the shoot so there was a great din while it was in progress. Just as we finished, the sirens commenced a warning of a gas attack so we put our helmets on the top of our heads, ready to pull down but luckily no gas came our way so we then turned into bed.

Monday 19th. Lindsay dropped in this afternoon and had a yarn. He said that the noise of the late bombardment was hell in their front line trenches. 4 officers and several men of our division were wounded. Luckily while Lins was with me the battery did some shooting so he was able to see a gun at work. No N.Z. letters for a long time past as a mail has gone astray.

Thursday 22nd June. On cooks fatigue today, an easy job. I found a patch of gooseberries so picked them for the cook to stew. We help ourselves to all the fruit about the place, strawberries, cherries and red currants are plentiful and we have some good feeds. Although looting is forbidden I do not believe in seeing good fruit go to waste. We get all the chairs, mattresses, and dishes etc we want as the people left their furniture behind when they vacated this town. There was an alarm at midnight so we had to stand to for a while but only fired one round. The weather has turned quite warm today. I hope it lasts as this billet is a home from home in fine weather.

Sunday 25th. I met Lindsay in the street today so went out to the trenches with him. He showed me the different kinds of bombs and flares they use and explained the working of them. Then we walked round through the trenches and had a look at the country beyond but could only see barbed wire and the Hun's parapet. The trenches are very wet and muddy in bad weather. Lindsay has a very comfortable posie and looks very fit. I met Ted Houghton in the trenches; he looks much better than when I last saw him at Anzac. He has had a long spell in hospital.

Friday 30th June. Business is getting a bit busier lately. Our battery has been doing a lot of shooting. The activity seems to be general along the whole front. At last the British army is doing something and it is high time. The shooting is usually done at night so our sleep is broken. The other day our airplanes brought down some enemy observation balloons with a new firebomb, which they are using. It is apparently a first-class invention. I went into Nieppe for a bath today and met Arthur Brown of the 4ths there, looking very well. I do not get any too much sleep now as I am on guard every second night which means 3½ hours duty between 10p.m. and 7 a.m. and in addition there is frequently some shooting during the short time I have off guard. It is good to get a full night's sleep (9 hours). Often the officers tell us what targets we are firing at and so give us a little interest in the shooting. We can never see

our targets but use a chimney as an aiming point and the controlling officer orders the bearing right or left of the aiming point (in degrees and minutes). He then observes the burst of the shell and corrects the lay if it is a bit out for line or range. It is interesting work. The only objectionable thing is the concussion of the gun when fired. One can feel it hit him when behind the gun and continuous fire soon makes my ears and head sore. The one consolation is that the more shells we fire, the sooner the end of the war will come. The Huns send a good many shells back and do plenty of damage. A gun of the 10th battery was blown up lately. Our infantry are making raids on the enemy trenches frequently and are now using poison gas. I was shown a piece of German tear-gas shell which one of the boys found. It still smelt of the gas and a little of it soon made my eyes sore.

Monday 3rd July. Shifted camp back to the stables for a week's spell away from the noise of the guns.

Thursday 6th. On fatigue last night at the new gun empaulments so lay in till 11a.m. I am having a good time in the evenings as we get so much freedom here. The picture show is a good place to put in an evening. Good news is coming in from the southern part of the British line.

Monday 10th. Shifted to the forward guns last night alongside the river and today at 10.30 we got orders to shift guns and all equipment to a different position a bit further back. We manhandled the guns and some ammunition to the new position in a factory. Empaulments are all ready built for us and we have a fine big room for our sleeping quarters with beds all ready for us. We registered some targets and after stand-to carted more ammunition until midnight when we turned in.

Tuesday 11th. On cook's fatigue today and as the cook has gone sick I have some extra work. There is a piano in our new quarters so we are likely to have some music and singing.

Friday 14th July. There was a small bombardment last night each gun firing over 100 rounds. The infantry suffered badly from German shellfire and a party of 4th Otago boys who attempted to make a raid were nearly all casualties. Fritz was sending some back to the guns and killed Capt. Turner of the 4th How. Battery. I had a bath today, very nice. Mosquitoes are very numerous about here and I get some bites but they do not trouble me as I seem to have been hardened a bit by what I have had to put up with in Egypt and Gallipoli.

Sunday 16th July. Shifted camp today to the stables again. So I am able to get to the picture show and the baths whenever I wish. At the guns is the most comfortable posie but I enjoy the freedom of the life at the stables. Leslie is down from the guns too and I had a yarn with him.

Friday 21st. We have received news that the Australians attempted to advance but have been pushed back into their own trenches with very heavy casualties. I am exceedingly sorry to hear this news as it practically means defeat for the Anzacs.

Sunday 23rd July. I went to the 1st Otago Battalion Headquarters this afternoon and had a look at their casualty list, which I knew was very heavy. Cousin Lindsay's name is among the wounded. I had tea in town, eggs and chips and then proceeded to the guns where I was put on guard. There is a lot of sandbagging work to be done at guns so we are having a pretty hot time this week.

Tuesday 25th. At the gas instruction school today where they gave us a sniff of poison gas, very nasty stuff. Received a parcel from Murray today containing some very acceptable dainties and a panniken. New Zealand mails are well overdue.

Saturday 29th. Enjoying beautiful sunny weather. Lindsay looked in yesterday and had a yarn. He is still up in the trenches and is having a very busy time. We were informed last night that our battery has to shift out of this posie, as the 15th who were here before us are coming back. Hard luck after all the hard work we have done on the empaulments. We shift into new empaulments under railway line.

Sunday 30th July. Working in the new empaulments under railway line this afternoon and then shifted to the stables for a weeks spell. I have put in a lot of work this week and next week there will be more still to do.

Saturday 5th August. I have had an enjoyable week and an easy time, only one picket. The weather has been perfect and I have had a swim in the river most days. News that Lemberg had fallen was received by wire but the newspapers do not confirm it so there must be some mistake. Each morning after exercising horses we can get a cup of hot coffee across the street

and it goes well when we are hungry. I had a trip to the guns tonight with ammunition wagons. It is a novel joy ride. Nearly all round can be seen flares and the flash of guns but the noise made by the wagons on the cobble roads is so great that it is impossible to hear much. One cannot tell that a shell has burst somewhere near by until one sees sparks made by the pieces of metal striking the cobbles.

Saturday 12th August. On cook's fatigue today so during the afternoon I went into town and had a swim in the cold-water baths where diving competitions were in progress. During my absence from the guns Lins dropped in.

Monday 14th Aug. I got 2 hours leave this morning and visited Lindsay in the trenches and had a yarn with him. He is quite well and expects to be relieved in 3 days. The whole division is going out and we are prepared to move any day. We will have a short rest and then move into a place where we are pushing the line, I expect. We have built fine new empaulments for our guns inside houses but will have to leave them for the Tommies. We were in the tunnel empaulments under the railway-line for a few days. It was damp.

Thursday 17th August. An easy day playing cards and doing a little shooting. At 10p.m. the Scotch battery arrived with their guns so we ran ours out, limbered up and proceeded to the horse lines. The boys are all happy at the prospect of a change, although we are very comfortable here and not likely to again be in such a good position as Armentiers.

Friday 18th. Harnessed up at noon and said goodbye to Armentiers and all our friends there. On the road out we passed numbers of Scotch troops coming to relieve the N.Z. Division. Travelled along the same route as when coming to Armentiers, through Estaires, La Motte Wood and Morbecque. Halted at 6p.m. and fed up. Arrived at our camping ground at 10p.m. 25 miles in 9 hours. Picketed horses and proceeded to our billets. The latter consist of sheds open on one side with straw on the floor for our bunks. The weather is fairly warm so we are comfortable enough. There were some showers of rain during the day but not enough to wet us. The country we travelled through is agricultural. Hedges and avenues are numerous and the crops look beautiful, they are being harvested now as they are a golden ripeness. The country is a pleasant change after Armentiers, which is a manufacturing town in which the houses are crowded together with no gardens except in the residences of the richer classes.

Saturday 19th August. Reveille 6a.m. The boys got wet taking the horses down to water 2 miles away at Blaringhem. I did not go as I am stableman for today. A beautiful warm day in the afternoon. We are now in the same part of the country as we were 3 months ago and only 1½ miles from Les Cizeaux where we were billeted then. This is a beautiful piece of country. It was spring when we were here before and now it is early autumn. I do not know at which season the country looked best. After tea I walked across to Les Cizeaux, had a look at our old billets and visited our friends there. I spent a very pleasant evening with little Maria and had chips and eggs before returning to camp when I had to go on picquet till 12.30.

Sunday 20th. Stables and cleaning harness during the day. Went to Les Cizeaux again in the evening and had an enjoyable time.

Monday 21st. Took horses down to Blaringhem for watering twice during the day. Boot and saddle at 6p.m. Moved off at 6.40 all aboard. The wagons are well loaded when all the gear and our swags are on. Travelled about 12 miles to Arques. Near the end of the trip Corporal Roscoe was thrown by his horse and dragged, sustaining nasty wounds on the head. Hard work putting guns and horses aboard train by 1a.m.

Tuesday 22nd. Departed at 1.30a.m. in vans with a little hay to lie on. I was dog tired and slept during all the rattle of the train until 9a.m. when I woke up quite fresh. Arrived at Pont Remy station at 11a.m. Unloaded horses, guns and wagons and moved out of yard. Had lunch alongside the road. Travelled about 3 miles to Fontaine where we are billeted. The horses are in a fine big paddock. The men's billets are full of dirty straw so I will sleep outside and keep clear of lice. After tea I had a swim in a lake alongside our picket ground and strolled through the village. Edgington invited me to sleep in a hut they have cleaned out.

Wednesday 23rd. Reveille 5.30a.m. slept well. A number of fellows are sleeping in bivies constructed of canvas, oilsheets etc. in the paddocks so as to keep clean.

Thursday 24th. B-sub stableman today so I am having an easy day. Had a swim in the pond and did some washing this morning. The pond is A1 for a swim, about 8 feet deep and clean. I have been in each day and sometimes there are 30 in at one time. The sides are straight down and so are good for diving. The village is mostly dilapidated but they have a fine

church with beautiful architecture. Last night there was a short shower but today is ideal weather. I hear that we only stay here for 10 days.

Friday 25th. Practising battery manoeuvres this morning up on the hilltop from which we got a fine view of the Somme Valley.

Tuesday 29th. Packed up and left Fontaine at noon. Trekked by road to La Chausee, which we reached at 5p.m. Very heavy showers en route so we were all fairly wet on arrival at our destination but we have a good barn to sleep in.

Wednesday 30th. Moved off again at noon. Started to rain again and continued nearly the whole way so that everyone was soaked by the time we reached Bonney at 6.30p.m. after travelling about 20 miles. Thanks to some Cogniac (sic) in my bottle I did not get a chill. We came through Amiens, a fine big town and were often within sight of the Somme. In fine weather it would be an enjoyable trip. Bonney is a small town and tonight there is mud everywhere. From here we can hear the guns 10 miles away.

Thursday 31st. A fine day so we are able to spread our clothes out to dry. The mud also is drying up. Our horses are picketed quite handy in an avenue of trees. I am on a town picket tonight.

Friday 1st September. Strolled into Corbie tonight and had a look round. It is a fair sized town and contains a big old church, a very solid building of stone. A lot of French soldiers are in the town including French colonials some being niggers.

Sunday 3rd. Bombardment sounds violent today. Church parade in morning, afternoon off so had a swim in the canal and washed some clothes.

Monday 4th. Wet morning. After tea started out for Amiens but were unable to catch a motor-lorrie so gave it up after going some distance.

Tuesday 5th. Reveille 5a.m. Packed up and right section moved off at 7a.m. Travelled along very bad roads. About 9a.m. we reached country where transport camps and horse lines were very numerous. And for miles we passed horses and wagons in every paddock. The railway line runs up to here and there are numerous large sidings and stores of supplies and ammunition. The country presents a great spectacle of animation for all the world like a swarm of bees shaken onto the ground, each bee being represented by a man or a horse. Naturally there is a tremendous stream of traffic on the roads, one stream going up one side and another passing down the other side. The late bad weather has made the roads bad. About noon we reached the particular spot of earth where our battery horses and wagons are to camp, picketed and fed horses and had a bite of lunch ourselves. At 1.30p.m. the guns pulled out to go up into action. I secured a ride on a G.S. wagon. For a mile we still passed horse lines and stores and then came the outskirts of the firing line, the big naval guns. Old trenches and saps cover the face of the country about here and the ground is everywhere covered with shell-holes the greater number of which have been made by British shells at the commencement of the big offensive. A little further on we pass more big guns and howitzers hidden in every hollow and behind every wood or hedge. In fact guns are so numerous that it is impossible to secure screens for them all, so some are quite in the open. Smashed wagons are here and there alongside the road, just as they have been cast off the road to allow traffic to continue. Now and then a wounded man hobbles along making for the dressing station down below. Badly wounded are brought down in Red Cross motors and wagons. At the top of a hill we pass through a wood, which more represents a collection of broken off telegraph poles than a wood, as there is hardly a branch or green leaf left on the trees. A fire could not have made a greater mess of it. Hundreds of men are working on the road trying to keep it in order. A bit further on we come to what was once the village of Fricourt. With the exception of part of one wall of the church everything is razed to the ground. Down hill into a gully and we strike the scene of operations of the 18pr. guns. They are here in dozens in every hollow. The wheel of one of our guns struck a bomb in the mud and exploded it, injuring the horse and driver (Bomb. Bob Brown) immediately following. We secured a stretcher and started to carry him away but two S.B. relieved us. He has a nasty cut on the forehead. Shifted two Tommy guns, 156th Bde A battery out of their empulment and put ours in. We commenced firing straight away. The guns taking it in turns to do the shooting. The rate is slow, one round every 2 minutes. Fritz sent over a few gas shells but not enough to trouble us. The bombardment by us is continuous both night and day and never a second passes but a gun somewhere near us fires. Often 20 guns fire in the one second. The noise is great. Fritz

sends a few shells back but not 1/10th of what we send over to him. This morning one of the Tommies guns was blown out and the detachment finished. The remains of the gun landed alongside our empaulment. I secured a possie in a trench roofed with iron and with ammunition boxes for a bunk so am pretty comfortable. It is still raining a little and mud is everywhere. I was dog-tired and slept like a top until my shift at 5.30a.m.

Wednesday 6th Sept^r. I was sent down to the wagon lines with a message with Grace. It is about 6 miles and very heavy going through the mud. It is fine today and things are beginning to dry up. The left section arrived at the wagon-lines and proceeded to the guns. I had a wash and a cup of tea. There is a Y.M.C.A. marquee handy and there I got some nice cakes. Issued rations are very poor and water is scarce at the guns. Returned to the guns at 5p.m. did some shooting and turned in. Two specialists hit today, Smith and Calder.

Thursday 7th Sept^r. Shooting at 5.30a.m. On airplane guard today. Airplanes and balloons are numerous about here but the Allies have the majority. The French have advanced on our right today. Fritz put a number of shells over this afternoon and stirred up the batteries below us. He also shelled the road and got one of our teams, one horse killed and one man wounded. The teams are very busy carting ammunition and come up at all hours daylight or dark. We are not having the picnic here that we enjoyed at Armentiers. No mattresses or bedsteads here. Shooting from 11.30p.m. to 1.30.

Friday 8th Sept^r. On guard 3.30 to 4.30 and shooting from 5.30 to 7.30. Boiled spuds with our bully this morning, a luxury. I turned in after breakfast and slept till 12. Bread cheese and tea for dinner. A beautiful fine day. A very heavy bombardment on our right today.

Saturday 9th September. Another fine day. I got a fair nights sleep in my dugout which is fairly comfortable. It is in a disused trench dug in limestone, which is very plentiful in this part of the country. Our tucker in none too good, no butter and very little jam or fresh meat. We have to fall back on the good old bully beef and biscuits. Bombardment is intense this afternoon all our guns are firing. I believe the infantry make an attack today.

Tuesday 12th. Weather still fine. Bombardment still going strong. The Huns counter-attacked yesterday but were repulsed. We all wear steel helmets here for protection against shrapnel and splinters.

Thursday 14th. I went across to a war machine which happened to stop near the battery and which we nicknamed the caterpillar. It is a big armoured motorcar only instead of travelling on wheels it travels on 2 endless ribbed belts, which run underneath nearly the whole length, and returns over the roof. It is raised in front so can travel over obstructions. It mounts 2 6lb Hotchkiss guns and 5 machine guns. It is quite a secret and we are said to possess 200 of them. Tomorrow they will be used in the big attack. Cavalry also are in readiness.

Friday 15th September. Bombardment started at 6a.m. but very shortly we had to raise our fire as the infantry advanced. Battery ceased fire at 8a.m. and prepared to move forward. Followed a road up to and through Delville wood which is nothing but a mass of broken off poles and stumps. The village is represented by pieces of timber and bricks well mixed and in some places a bit higher where a building has stood. On emerging from the wood our eyes were met by one huge ploughed paddock (ploughed by shells). No doubt something grew there once but now not a green leaf is to be seen. It has been turned over and over again by bursting shells and is well mixed with metal. Numbers of wounded men are coming in past us. New Zealand Infantry amongst them. Shells are raining galore. Out here one of the caterpillars has come to grief and further on two more. The road is being kept in repair by men on the job permanently. We halted under the shelter of a hill off the road took shovels and picks and started building our new empaulments. Just then a shrapnel shell burst right among the D Sub men hitting 9 including Lt. Holben. 3 men died, Taylor, Crogman and Thompson. Sgt Jenkin, Cpl Flood, Hague, Bill Dale and Allardice were wounded. Sgt Jenkin had several wounds so I bound him up as best I could. Although wounded in the legs he was able to walk so I went with him to the dressing station. His worst wounds were in the shoulder and hand. We got into an old German trench which we followed some distance. The Huns were only driven out of this this morning and some dead are lying in the trench. Further on we crossed the open to the wood. Although shells were plentiful all round us we got through safely although slowly. Jenky was pretty near done and was glad to lie down and be dressed properly. I said goodbye and returned to the guns, picking up a tin of milk and one of jam on the track. The empaulments were nearly finished and the guns ready to fire. Plenty

of work to do digging a communication sap and a dugout to sleep in. Turned in from 10 till 11, firing from 11 till 1 and then slept till 5a.m. in full dress as it was raining slightly.

Saturday 16th Sep. The infantry are advancing again this morning and we are putting up a barrage until 11a.m. Numerous wounded coming in. Last night 2 wandered to our battery and slept in the open but were too weak to move this morning. No stretcher bearers would take them as they were busy with the front line casualties. One man died about noon. We carried the other man away on our stretcher until we found 2 R.A.M.C. men who relieved us of him. Buried the other poor fellow after dark. The Huns shelled our gully and made things very hot for us but they did not hit the guns and as we kept under cover we had no casualties. Slept under the guns.

Sunday 17th Sept. Dug an ammunition pit, put a roof on our empulment and improved our dugout in which Butler and I sleep. Germans counter-attacked so we opened fire and drove them back. Battery next to us shelled and some casualties caused. Our drivers get a warm time coming down the road with ammunition. They say that dead men and horses and smashed wagons litter the road. They have been lucky and have had no casualties during the last 2 days. Unloaded ammunition at 10p.m. and then turned into our dugout which is partly roofed with oilsheets and is fairly comfortable.

Monday 18th. Awoke at 8a.m. to find our feet in a pool of water. It is still raining and making things very uncomfortable for us. Some fellows who were sleeping in the sap got flooded out and went into the gun empulment, which is a bit drier. We are getting some better food now, butter and jam and some fresh meat and spuds. Some mail has also arrived. Baled the water out of our dugout with a bucket but things are very wet inside and as my mate Butler puts it we will have to sit up to sleep.

Tuesday 19th. Bomb. Scrimshaw wounded in the forehead. The piece of shell first penetrated his helmet. Scrimmie and Gardner had a narrow escape at the O.P. Their steel helmets saved their lives. Our gun has been put out of action by hard wear so most of B sub detachment went to the horse lines. Butler and I stayed with Sgt Sutton. I was up in Delville Wood today getting some firewood for the cook and there saw some horrid sights produced by the shellfire. Equipment is lying about everywhere. I was promoted to bombardier today.

Wednesday 20th Sept. Weather still a bit showery and mud everywhere making things very uncomfortable. The mud and rain has stopped the advance. Fritz put a few shells near the guns today and gave us a fright but no casualties. The country beyond our lines looks pleasantly green and not torn up by shells and if we could only get there we would be more comfortable than amongst this mud.

Saturday 23rd. Glorious sunshine today. Early Fritz sent over a number of lachrymatory shells and made our eyes sore. We had to use our goggles. Received a cake from home today, very welcome. Working on our empulment today making some improvements. We expect the gun back tonight. I believe there will be an attack tomorrow.

Sunday 24th Sept. Fritz pelted us with shrapnel from a new direction today and caught three including Sgt Button and Ockenden. Our gun came back this evening so we are doing some shooting again now. Cpl Climo in charge.

Monday 25th Sep. Fritz shelled our valley again today with high explosive and did some damage especially to the Tommy batteries. Capt. Robinson O/C 12th Battery was killed. He was formerly a lieutenant with our battery. Action from 12.30 until 7p.m. Infantry advanced over 1000 yards and took numerous prisoners. Capt. Rogers wounded in the arm by shrapnel. A hun shell got a direct hit on a 12th battery gun and I saw a man blown yards away, not the first today. Turned in at 8 30 very weary.

Tuesday 26th Sept. Shooting this morning. Our gun was put out of action through a fault in the buffer so we had a fairly easy day. The infantry made another advance this afternoon and captured more Huns. The Germans counter-attacked on our left. We have reinforcements in the battery now so are not so very short handed. Hun shrapnel has torn holes in the oilsheets forming our roof but so far I am thankful to say no shells have landed close enough to bury us. Last night Cpl Climo was in talking to me when a pellet went whiz past his face and into the wall. They cannot reach me when lying down.

Wednesday 27th. As our gun is out of action the captain ordered us down to the wagon lines so we packed up and went after having tea. During the night airplanes came over the wagon-

lines and dropped some bombs near us killing several horses and men. Discipline is very free here.

Thursday 28th Sept. Our gun is coming back from ordnance today so we returned to the battery and came into action again. As we have no sergeant I have to take charge of half of the shooting. Plenty of work putting a new roof on our empulment.

Friday 29th. Cpl Driscoll transferred to our sub-section today and Cpl Climo promoted to be sergeant.

Saturday 30th. Our guns are shooting on a new target today with a big switch so we had to alter our empulment. More artillery are digging-in, in front of us. Weather is continuing fine.

Sunday 1st October. All clocks put back an hour today. Fritz shelled our gully this morning without doing any damage. A big stunt today starting at 3.15 and lasting till 7.15. During the shoot we struck an unusual thing, a cartridge without any charge. A and D guns have shifted forward near Flers. I think B and C will stay in the old position.

Monday 2nd October. Poor old B gun is out of action again so I went down to the horse-lines for a team to be sent up to take the gun away. It is quiet at the horse-lines. No shells and very little sound of guns here.

Tuesday 3rd. Raining slightly. The N.Z. infantry are coming out of the trenches today so I walked across to their transports to find out where the 2nd Brigade are and learned that they had already departed for Fricourt. The Engineers are going down today and the 1st Bde. and Dinkums go tomorrow. It is high time the infantry were relieved and I believe the artillery will also be relieved shortly.

Wednesday 4th. Raining hard this morning but I am thankful to say I am in a good bivvy formed out of a big tarpaulin. We get plenty of empty ammunition boxes for firewood and always have a fire going outside. Some of the boys make cocoa etc and do some cooking for themselves. I heard that the 1st. Otago Battn. are camped across the road so went across this afternoon and learned from an officer that Lindsay is wounded and in hospital. Alex Glenn is still fit.

Thursday 5th Oct. Ordered to proceed to the guns today as Bomb. Forsyth does not want to go up. After lunch I packed my swag and carried it up to the old gun position where I found Sgt Climo and his detachment waiting for a cart to carry the iron etc for their empulment up to the new position. I was instructed to stay with Gr. Butler to guard the material left at this position. An officer's bivvy has been left complete so we have a good bivvy and some tucker will be sent to us from the guns. B gun has been condemned by ordnance and it may be some days before we get a new one. The 12th battery officer's cook has the use of the cookshop along with us.

Friday 6th October. The Tommies about here are trying to get away with iron etc. and we have some trouble stopping them, as we cannot sit on it all day. 7 casualties at the battery today. Lethaby died of wounds. We are cooking some first-class meals for ourselves.

Sunday 8th. A S.A. cart arrived at 5a.m. and took away a load of material. Raining again today and mud is plentiful. We have water to spare so I had a good wash - the first for a month - and did some washing. Sergt Climo arrived at 3p.m. with orders for us to return to the battery in time for tea. On account of the frequent shelling to which the guns are subject, the men sleep in a trench 300 yards away. Calder kindly allowed me to sleep in his bivvy for the night as he was going on duty elsewhere. At 9p.m. Fritz opened out again and the gunners who were firing came away.

Monday 9th October. After breakfast I set to work digging a bivvy for myself. Fritz shelled the battery again and wounded Sergt. Hopwood. One gun was hit direct and the trail is standing up in the air. Tea, biscuits and a little jam for dinner, rations short. Just after dinner the Captain told us that the guns which were left would be shifted tonight. My bivvy is just finished. We all got picks and shovels and went across the hill to the new position where we got to work on excavating the gun pits. The ground is stony. After tea we worked away again in the moonlight. It is terribly hard working so long on the poor food we are getting. A nip of rum helped to liven us a bit. Teams brought the two guns across and we got them into place and the roof on by 2a.m. B-sub men then started out for the wagon lines, which we reached at 3.30. I was never so tired in all my life and was thankful to crawl into a corner of a bivvy and get a few hours sleep.

Tuesday 10th Oct^r. A fine day and I had a good rest. B gun arrived from ordnance in the afternoon.

Wednesday 11th. Up at 3a.m. to guide some ammunition wagons to the battery. The Q.M. gave orders for B sub detachment to proceed to the guns to build an empaulment for our gun. Arrived there at 7a.m. and later got on to work. We had to carry sandbags, iron and timber from the old position so the job took some time. The gun arrived at 11.30 and about an hour later we all turned in dog-tired.

Thursday 12th. No work to do but just keep out of the road, as I am not on the detachment which is firing. At 2p.m. all the guns opened out for a big bombardment. What a rattle crash bang it was. At first one could pick out the black fan-shaped burst of high explosive and the white fleecy burst of shrapnel but presently all was merged in one bank of smoke with the bursts of Hun shells showing in the foreground. Our old guns are not standing the heavy firing well and both B and C were out of action at times.

Sunday 15th Oct^r. The vital question of the day is when are we going out of the Somme. We expected to be relieved some time ago but now it seems we have to stay here for a few days yet. We are all fed up with the place and will be happy the day we receive orders to go. The Huns got onto our new position today and put over a number of shells, one falling into C gun pit and putting the gun out of action. We are firing in bombardments only and get plenty of sleep. Pincher Page is cooking for us and is treating us very well. A and D guns are going to shift to a new position near Geudecourt.

Wednesday 18th Oct. At 10p.m. when I was comfortably in bunk I got orders to take a message to the horse lines so set out with a mate. A very dark night but we managed to keep the track and on reaching the road we got onto an empty limber and rode most of the way. Arrived at midnight and got some sleep in C subs bivy. Heavy rain early in the morning.

Thursday 19th. Very peaceful at horse lines where there is no sound of guns. Returned to guns at midday. There is a continual stream of traffic on the road taking up ammunition and stores and we got a ride part of the way in a motor-lorrie. Men are continually at work keeping the road in repair. The rain makes plenty of mud on the road and we got well splashed. As we got further out we got in amongst the noise of the guns again. On reaching the gun we found that the gun and my dugout had been flooded. Drained gunpit and slept there.

Friday 20th Oct. Cold day. Baled water out of my dugout and cleaned it out. Got a good nights sleep but my feet very cold.

Saturday 21st. The ground was white with frost when we got up this morning, no wonder it was cold. Working on a new empaulment this morning so got nicely warmed up. An Australian Division is relieving us and I believe it will be very shortly.

Tuesday 24th. Walked to wagon lines to get a new pair of boots. Rode on a motor lorrie part of the way back. I only once saw such a continuous stream of traffic as is to be seen on the road and that was while the Bridge of London Tower was closed for a minute to allow a steamer to pass through. The drivers believe that the Australian division to relieve us is down at Bonney and the skipper believes that we will go out very soon. Weather cold and mud plentiful.

Wednesday 25th Oct. Advance party of Aussies arrived today. We got 2 new empaulments fixed up for their guns.

Thursday 26th. Aussies everywhere and I am glad to see them. Working on the empaulments again this morning. We move out tonight. At 4p.m. one Australian gun arrived and C gun pulled out to the wagon lines. The other 3 Australian guns are stuck in the mud. The road is in an awful condition with mud. At 7p.m. we went across with drag ropes and attempted to pull one of their horses out of a shell-hole but failed. Left the guns in the mud and returned to the battery where B sub detachment received orders to proceed to wagon lines, which we reached at midnight. We carried our packs but secured a ride in a motor-lorrie a good part of the way.

Friday 27th. Up at 4a.m. Had breakfast and packed up ready to move off, on wagons at 6a.m. 2 B sub teams were left behind to pull out our gun. A cold damp day for our ride. Passed Albert and away from the sound of guns. Reached Bonnay at 12.30 where we camped. It was here we stayed for a while before going into the Somme. There is plenty of mud here.

Saturday 28th. Reveille 6a.m. Stables, grooming, cleaning vehicles etc during the day. On picquet at night. Had a comfortable bunk in a G.S. wagon.

Sunday 29th Oct. Had a warm bath in Heilly and got a clean shirt and sox. Bath a luxury. An easy day, only stables. Moving on tomorrow. Our gun team with 2 horses extra has gone back to Montauban to bring out our gun.

Monday 30th. Reveille 5.15a.m. Moved off at 8. A dull cold day for our trek but rain not heavy. Heading for Armentiers. Reached a small village at 12.30 and camped for the day. Billets in town, bunks made of wire netting on poles. Heavy rain after noon. We were lucky to be camped before the rain came on.

Tuesday 31st. Moved off at 12.30p.m. Long after dark we reach a muddy camping ground at Ampliers where we slept in tarpaulin shelters, cold.

Wednesday 1st Nov^r. Moved off at 8a.m. through beautiful country well cultivated and plentiful with trees. Passed through Doullens and Frevent. Camped at 2p.m. at Ligny. First class billets, straw plentiful.

Thursday 2nd. Reveille 4.30a.m. Continued trek at 8a.m. rolling country, light rain. Reached Heuchin at 2p.m. Good camping ground.

Friday 3rd. Moved off at 7.30 and reached Berguette at 3p.m.

Saturday 4th. Moved off at 8a.m. A beautiful day with sunshine. Passed through Merville and camped at Strazeele at 3p.m. after a long trek of about 16 miles. Our usual is 12-14. We have been able to buy bread biscuits etc on the road and so have kept our hunger in check. The roads are good considering the rain and we have been lucky with the weather, as we have never had it wet enough to soak through us. The country is losing the pleasant green colour it had in summer although the woods are pretty with yellow and red foliage. We are getting near the end of our trip now as we are within a day's march of Armentiers. We are wondering whether we go straight into action without a spell. I am sure we deserve a holiday but we may not get it. During the spell at the Somme I forgot we were in France as the country has been made ugly by war and there are no French men or women there.

Sunday 5th Nov. Busy day cleaning harness and wagons. To the baths in the morning. Afternoon off duty so went into Hazebrouck. Ride in motor-lorrie half the way. Had a look round the town, which is a fair size. Tea with some nice girls who spoke excellent English. Went to the pictures in the evening then walked home 4 miles. A very enjoyable day.

Tuesday 7th. Left section moved off at 5p.m. in heavy rain. Poor beggars.

Wednesday 8th. Right section moved off for the firing line at Fleurbaix at 10a.m. It is dull but not raining. Many of the roads are under water. Reached the 52nd Austln. battery horse-lines at 2p.m. where we take over from the Ausies. I stay at horse-lines in the meantime. Stables good but mud plentiful round about. The road is flooded to a depth of 1 foot in the centre and many feet at the sides. The cook-house and left section billet is 100 yards along the road and we have to wade through the water to get our meals. It is very cold and uncomfortable with ones boots full of water all day. Those fellows who have gumboots are lucky. There are bunks in our billet but part of the floor is flooded. The horses are best off with a brick floor and a good roof. We are about 8 miles back from the guns so are well out of range. The horse-lines are near Doulieu.

Thursday 9th. Reveille 7a.m., water and feed. Afternoon grazing. I was pleased to get a letter from Lindsay saying that he was only slightly wounded and was quite well.

Friday 10th Nov. Morning exercising horses, rode to Vieux-Berquin. Afternoon rode to baths at Sailly where we got a hot bath and a set of new underclothing. Beautiful weather. The water has gone down so we are able to keep our feet dry.

Sunday 12th. Weather still continues fine. Frosty at nights. Walked into Estaires (3 miles) and spent a pleasant evening there.

Saturday 18th. Very heavy frost. Raining in afternoon but we have had a good spell of fine weather so must not complain. I must get a pair of gloves for riding.

Saturday 25th. Grazing horses every morning in a big paddock up the road. We each put in half franc and bought a football, which we use to keep ourselves warm while the horses are grazing. The damp billets and the mud are producing a good deal of sickness and some fellows have gone into hospital. I have caught a bad cold. It is raining today and some teams have to go out.

Sunday 26th Nov. A fine day for the French people to show off their best clothes.

Sunday 3rd Dec. We shifted from our billet today to another billet a bit further away. Our old billet was too wet on the floor so the doctor condemned it. A number of fellows have gone into hospital lately and I blame the coldness and dampness of the billet. Although we had a fire every evening the place was never warm.

Wednesday 6th. Rode to Estaires this afternoon and had a bath which I enjoyed very much.

Friday 8th Dec. Trip to the 4th D.A.C. this evening, driving a G.S. wagon. We had a lot of trouble getting the wagons out of the muddy yard as the horses were tired and jibbed. After a lot of work we got them out and they went all right on the road. Returned at 10.30p.m. and luckily scored some supper.

Saturday 9th. Our battery played the 12th battery football today on a muddy field. Although we had a number of rep players the 12th proved superior and won by 9 to nil.

Sunday 10th. Trip to Bac St Maur with a wagon for posts this afternoon. Returned at 8p.m.

Monday 11th. I secured a day off duty so walked to Sailly and luckily found cousin Allen and had a long yarn with him about the Somme and other things. Allen has a very comfortable possie and a good job despatch-riding. Had a bath while I was in the township then walked back to Estaires where I had some eggs etc.

Tuesday 19th. Trip into Sailly this morning with the wagon for gravel. In the afternoon we had a light fall of snow. The General was round inspecting a few days ago and roared about the dirty harness so during the past few days the boys have been very busy cleaning it. Now the harness is very bright and shiny.

Wednesday 20th Dec. Days are very cold now, it freezes all day at times. Our battery played the 10th and lost by 3 to nil.

Sunday 24th Dec. It is blowing a gale today, the first wind since we left Harve 7 months ago. The boys are very lively tonight.

Christmas Day. A good dinner, plum duff fruit etc. No work beyond watering and feeding the horses.

Tuesday 26th. Trip to Bac St Maur in the morning and up to the guns after tea with an exceptionally large amount of ammunition. Finished up at 1.30a.m. pretty wet.

Wednesday 27th. A beautiful sunny day.

Saturday 30th. Trip to-the guns today with a load of ammunition. At the guns I heard that Lins is back on service and had been looking for me. I must find him and hear the news.

Sunday 31st Dec. Lindsay biked up from his billet today and we had a long yarn. He is looking thin but says he is fit. His 2 fingers are a bit stiff. He saw Murray in the old country and they had a holiday together. Lins is with the 2nd/8th Otago Coy. now.

Saturday 6th Jan. Our football team had a win today 14-0 against the 13th Battery team.

Saturday 13th. Trip to Bac St Maur with the wagon today. Very cold and wet with snow. On returning I found the road flooded badly and I had to wade through it. The water makes things very uncomfortable. I get some eggs and chips at our billet to save wading down the road to the cookhouse.

Wednesday 17th Jan. When we got up this morning the ground was white with snow 1 inch deep and it is still snowing. Better to have snow than rain.

Wednesday 24th Jan. The last three nights there has been heavy frost and today everything is hard, all pools and mud and even the creek has a coat of ice. The boys are having some fun skating on the ice. I went into Bac St Maur today with the wagon and stopped behind and had a bath. Met Lins in the street. He has just come out of the trenches and is looking well.

Thursday 25th. I rode into Vieux Berquin on a motor-lorrie tonight and went to a cinema show. Ride home again by 9p.m. a very enjoyable evening.

Friday 26th Jan. Freezing harder than ever this morning but we are getting some sunshine. One needs to keep moving to keep warm, but I like this better than the rainy weather with its mud.

Friday 2nd Feb. I had my first trip to the guns in their new position today and luckily it was in daylight. They are a long way from the horse lines now and quite near Armentiers. We expect to shift to handier wagon lines shortly. Weather continues very frosty, only a few hours a day that the temperature is above freezing point. The ice on the creek is 8 inches thick and we have holes broken through it to get water for the horses. Every night these holes freeze over and have to be broken out again. While out on the wagon this morning icicles formed on my moustache through the condensing of the moisture in my breath. Today I

opened a tin of preserved pineapple and found it frozen solid. Out at the pictures last night when there was a good programme.

Saturday 3rd Feb. 12th Battery beat our boys at football today by 20 to 5. We are a 6 gun battery now with Major Glendinning O/C. The horses of the new section are still separate from us but the 6 guns are together.

Saturday 10th. Football again 11th B. 6 v 13th B. 3.

Sunday 11th. The heavy frost is missing this morning and today things began to thaw. It will take days for the ground to thaw properly and then we will have plenty of mud again. Everything was frozen for 3 weeks.

Tuesday 13th Feb. Parade in full marching order today as we are moving out in a few days.

Wednesday 21st Feb. Reveille 5.30a.m. as we are moving out. The road is covered with water again but I have a pair of service top boots so am able to keep my feet dry. After a lot of bustle packing up, we moved off at 9a.m. Passed through Doulieu and then turned east. Arrived at our new horse lines at 12 noon, east of Steenwerck about 1 mile. Mud is very plentiful but we have duck-walks and good stables. Our billets are fair, straw laid on the ground. The left and centre section's billet is tier above tier of wirenetting bunks commonly called the monkeyhouse. Left section guns came out of action tonight.

Thursday 22nd Feb. Plenty to do getting things into working order. After tea I walked into Steenwerck met Munro (Med Corpl) and spent the evening with him there. The rest of the guns came out of action tonight.

Friday 23rd. Pay day, badly needed. The weather has been dull and misty lately. Received a long letter from Hedley giving his history since leaving New Zealand.

Monday 26th. Left section guns went into action.

Tuesday 27th. Right and centre section guns into action. I spent the evening in Steenwerck at the Cinema.

Thursday 1st March. Moving to new horse lines today. Moved off at 1.30p.m. Passed through Steenwerck to horse-lines near the Armentiers-Bailleul road, 3 miles out of Armentiers. There are stables for the horses and huts for the men. B sub hut has double-decker bunks, which are comfortable. Horse-lines and camps are plentiful about this part of the country. We are only about 4 miles from our guns at Ploegsteert. Today a Hun aviator gave us an entertaining 5 minutes. There is an observation balloon stationed near here and he flew round and round the balloon with his machine gun going. The two observers jumped out of their basket and came down with parachutes, the Hun plane then got for its life with our anti-aircraft guns chasing him. The days are fine and warm now but frosty at nights very often. During the cold spell the birds especially robins became tame but now they are rarely seen.

Saturday 3rd March. Walked to the baths at Pont de Nieppe where I had a good wash and got clean clothes.

Wednesday 7th. Trip to the guns at Ploegsteert with ammunition. The village is completely deserted. The weather has turned cold and windy again with frost and snow. We have done well lately with gift parcels from N.Z. These were sent for Christmas but have just arrived now.

Thursday 8th. Paid Lins a visit and had a yarn with him.

Thursday 15th Mar. The N.Z. Division is moving again to the next sector on our left. Today 2 of our guns came out of action so we will move soon. We are doing very little but polishing harness and grooming horses. The weather is much warmer and has been fine lately.

Friday 16th. At the divisional concert at Nieppe where I was surprised to meet Irvine Stevenson.

Saturday 17th. Afternoon off so I went to Bailleul and had a look round the town which is a fair size.

Tuesday 20th Mar. Visited Irvine Stevenson and had a yarn. He is laid up with influenza today.

Wednesday 21st Mar. Marching order parade and inspection by the Major - bally nuisance. Went to "Kiwi" concert at Nieppe where the programme was excellent.

Sunday 25th. Our guns were heavily shelled this morning at 7a.m. One man Aldie Binnie was hit on the leg and one gun was put out of action. Our rations have been cut down lately especially in bread so we have started a canteen of our own the profits of which are to form a

mess fund. Canteen was opened today and did great business. Bread is difficult to buy from the Froggies as they are short of flour.

Sunday 1st April. Received orders to go to guns for duty there so left at 1.30. This is my first duty on the gun since leaving the Somme. The gun pits are fairly comfortable with sleeping accommodation attached, a dugout. Plenty of night duty now.

Wednesday 4th. Weather cold and wet. We have a fire in the pit at night but still it is a bit cold. We do a little shooting each day. Numerous new pits are being constructed near here and this and the ammunition dump point to something big being done on this part of the front in the near future.

Saturday 7th April. Went to baths at Pont de Nieppe this afternoon and then to horse-lines where I witnessed a football match between our boys and the 4th Battery. Result a draw.

Sunday 8th. A beautiful warm day. After tea I walked to the Nieppe road and visited Lins who is looking well. He goes back for a fortnight's training soon.

Wednesday 11th. Good news has come through of an advance at Arras. We are doing a bit of strafing here. The weather has turned cold again with snow.

Friday 13th. Lins paid me a visit today on his way back from the trenches. A few days ago I saw one of our big airplanes catch fire and then dive to the earth. By the time it got down it was a mass of flame and the airmen must have been killed for it landed with a crash, nose first.

Sunday 15th April. No gun detachments changing over this week so I am remaining at the guns. At 8.30p.m. we opened fire as the Huns were making a raid on the Ausies on our right. All guns were firing at a slow rate and Fritz got angry and shelled the battery but luckily all the shells missed. A number of gas-shells landed near us and we received the order "Gas-masks on". As the sergeant was away I was in charge and had to receive orders and give orders with my mask on and found it awkward doing so. However the gas proved to be lachrymatory and not asphyxiating so we took our masks off. Our eyes smarted and watered but otherwise the gas does not affect one. Unluckily we had trouble after firing 30 rounds being unable to get a round into the breach. Eventually we found a small piece of metal in the chamber and this was jamming the shell. It is a mystery how that piece of metal got in. The firing finished then and we were allowed to break off 9.30p.m. As I was doing duty 11p.m. to 1a.m. I did not bother turning in just then. The balance of the night was quiet.

Monday 16th Apl. There is still a trace of tear gas about this morning, which is sunny and warm. I walked to the canteen and got some bread Quaker oats and milk to help us with our rations. We got some firing this afternoon and were short-handed as the Sgt and two men were away at the new position which we are building for the offensive. Gun pits are being built everywhere. Our new possie is on top of Hill 63 in front of us.

Tuesday 17th. I was working on our new empaulment on Hill 63 today. It is right on top of the hill just in front of a wood. There is a YMCA hut quite handy and we went there to eat our lunch and secured some hot cocoa. The hut is perforated with numerous shrapnel holes. Met Scrimshaw who was wounded with us at the Somme. He returned from England lately looking fit.

Thursday 19th Apl. Right section guns pulled out of action tonight. We were inoculated today.

Friday 20th. We were supposed to work on the new empaulments today but I am stiff after the inoculation. Fritz started to shell the battery at 4p.m. so after tea I went down to the horse-lines. Lieut. Speight and Bdr. Dobson were wounded by a shell, which struck a dugout. They are both serious wounds.

Saturday 21st. Pay day. Walked to the baths at Pont de Nieppe this afternoon.

Sunday 22nd. Reveille 4a.m. Battery moved out at 8a.m. for 10 days training back near St Omer. Passed Hazelbrouck and stopped at Wallon at 2p.m. After tea I walked back to Hazelbrouck and had a good feed.

Monday 23rd. Reveille 2.30a.m. Moved off at 7a.m. Beautiful warm weather. Passed in view of St Omer, a fine big town and reached our destination Lumbres at 2.30p.m. Horse-lines in paddock. Good billets. This is a fine village and the people seem friendly. Everybody tired and sleepy.

Tuesday 24th. Grazing horses in morning. Football match in afternoon. 11th. Battery 6 v 4th. B. 5, a close hard fought game. I walked into St Omer (11 Kilos) after tea and enjoyed myself although the walk is lengthy.

Wednesday 25th April. The battery went out for manoeuvres this morning to a paddock up on top of the hill. The infantry were practising advancing there on a hill on which trenches are dug to resemble the German trenches in front of Messines. It was interesting watching them advancing behind the artillery barrage which was represented by a line of men waving flags. We returned to camp at 3p.m. and cleaned the wagons and then fed the horses.

Thursday 26th April. Standing gun drill this morning. The weather is beautiful and it is warm drilling. Afternoon football again. I played for the soccer team, which was beaten, by the 13th team 2 to nil.

Friday 27th. Still fine. More battery manoeuvres up on the hill.

Saturday 28th. More gun drill in the morning. Afternoon football. 11th battery beaten by 4th battery 6 to 4. 11th battery soccer team A won by 1 to 0. After tea I went to St Omar with Cpl Driscoll. We had one bicycle and took it in turns to ride until we reached the hilltop when we both got on and coasted down in fine style. I am getting fit and walked home without any trouble.

Sunday 29th Apl. Battery manoeuvres this morning and harness cleaning in afternoon.

Monday 30th. Grazing horses in morning and football in the afternoon. 11th. Bty. soccer team drew with 13th Bty. 1 to 1, and won by 2 corner kicks in the play off. The weather is glorious a marvellous thing for France. Not a drop of rain for over a week. We are enjoying ourselves immensely and wish we were staying here for months. Baths are provided at the local paper mill and after tea we marched down and had a good wash. A number of Portuguese soldiers are billeted near here and I went round and had a look at them. The men do not appear intelligent and look dirty. Their uniform is neat being similar to the French blue. Their artillery have French 75 guns.

Tuesday 1st May. I am orderly bombardier today so did not go out for manoeuvres but took the horses out grazing. It was fine lying on the grass with the sun shedding its warmth on one. We all appreciate the sunshine after the months and months of rain and frost. Up on the hill violets and primroses are blooming amongst the trees and the trees themselves will soon be a mass of green.

Wednesday 2nd. At 3p.m. a cross-country race was started, distance about 3.5 miles. About 70 men of the battery started but not all finished. I ran 18th and was tired when I finished. Fastest time was 20 min 30 sec. Ted Dunford ran 1st and Cpl Driscoll 2nd.

Thursday 3rd May. Battery manoeuvres this morning. I am very tired and stiff after the run yesterday. The final of the race was run tonight but the 11th. boys are too stiff to start. 25 men from each battery competed, 12th battery scoring a win. Emarali 1st.

Friday 4th. More manoeuvres. Afternoon devoted to sports. 11th. Bty. team won the wrestling on horseback after an exciting contest. Ted Dunford secured 2nd in the 440 yds.

Saturday 5th May. Grazing horses and cleaning harness. Afternoon swimming parade in the river which was enjoyable. Pay day. We move out tomorrow after a very enjoyable fortnight at Lumbres, during which we have enjoyed glorious weather without a drop of rain.

Sunday 6th. Trekked to Wallon-Cappel. A windy day but no rain. Some of the boys stopped at Arques and are up on the mat, as they did not rejoin the battery.

Monday 7th. Fine day, trekked through Hazelbrouck and Doulieu and pulled into stables near Steenwerck at 3p.m. After tea I went into the town and secured a hot bath then had some eggs and chips. Bunk 9p.m. very tired. We are in the same barn as when we moved from Doulieu but we have other horse-lines.

Tuesday 8th May. Raining the first time for over a fortnight.

Wednesday 9th. A beautiful day. The trees are all green and the fruit trees are in flower. Everything looks gay and happy today. Each night a heavy bombardment goes on and we can hear it all plainly from here.

Thursday 10th. 2 guns went into action tonight.

Friday 11th. The remainder of the battery went into action at Ploegsteert. I remained at wagon-lines.

Saturday 12th. Cleaning vehicles and harness for the N.Z. Divisional Show tomorrow.

Sunday 13th. I went to the show with the battery which secured no prizes. The weather is still fine and very warm. A thunder storm tonight.

Monday 14th. Went to Steenwerck 1 mile after tea and had a fine hot bath.

Tuesday 15th. As the Otago M. Rifles are taking over our horse-lines we have to move today. We are unable to secure horse-lines so are camping in a paddock with the 13th. Battery. We are lucky enough to have billets in barns as usual 10 minutes from the horses.

Thursday 17th. Raining the first time for 3 weeks. Plenty of mud again now. Spent the evening with cousin Leslie.

Saturday 19th May. Each morning we take our horses along the roads and let them nibble the grass growing at the sides. Some of the poor beggars are thin and we are trying to get them up in condition for the push. The 4th Australian Div. is billeted near here having just come up from the Somme. Evidently they are going to join us in the push here which will soon begin now. A large number of our men are working on the new empaulments leaving us a bit short-handed at the horse-lines.

Monday 21st. Had a hot bath at Le Mortier about 1 mile away.

Tuesday 22nd. Struck camp this morning at 11 a.m. and moved off. The wagon lines are to be split up. All teams with a few N.C.Os go to Nieppe while spare horses and men go to a camp at Westhof Farm. I went with the spares and on arrival found nothing but a paddock awaiting us. We secured a cookhouse and storeroom from the Frenchies and got 2 tents. As there are over 30 men here all told the tents are crowded so I erected a little bivvy with 2 horse blankets. It rained heavily all morning while we were packing up so we got pretty wet. Luckily the afternoon was fine and we were able to get settled down with comfort.

Friday 25th May. Walked to Neuve Eglise (2 Kilos) and had a bath. Guns and ammunition dumps are here there and everywhere about this part of the country now, and every day more guns and train loads of ammunition arrive. The railway runs up to within 2 miles of the trenches and all ammunition goes up by rail. We are enjoying an easy time at our camp and have fine weather all the time. I left my souvenirs for safety with a French lady Mlle Marthe Leblon near Nieppe.

Sunday 27th May. With Len Hill and Burnett I walked out towards the trenches and had a look at the country which the Huns hold. We got a good view of the towns of Messines, Warneton and Frelinghem. Our heavy guns were shelling heavily and we could plainly see the smoke and dust from the explosions.

Monday 28th. Walked to Hill 63 to see Lins but missed him. Met Dick Beeby and had a yarn with him.

Wednesday 30th. Our felt hats and bandoliers are called in and we are now supposed to wear steel helmets at all times but a large number of bare heads are to be seen at all times.

Friday 1st June. We are now confined to camp unless going on duty when we must have a pass. This is to lighten the traffic on the roads and allow the supply of ammunition to be kept up. The organisation of supplies is wonderful. Wide gauge railways carry munitions from the sea port to within a few miles of the firing line where they are transferred to a narrow light line, which runs close to the guns. Oil motor locomotives are used on many of the light lines. One of these motors can draw 50 tons of ammunition, which would require 17 motor lorries to move by road. Thus a big saving is made in wear of lorries and roads. Our airmen now have the upper hand of the Huns. Numbers of British planes scout about all day and Hun machines are seldom seen over our lines and even then they are very high up. However a daring Hun airman flew over last night and destroyed one of our observation balloons. Paid a visit to the army baths this morning.

Saturday 2nd June. The new N.Z. Brigade has arrived so after tea I walked across to where they are camped and met a number of friends. I saw the brigade march past Gen. Godley and they looked a fine crowd of men, above the average in size. I heard that Lindsay's O.C. (Major Rae) is wounded and that probably Lins will have to take command of the 8th company. Hard luck for him after having been sent to the reserve camp.

Sunday 3rd June. The bombardment opened up today but back here we cannot hear the full strength of it. We are enjoying glorious weather and have very little work to do.

Tuesday June 5th. After tea I walked across to the infantry camp and learned that Lins will not return for the stunt. The N.Z. Pierrots were giving an entertainment in the open air so we

stayed and listened to them for a while. The noise of the guns often made it impossible to hear the item for a few minutes. We saw a big naval gun in action on the railway.

Wednesday 6th. Watson and I had an enjoyable and refreshing bath at a pond this evening.

Thursday 7th. At 3a.m. the big push started. We were all wakened by the explosion of some mines. The trembling of the earth was plainly felt at our lines. I had a look from the top of the hill but could see little of the fighting on account of mist and smoke. At 8a.m. we heard that Messines had fallen to our boys with few casualties and that they continued to advance with little opposition. The Germans turned tail and ran, most of our prisoners being taken from dugouts. Heavy bombardment was renewed in the afternoon.

Friday June 8th. Fighting continues heavy. Fritz counterattacked several times. The 4th Div. Australians pushed forward and gained some more ground, which they had difficulty in holding.

Saturday 9th June. All N.Z. Div. infantry came out of the line today. They looked tired and dirty. Total casualties were about 25%.

Sunday 10th. Our battery is moving forward so a party of 12 including myself went forward to prepare gun emplacements in what was No Man's Land. One man, Wyatt, was killed today and a number of the men are suffering from gas. Sgt Climo has gone to hospital. We worked all afternoon and got platforms ready for the guns, which arrived at 2a.m.

Monday 11th. Busy all day getting sandbags iron etc from the dump. Luckily a tramline runs past the battery position so we do not have to carry the stuff.

Tuesday 12th June. A warm sunny day too hot to work. Fritz has 2 balloons up so luckily we are unable to work during the heat of the day. Shooting from 2 to 7a.m. As my dugout is dark I am able to sleep during the day so I turned in at 7a.m. and slept till noon.

Thursday 14th. Fritz shelled a bit today but has not found our battery. At 7p.m. another advance started, so we were kept very busy until 10p.m. when things quietened down and we went to bed. The Tommies had advanced another 1000 yards.

Saturday 16th. We are shifting again today. No one knows where to. At 10p.m. the teams arrived with the limbers and in half-an-hour we were out on the road with the guns. We halted at midnight and waited 1½ hours for a guide. Reached our destination Le Bizet at 3a.m. and put the guns into the empaulments recently evacuated by the Australians. Turned into bunk and slept till 11a.m.

Sunday 17th June. Still glorious weather. We are in houses again near Armentiers and the country is green and fresh. Shell holes are scarce. After dinner Barker and I went across to the river and had a swim. On our way back we found a fine patch of strawberries which we ate until we could eat no more. Collected some more berries and took them back with us.

Monday 18th June. Our gun was shooting early this morning and as our bunks are right over the gun we were unable to sleep for a while. I am moving my camp to the house next door so as to be away from the gun when it is in action. On duty tonight so I have to sleep by the gun.

Tuesday 19th. Fritz shelled D E and F subs position today and although no guns were hit 8 men were wounded, none seriously.

Wednesday 20th. At 8a.m. Fritz shelled A and B gun position and unluckily put one shell right into the telephonists room where there were 5 men and killed the lot of them. (Jack Hutchinson, Athol Thomson, Jerry Highman, Jack Jennings and Emonds.) 2 Tommies and Buster Brown who were sleeping upstairs were wounded and a bit burnt. The 3 (Sgt Mains, Ted Dunford and Ian Webster) who were sleeping by the guns managed to get out unhurt. The building burnt fiercely and is now only a heap of bricks and ashes. I believe the deaths with one exception were instantaneous. The rest of the men dressed quickly and got out of the danger zone as Fritz renewed the shelling. For breakfast I had cherries and strawberries but later on managed to get some bread and bacon. As we had nothing to do, Barker, Turps O'Neill and I went across and had a swim also more strawberries for lunch. I received a letter from Heds saying that he and Murray have arrived in France.

Thursday 21st June. Moved our quarters to a farmhouse along the road where we slept in a protected cellar. Barker and I walked into Armentiers and had a look round the town which I had not seen since leaving it last August. The buildings are mostly damaged and very few civilians are living there. It is a wonder to me why any of them remain there. Chips and eggs for lunch. On returning we found that the battery is to occupy a new position about a mile to the North, so we got our swags and proceeded to the new position. We have well protected

rooms to sleep in but there are no gun pits and in the meantime the guns are in the open but hidden by an avenue of trees. Myself and three others were detailed to clear up the old position and get the burnt guns out so that they can be taken to ordnance. Our first task was to remove the bodies of our comrades and an unpleasant job it was. However the least we could do was to give them as decent a burial as possible. Watson and Stewart dug a grave for them and I got Mr Wilkinson to secure a chaplain who arrived about 10p.m. and by the light of the stars he conducted a short service and we covered over the remains of our friends. A sad job for all of us as they were 5 fine boys. The teams arrived shortly afterwards and we hooked on the old guns and evacuated the scene of the late disaster.

Friday 22nd June. Breakfast 10a.m. working all day filling sandbags to strengthen our sleeping bivvy. Carrying ammunition after dark as the guns are shooting in a stunt tonight.

Saturday 23rd. We have had several showers lately but today is beautifully fine. Today a Hun airman set fire to 3 of our observation balloons. The Germans have been very active lately especially with their artillery and ours is not the only battery that has suffered.

Sunday 24th. A and B subs commenced to build an empulment about 300 yards across a paddock and took over E subs gun. About 1a.m. we got the walls completed and man handled the gun across and put it into the pit, then turned into bunk.

Monday 25th June. Breakfast 10a.m. Did a little more to the pit before dinner, then walked into Armentiers to get my washing. Had a feed of strawberries by the road. Working on the pit from 8p.m. till midnight. Got the roof on and a supply of ammunition. It rained most of the night and we got wet, however Fritz did not put over any gas shells like he did the night before.

Wednesday 27th. I received a note from Hedley last night saying that he and Murray had joined the Division and were near Hill 63, so in the afternoon I walked across and found Heds. After he had tea he came along with me to the battery and we had a long yarn about our doings during the past year.

Thursday 28th June. Working all day on a new empulment and after tea I took some men across to the old position to load ammunition wagons. The wagons did not arrive till midnight so we were late finishing our job. A heavy thunderstorm kept the teams back. I was much surprised to find Murray on one wagon. He had hunted for me all day and had just found me. We walked back to the battery together and swapped news by the road. It struck me that Murray was not looking as well as he might. The whole division is moving out in a day or two.

Saturday 30th. At 3p.m. I received orders to pack up and go to wagon lines which I reached at 5p.m.

Sunday 1st July. I managed to get the day off so went to Steenwerck had a bath and thence to Nieppe and Bailleul where I saw a collection of war trophies captured by N.Z. Div. and others at Messines.

Monday 2nd. Parade 11a.m. full marching order. Moved to Westhof farm where we are to camp for about a week. We scored some iron and built a very comfortable bivvy. We are here for a rest and are to have some sports days. The weather has turned fine and warm again.

Thursday 5th. Brigade sports day. In the morning steeplechases for officers and for men also D.A.C. flat races, jumps etc. Afternoon 3rd Bde flat races, jump etc.

Saturday 7th July. Afternoon off duty so I went into Bailleul, had a bath and a good feed and went to the Australian Pierrots entertainment with Macintosh. The programme there was A1 especially the acting of one fellow dressed as a girl.

Sunday 8th. N.Z. Division sports meeting at Doulieu. We travelled in G.S. wagons and arrived at the ground at noon. The day was a bit showery after a great storm of thunder and lightening early this morning accompanied by heavy rain. I met Murray there and had a long yarn with him. 3rd Artillery Brigade won the wrestling on horseback. Our battery is going into action again. 2 guns go up to the old position tonight and the remainder tomorrow.

Friday 13th July. Fritz's airplanes are doing a lot of bombing at night lately. One night he dropped 102 bombs on Bailleul killing 20 soldiers, 1 nurse and many civilians. His favourite time is about 2a.m. and many mornings at that hour we are awakened by the noise of bombs and anti-aircraft guns. Today we are moving again from Westhof Farm to horse-lines near Nieppe. They are the same lines as we left a fortnight ago and the huts are comfortable. At

Westhof we lived in tents and in shacks built of curved corrugated iron. After tea I went to Steenwerck, had a bath and visited Jack Hutchinson's brother as I still had Jack's watch.

Friday July 20th. I have dropped into a soft job at the wagon-lines, mail orderly and clerk, a job with plenty of spare time and no parades to attend. A few days ago one of our guns was blown to pieces but nobody was hurt. Leave to England is more plentiful and I hope to get away again in a few months time.

Sunday 22nd. Biked to Bailleul and made a few purchases, and then to Steenwerck and spent the evening yarning with Murray and Hedley.

Wednesday 25th. Heavy rain this morning. Went to the N.Z. Pierrots after tea - a good programme.

Friday 27th. Lindsay paid me a visit at 2p.m. He had just returned from 5 weeks at the training school - Wisques. He went on to Steenwerck and found Mur and Heds. I got off and biked in at 3p.m. and that was the first time the 4 of us had been together for many years. We went to a photographer and had a photo of the 4 of us taken and then returned to our several duties. It was a short reunion but a happy one as we were all in good health.

Sunday 29th July. I got the afternoon off so walked into Steenwerck, had a bath and then looked up Mur and Heds. After tea I went to the pictures as Mur and Heds had to go on duty.

Wednesday 1st August. Yesterday a big attack was started by the British, and some New Zealanders went over and after stiff fighting captured a small village. Heavy rain today will interfere with operations a bit.

Saturday 4th. Rain has been heavy during the past few days and mud is plentiful about the horse lines. This place is going to be dirty in wintertime.

Tuesday 7th August. Packing ammunition to the guns tonight. It is dark and for a while we were lost amongst shell-holes and mud. Returned to horse-lines at midnight.

Thursday 9th. I have been notified that I go on leave to Blighty in a day or two. Hooray.

Saturday 11th August. Received my pass for Blighty and proceeded to reinforcement camp at 10a.m. Went to pictures at Steenwerck with Hedley and spent the night at the camp with one blanket. Very cold and rained heavily, some rain flowing into the tent and wetting us.

Sunday 12th. Left Steenwerck by train at 11a.m. and reached Boulogne at 4p.m. Marched up a hill to St Martins camp. Had a good tea at the Salvation Army hut and slept pretty well.

Monday 13th August. Reveille 3a.m. marched off at 7a.m. and went aboard the *Princess Victoria* at 8.30. Arrived Folkestone at noon and were lucky enough to secure seats on a passenger train and so reached London at 2p.m. We booked beds at the N.Z. Club, went to the pay office and got fixed up. Had tea at Lyons Corner House and spent the evening at the Comedy Theatre where "Bubbly" is being played. I found taxis very handy for getting about as otherwise I would get lost. London strikes me as being wonderfully clean and orderly for so large a town.

Tuesday 14th. Went out to Acton but found that Peter White is away on a holiday. Left my souvenirs there and caught the 2p.m. train for Edinburgh, which I reached at 11p.m. Slept at Waverley Hotel, very comfortable.

Wednesday 15th. August Breakfast at 8.30a.m. Left by 10.45 train for Oban. People are sociable and I am not lonely on my journey. Passed Bannockburn, Stirling and Allan Water, then entered the highlands where the scenery is glorious. The railway skirts numerous lochs and burns. Arrived at Oban at 5.30. Went to Imperial hotel and had tea. I heard that a steamer makes a trip down the bay at 6.15 so hurried along and caught it. Two nice girls kept me alive during the trip and invited- me to their picnic next day. Said goodbye at 11p.m. and then to bed.

Thursday 16th. Promises a fine day. Had a nice bath before breakfast. People here seem to live on fish, which luckily I am fond of. Met the ladies at 11a.m. Hired boats and rowed out to Kerrera Island where we spent the whole day. The girls supplied lunch and we had sunshine in plenty. They are full of fun and frolic and. I spent one of the happiest days of my life. Returned at half past six. Went for a stroll up the hill after tea and home at 11p.m.

Friday 17th. Left Oban for Glasgow at 10.45 very sorry to say goodbye. Arrived G. at 4.30, booked bed at Royal and after tea went out to Jack Hamilton's where I was well received. Jack took me through Weir's works where mortars, shells and aeroplanes are being made. Many girls work there.

Saturday 18th. Paid a visit to old Mrs Smith, Bath St. Met Tom Brown at 11.30 and went out to his home at Kilbirnie where I had lunch. He has a pretty little wife and is quite happy. Returned at 5p.m. and tried to find Mrs Forson but she has moved. I will try again tomorrow.

Sunday 19th August. Found Mrs Forson's house at Cardonald at 12. Her daughter-in-law was at home and the old people returned from church at 1p.m. I had lunch there and left at 2.30 to catch the Preston train. Arrived Preston 10.20p.m. and slept at an hotel.

Monday 20th. Reached Pilling at 9.30a.m. and soon found Miss Winder who was pleased to see me and treated me well. They live in the country in a quiet part. Left after tea at 6.30p.m. Spent an hour at Garstang and 2 hours at Preston. Arrived London at 5a.m. and got a bed at the club where I slept until 10a.m.

Tuesday 21st Aug. Visited Madame Toussaud's waxworks. Met Aunt Gertrude and her daughter at Waterloo at 3p.m. and had afternoon tea with them. They left London again at 4.30. Tea at the club and then I went to *A little bit of fluff* with an acquaintance. It was a real good thing and I enjoyed it. Slept at Waverley Hotel.

Wednesday 22nd. Paid Peter White a visit and lunched with them. Returned to town at 2.30 and had a look at St Paul's, Westminster Abbey and Crystal Palace. After tea went to *Choo Chin Chow* which was amusing. I rather like London. I find the town clean well built with plenty of parks and its history is interesting. Bed at the club. Finish leave.

Thursday 23rd. Up at 5a.m. and left Victoria Stn at 7.30. Left Folkestone at 11. Arrived Boulogne and marched to a camp.

Friday 24th Aug. Had breakfast at 12.30 and left the camp at 2a.m. Train left at 4.30 and after a monotonously slow ride reached Steenwerck at 11.30 very weary. Saw Hedley and then returned to the battery and the old routine.

Monday 27th. Marching order parade and inspection by Gen. Johnston who praised the turnout. It is raining today and soon mud will be plentiful again. The division is moving from here and the battery moves in a few days.

Sunday 2nd Sept^r. We have not moved yet but expect to move shortly. I was at the N.Z. Pierrots last night and enjoyed the programme very much.

Wednesday 5th Sep. Tonight I took two teams up to the gun position and brought out A and B guns. Everything was quiet and we returned to lines at 12.30.

Thursday 6th Sept. The battery moved off at 11a.m. for Morbecque. Stopped for lunch near Vieux Berquin and reached our camping ground at 4p.m. A beautiful day.

Saturday 8th. Went into Morbecque and saw Hedley who was busy. We are moving on again tomorrow.

Sunday 9th. The battery moved off at 8a.m. but I had to go to Ordnance with some tents so missed them. However I got a ride with the 4th Bat. until near Aire where I left the column and went into the town for some lunch. Aire is a fine little town with a fine old church. I scored a hot bath and a good lunch then walked to Estree Blanche, 8 kilometres, where the battery had camped. There is a big aerodrome on a hill beside here and after tea we walked up and had a good look round. Numerous planes were ascending and alighting and the ground was quite busy.

Monday 10th Sept^r. As our billet did not smell too inviting I slept under a wagon and was quite comfortable. Reveille 4.30. Moved off at 8a.m. Trekked 24 kilos through pleasant country with good weather to Willametz near Fauquembergues. Our billets here are rotten but I scored a good bunk in a loft full of sheaves.

Tuesday 11th. We are enjoying glorious weather but the old routine of stables and harness-cleaning grows monotonous. Walked into Fauquembergues, 1 Kilometre. This is a pleasant village built in a valley beside a stream.

Wednesday 12th. 6 of the boys are going on leave today and have to ride to Lumbres so I went along to bring one of the horses back. We stopped there for three hours and had tea at Mlle Mizet's where we received a good welcome as we were camped there when in Lumbres previously. It is a long ride and we returned to camp at 9p.m.

Friday 14th Sept. I went to Nielles in an ambulance car to get a tooth filled but they were too busy at the dental hospital so I have to return in a week's time. We had some eggs and chips and malaga and then had to walk home 9 kilometres.

Saturday 15th. The weather continues glorious. Our battery played the 4th football today, and after a hard game secured a win by 6 to 5.

Wednesday 19th. Artillery divisional sports today. The weather is good and we spent a pleasant day watching the events being competed. 11th battery did very well securing 2 wins and 3 seconds. 1st. Battery secured the championship cup with 16 points, our battery being second with 14 and 7th battery 3rd with 11 points. Tea and biscuits were provided buckshee by the YMCA and after tea the N.Z. Div. Pierrots gave an interesting programme in the open air.

Thursday 20th Sept. Reveille was blown at 4.30a.m. very much to our surprise. On turning out we learned that we are moving off. Fed and watered the horses and packed up in a hurry and moved off at 8a.m. Trekked through Arceques and Ebbingham to Hondeghem where we bivouacked in a paddock at 4p.m. We did about 38 kilometres today which is a very long journey for one day. We were all tired and slept well. I scored a tent to sleep in and was lucky in this respect, as most of the billets that we get are dirty.

Friday 21st. Pay day. The weather continues good. Strolled into the village, which is a small place.

Sunday 23rd. Church parade. 12th battery beat 13th at football by 5 to nil after a hard game.

Tuesday 25th. 12th battery beat 11th. at football by 6 to 3. An interesting and exciting game.

Wednesday 26th Sept. At 3p.m. we unexpectedly received orders to pack up ready to move. On the road at 7.30p.m. a fine moonlight night. Passed through Steenvoorde and Poperinghe and bivouacked at 1.30a.m. Sgt Mains was sick so I had the honour of leading the subsection. Bed was welcomed at 2a.m. on a mess-room table.

Thursday 27th. Reveille 6a.m. was rather early after last night. Camp is 2 miles past Poperinghe and we move on into action tonight. Business is brisk on this front as was shown by the large number of ambulances which passed us last night also by the gun flashes which we could plainly see. Aeroplanes were also busy and numerous lights were to be seen travelling across the sky. We are fortunate in having good weather for moving. After tea I walked into the town of Poperinghe which is not badly damaged, as it is about 10 miles from the firing line. The town is partly deserted but khaki is every-where in large numbers. Had some eggs etc then home to tea.

Friday 28th Sep. Our gun detachments took over Tommy guns today in a position to the east of Ypres.

Saturday 29th. The Huns shelled the gun position today and killed Jim Moore besides putting 5 guns out of action. Fritz's aeroplanes get very busy at night with bombs and tonight we had a fine display. Searchlights got on to the planes and then the Archies opened up but did not secure a hit. Things were lively for some hours after dusk. The nights are getting colder now although the days are warm.

Sunday 30th Sept. The Tommies pulled out the shelled guns and left them here, taking away our guns. Only one gun is badly hit. Packed up and moved to other wagon lines at 9a.m. We got guns from an Australian battery who take the damaged guns. Our gunners returned to the wagon lines today. I have a tent to sleep in but could not get to sleep while Fritz was busy bombing the country.

Monday 1st Oct. At 1a.m. 2 guns and all the ammunition wagons left for the gun position. I went with them in charge of the right section. A beautiful moonlight night for the trip which is a long one of about 10 miles. We passed through the town of Ypres, which is one mass of ruins. There does not appear to be one building which is not destroyed and some of the buildings have been grand. All rubbish has been cleared away from the principal streets, which are used for traffic to the firing line. Further on in the country torn up by shellfire the roads have been constructed of heavy timber, the ground being too wet and soft to stand traffic. We reached the gun position at 4.30a.m. and unloaded the ammunition, which has to be packed the last half-mile. Fritz started shelling so we were unable to complete the work of packing. On the way home I got a bit lost and missed Ypres altogether but struck the road again and reach camp safely at 8a.m., quite ready for breakfast. The wagon-lines are far too far back from the guns and this makes the work heavy on both men and horses. We had an easy day after our strenuous work of the night.

Tuesday 2nd Oct. Left wagon-lines with ammunition packs at 5p.m. On the road we were held up by a congestion of traffic for over an hour but eventually reached the guns and got to work packing ammunition to the guns. A Hun aeroplane came across and spotted us in the moonlight and dropped some bombs. Two of the boys were wounded and about 6 horses.

Finished work at 11p.m. and set out for the wagon-lines which we reached at 1.30a.m. On my way home heard that Lins was wounded 29th.

Wednesday 3rd. Moving camp again today to be nearer the guns. Settled down near Ypres at 4p.m. Luckily we brought a tent for B sub so have some place to sleep in. Nearly everyone went up with ammunition tonight.

Thursday 4th. I am going up to the guns at 2p.m. so am packing up. We scored rides parts of the way but had to hump our swag the larger part. Reached guns at 4p.m. and found 2 guns out of action and 5 men wounded. An advance had taken place and the boys had been busy putting up the barrage and repelling counter-attacks. The infantry had been successful and had reached their objective. On the road we passed many wounded and ambulance cars so our boys had not had it all their own way. We passed several batches of prisoners on their way back to the cages. Fritz had made things pretty warm for the N.Z. Artillery, other batteries having suffered more heavily than ours. Our gun positions are very rough. The only protection we have is a parados to save us from prematures as the 13th battery are directly behind us. The ground is extremely soft and wet and so we are unable to dig in at all. The guns are covered by camouflage only. The boys who are off duty sleep in one of Fritz's concrete shelters, which are almost shellproof. I took charge of the gun for the night and fired over 200 rounds in stunts and S.O.S.

Friday 5th Oct. The fine weather has broken and now the surface of the ground is mud and everything is wet. The trail of our gun buried itself during the night so we dug it out and put a log behind it. The cookhouse here is a rough affair so we cannot expect any flash tucker. In fact everything seems to be upside down. I am sleeping in the concrete bivvy so hope to get a good nights sleep tonight. Fritz's guns have quietened down a lot today, perhaps he is moving them further back.

Saturday 6th Oct. It is raining a bit again today but we are not being kept busy. Went to forward gun position on fatigue but too wet for work. Sammy Woods and Dooley were wounded there. Fired a number of rounds in response to S.O.S. signals. The infantry seem to be scared and are sending up numbers of S.O.S. signals.

Sun. 7th Oct. Still raining. Patched up the bivvy at the gun this morning. It is in a bad state the floor being soaked and I have to sleep in it tonight. Spent the afternoon playing cards in the pillbox.

Mon. 8th Oct. Slept well although the bivvy was wet. Cleaned the gun and ammunition this morning as another attack is to be made tomorrow. Raining this afternoon so probably the stunt tomorrow will not eventuate. Many batteries have moved forward of ours and transports are moving along the roads all day long but Fritz does not shell them to any great extent.

Tues. 9th Oct. The advance came off this morning starting at 5.30a.m. and we were fully occupied putting up the barrage for an hour. Then our gun went out of action, some of the springs being broken, so we are having an easy day and I managed to shave the first for a week. The advance was about 1000 yards, and some prisoners were taken as we saw a few coming back on the road. Today it has not rained for a wonder. Adams and I are sleeping on the gun tonight and we were busy shooting in stunts until 1.30a.m.

Wed. 10th Oct. Conditions about the guns and bivvies are bad now, mud being everywhere. We are thankful that we can get dry bunks and it is a relief to get wet boots and socks off at night and turn into the blankets. Tonight I am waiting up to carry the rations down from the road and it is late being nearly 10p.m. Rum issue has started again and we are glad of it on a cold night like this.

Thurs. 11th Oct. Old Fritz shelled the battery positions today and caused many casualties amongst the 12th and 13th Batteries. Our battery escaped losing anyone. A fine clear day helping the mud to dry up. The nights are almost frosty now. In the evening we were shelled again and had to evacuate for a while.

Friday 12th Oct. At 5.25a.m. a big attack started, our battery doing their share in putting up the barrage. The N.Z. infantry are taking part in this advance and they have highland troops on their left so no doubt the final objective, Passchendale Ridge, will be captured. There is a terrific noise being created by the guns which are so numerous and active. At 11a.m. our range was shortened from 6600 to 5300 so the attack has not been altogether a success. Change of detachments takes place today so I packed up and after dinner proceeded to the

wagon-lines. There I found the mud even more plentiful than at the guns and dry feet an impossibility. I walked into Vlamertynghe and tried to find Hedley but was not successful.

Sun. 14th Oct. Rumour has it that the losses of our infantry were extraordinarily heavy in the recent attack and today a party of artillerymen went up to do stretcher-bearing work as many of our wounded have not yet been brought back from the front.

Monday 15th Oct. Went into Poperinghe by motor-lorrie and visited the army baths as I was badly in need of a wash.

Wed. 17th. Went to D.H.Q. to see Hedley and found him at their wagon-lines half a mile away. He has had some experiences packing cable up to the front. He told me that Lins was wounded in the kidneys also that we move out on the 22nd. I went across to Ypres and had a look round the ruins then returned to the lines for stables.

Thurs. 18th. Trip to the forward position in charge of a fatigue party. We soon finished our job and returned early. I secured a few interesting snapshots.

Fri. 19th Oct. At 1p.m. I received orders to take a team to ordnance workshops and get our gun. It rained very heavily for an hour but I managed to keep dry with my oilsheet cape. We found the workshops away past Poperinghe and returned to the lines at 7p.m.

Sat. 20th. Proceeded to the gun position at 9a.m. and after dinner went on to the forward position. Here we had some work getting packhorses out of shell-holes and mud.

Sun. 21st. At forward position again. Grey got his shoulder dislocated by a shell and I took him back to the dressing station.

Mond. 22nd. Fritz is shelling the forward possie this morning so we did not go up until afternoon.

Tues. 23rd. Up forward again getting ammunition ready for a stunt, which comes off shortly. Some big shells landed close to the pillbox I am sleeping in last night and gave us a fright. The shells make the whole construction rock and quiver in the soft ground.

Thurs. 25th Oct. The first 2 of our guns were pulled into the new position by the pioneers but as they have now departed we have had to handle the remainder of the guns ourselves with the help of the trench mortar men. Horses are only able to pull the guns to within ¼ mile of the battery position where the road finishes. After that the road is one sea of clay into which one sinks to ones knees almost every step. Across this bog we pulled the guns with dragropes, about 100 men to each gun. It is a wonder to me how we ever pulled the guns through the mud as a few men got stuck in the stuff and had to be dug out. The horses have heavy work getting up to the guns with a load of ammunition on their backs.

Fri. 26th Oct. Attack commenced at 5.40a.m. but I did not go on the gun until 9a.m. and we ceased fire soon after 10a.m. In the attack the first objective only was captured. Heavy rain fell during the morning and no doubt hampered the operations of the infantry. A fresh detachment arrived at the gun at midday so after lunch we made tracks for the horse-lines.

Sat. 27th. Went to Poperinghe where I had an enjoyable bath.

Sun. 28th. Trip to the guns in charge of packhorses. The weather keeps fair but mud only becomes worse and will never dry up. It is an impossibility to keep dry feet now unless gumboots are worn. Rumour has it that we pull out in a very few days now.

Mon. 29th. A fine day. Packing ammunition to the guns.

Tues. 30th. Left wagon-lines at 8a.m. with packhorses and swag, as I am to go on to the detachment again but have to pack ammunition first and then hand the horses over to the man I relieve. On the road we were stopped by MP's and turned back as Fritz had a barrage on the road. I handed my horse to another man and walked up to the guns and on arrival learned that B gun went out of action during a stunt this morning. With the exception of Rhodes and I the detachment went to the wagon-lines.

Wednesday 31st Oct. Rhodes and I went to the guns with Fitter Bird and found that a spring case was broken. We carried the broken case to the rear possie and then on to the wagon-lines. Returned at 4p.m. very tired, as we had to walk most of the way and found the spring-case heavy enough.

Thurs. 1st Nov. Our relief party (1st Canadian Div.) are here and took over 4 guns today. Rhodes and I went to the gun and packed up our stores in readiness to change over.

Fri. 2nd Nov. Packed up and sent our gear down to the lines by G.S. wagon. After dinner we went down by motor-lorrie and got things ready for shifting tomorrow.

Sat. 3rd. Pulled out at 9a.m. and after being held up by traffic for a while we got clear of the congestion and reached Watou at 3p.m. Here we scored a good camping ground and 20 tents.

Sun. 4th. Cleaning up wagons and harness. After tea Tom Whitta and I strolled into Watou where we spent a pleasant evening with some Canadians, but it was too dark to see much of the village.

Wed. 7th. Moved off at 9a.m. for our old billet at Hondeghem which we reached at noon. It is raining a bit but the ground here has not been cut up by the horses yet.

Friday 9th Nov. I have caught influenza so have been in bed the last 2 days.

Sat. 10th. Quite well again today. It is raining heavily.

Sun. 11th. I received orders at 2p.m. to get ready to proceed on "A Tour of Duty to England" with 19 others from this battery. A party of 20 is going from each battery and rumour has it that we will reach N.Z.

Mon. 12th. Left at 10a.m. with our packs up and marched to Hazelbrouck. The packs felt heavy by the time we finished the 3 miles. Left by train at 11.30a.m. and after a slow trip reached Etaples at 8p.m. We scored some tea and tents to sleep in.

Tues. 13th. Mickie Lyons O/C treated us excellently, securing baths and a new outfit of clothing for us. This is a fine camp and the tucker is excellent. I met several old friends. Lts Wankelin and Tyson, Sutherland, Trowland, S.M. McLean, Bill Simmons, Smart, Vic Sparnon and Wagstaff are here.

Wednesday 14th. Went for a route march to Paris Plage and took lunch with us. This is a well-built and wealthy town being the Parisienne watering place, and has a fine promenade and beach. No doubt in summer it is a gay place but at present it is dead.

Thursday 15th. Another bath. After tea I was at a concert in the YMCA hall.

Friday 16th. Another route march to Paris Plage with the infantry draft from the division.

Sunday 18th. Church parade. The weather continues very good. Little sunshine as it is near winter but we have had no rain since coming to this camp.

Thursday 22nd. We have had an enjoyable stay in this camp. Pictures and concerts are given every evening and dainty meals are to be had in the canteens and YMCA and Salvation Army huts. We are moving on today and boarded the train at noon. Our train was slow even for France and we were 5½ hours in the train travelling a distance of 15 miles. On arrival at Boulogne we marched to a comfortable rest billet near by, where we spent the night. Each man was supplied with 2 blankets and I slept soundly. There is a canteen here where tea and sandwiches etc can be obtained.

Friday 23rd Nov. There may be some trouble in crossing the channel as fogs have held up the shipping lately. We went aboard at 3 and reached Folkestone at 6p.m. Arrived at Victoria at 9p.m. we were much surprised at being taken to the YMCA Shakespeare Hut where we were supplied with supper and beds. This is a good start to our "tour of duty". After supper I went out to Aunt Gertrude's but got no news of Lindsay.

Saturday 24th Nov. After breakfast I had a bath at the N.Z. Club. At 11a.m. we marched to N.Z. headquarters where Gen. Richardson inspected us and told us we could have 10 days leave. I got my pass and £10 from the pay office and after tea I enjoyed a concert in the YMCA and then went to "Cash on Delivery". Elalaine Terriss and Seymour Hicks were playing there and I enjoyed the play immensely.

Sunday 25th. Lloyd and I went out to Walton Hospital where we met a number of the old battery boys. We returned to town for tea and then I visited Mrs McLean.

Monday 26th. I went down to Brockenhurst, which is a pretty village near Southampton. I soon found Lindsay in the Forest Park Hospital, which seems very comfortable. He is unable to walk through a large wound on the thigh. He wheels himself about but expects to be able to get on his feet in a few weeks time. He looks very well. I returned to town and went to a theatre.

Saturday 1st Dec. I am spending all my leave in London and am having a good look round the city. Every evening theatres are my speciality and last night I had a royal time at "Round the Map." Violet Loraine as principal lady was simply glorious. Her acting is wonderful and her laugh so infectious. Her manner is very free and easy as though she had never a care in the world. Others of the players were good and altogether it is the best show I have seen.

Sunday 2nd Dec. Went to Petticoat Lane which was interesting with its hundreds of little stalls by the pavement. The cockney accent is pronounced amongst the vendors.

Tuesday 4th. Took train to Hampton Court where there to an interesting old palace with fine grounds by the river. Then I went to Richmond had lunch and on to Kew Gardens where I found the hot houses and fern houses looking fine.

Wednesday 5th. Finish of holiday. Left Waterloo at midday for Fleet. The camp is 2 miles from the station by a good road. We soon got there and found it a first class camp with fine huts to sleep in. We drew blankets and mattresses and soon made ourselves comfortable.

Thursday 6th. Little doing as we are being sorted out. Most of the boys went into the reserve battery where they will have horses and harness to look after. I went into the specialists as I like signalling. The stables are good with tiled floors and windows. No mud is to be found about the place for gravel is everywhere. The huts have two fireplaces each and conveniences. There is a YMCA and a Wesleyan hut also a canteen. Hot baths are always available. The junior N.C.O.'s have a separate mess and the tucker is good. Really one could not imagine a finer camp. Concerts are given frequently in the YMCA.

Saturday 8th Dec. I went to a concert in Fleet.

Saturday 15th. Butler and I walked into Aldershot and after a good tea went to the Hippodrome where there was a fine variety concert and we enjoyed it very well. Busses crowded going home.

Wednesday 19th Dec. Christmas leave for 7 days starts today so at midnight we had breakfast and then marched to Fleet. Arrived in London at 4.15a.m. I went to Shakespeare Hut and slept until 9.30. I went to Aunt Gertrude's for lunch and was surprised and delighted to hear that Lindsay was expected for lunch also. Sure enough at 1 o'clock he turned up looking as fit as could be and not even limping. We all had tea with Col. Cunningham and then back to the city as Lins has to return to his conv. home by 7p.m. train. After tea I went to "Carminetta".

Thursday 20th. I went out to Windsor and had a look round the castle and the beautiful country thereabouts. After tea at the hut I went to the Royalty and saw "Billeted" which was real good.

Friday 21st. After lunch I went to the Zoo with a party and after tea we visited the Gaiety where a full dress rehearsal of their new play "The Beauty Spot" was given and all soldiers were invited. It is a wonderful production as regards scenery and dresses. In fact the dresses of the girls are gorgeous and the way the colors harmonise on the stage is magnificent. The theme of the play is quite subordinate but the singing and music are A.1.

Saturday 22nd Dec. I accepted Mr Cleere's invitation to spend Christmas with him and reached Croydon at 1p.m. where Mr Cleere met me and took me along to his house which is small but comfortable. They are a happy couple and cannot do too much to entertain me.

Tuesday 25th. Christmas Day. Mrs Cleere complains of a scarcity of the usual Christmas fare but I think she has as good a table as I ever sat down to. Altogether I am very comfortable here and although things are quiet it is a pleasant rest.

Wednesday 26th. Said goodbye to the Cleere's and returned to London at 11a.m. Had lunch at the Shakespeare Hut and then to the pantomime "Peter Pan" which was good. After tea I went to "Inside the Lines" an interesting spy play and enjoyed it thoroughly.

Thursday 27th. Arrived at the signalling school at Dunstable at 3p.m. After tea Preston and I walked into Dunstable and spent a pleasant hour with some friends and then went to the pictures.

Friday 28th Dec. The examination tests for entry to the school were held. They were very stiff and I did not do very well. The rates were Buzzer 10, Flags 8, Disc 5, Semaphore 8 and Lamp 6.

Saturday 29th. After lunch we went to Luton and had a good time. After tea I went to the Theatre there but it was only fair after London. I have failed in the entry test so must return to Ewshott on Monday. Lilico has also failed so I have a friend in misfortune.

Monday 31st Dec. Left Dunstable at 9.25 and spent 1½ hours in Luton, waiting for a train. The time went pleasantly and we reached St Pancras at 12.30. We went straight to Waterloo and left our kits at the station. I spent some time at Ciro's listening to a concert and had tea there. Our train left at 7.30 and we reached camp at 9.30.

New Years Day 1st January 1918. A quiet day in camp very cold. Dinner was excellent.

Wednesday 2nd Jan. I went to a social at the Wesleyan Hall, Fleet, with Joe Houghton and had a ripping time. Coming home some MP's held us up for being out of camp after time but we managed to dodge them.

Monday 7th Jan. Julius Knight and a company paid a visit to the camp and played the comedy "Mollusc" in the YMCA. They played well and the show was very enjoyable. The weather is very cold now and freezes hard every night. The sun has very little strength in the daytime and so it is cold all day but it is healthy weather, as one has to keep moving to keep warm.

Thursday 10th. In the evening I went to Fleet with Lillico and spent a pleasant evening with the Blacknells. Miss B. plays the piano well and Lillico practised some of his songs.

Saturday 12th. To Aldershot with Ernie Parnell and to the Hippodrome where the programme was good.

Sunday 13th. To the Wesleyan Church at Fleet.

Tuesday 15th. To Blacknells again with Lillico. They are very hospitable people and always entertain us well and give us supper before we leave. There was an inch of snow on the ground this morning and the camp looked very pretty but it was cold.

Saturday 19th Jan. I went to Fleet and attended a concert at the school after which a short dance was held. Weather is warm but wet.

Wednesday 23rd. A good concert was given tonight by the NZFA band.

Saturday 26th. At a concert at the Wesleyan school at Fleet.

Monday 28th. At dinnertime I got a pleasant surprise when I was warned to proceed to Torquay tomorrow with a draft for New Zealand. After tea I went to Fleet and took Miss Blacknell to a fine concert. Said goodbye and returned to camp at 11p.m.

Tuesday 29th. Paraded at 9a.m. and marched to the station. Arrived at Torquay at 4p.m. Got a tram to the camp, which is a fine large residence very comfortable. We have bedsteads and most of the fellows have sheets. This is No 1 camp called Hampton and is situated on the hill overlooking the sea front. Torquay itself is a large village with a harbour used mostly for patrol boats and fishing boats. Babacombe Beach is over the hill on which No 1 camp stands. After tea I strolled down the road with Goien and coming home we struck acquaintance with two Miss McDonalds.

Wednesday 30th Jan. After 9a.m. parade I went for a walk along the front, down the cliff by a path and onto the beach. This is quite a rough piece of coast for England but is quite picturesque. We are now in glorious Devon. In the afternoon I had a bath in town. At 7.30p.m. I met the Miss McDonalds who took me for a fine walk out to Anstey's Cove. They are lively girls and I enjoyed the walk.

Thursday 31st Jan. A draft to leave for N.Z. by the Willochra paraded this morning. Another draft for the Tahiti leaves tomorrow and I expect to strike that.

Friday 1st Feb^y. The drafts for both boats left about midnight. I could have gone had I wished to but would like to see a little of the scenery about here before returning to N.Z. The camp is very quiet and deserted today. After tea I met the Misses Peach and went for a walk with them.

Saturday 2nd Feb. The first wet day since I arrived here. I have been given the job of meeting arrivals at the station and conducting them to the camps. This keeps me busy every second evening but still I have a lot of spare time as I have no duties in the morning.

Monday 11th. Nearly every morning I go for a walk and so I am getting to know this pretty country very well. I like the conducting job that I have as it leaves me plenty of spare time for touring. The weather has been very windy lately.

Monday 18th Feb. I walked to Kingskerswell this morning where there is a very old church. The weather has turned fine again and I hope it lasts.

Thursday 28th. I walked out to Cockington as it was a lovely morning but soon the sky got cloudy and snow began to fall. I made haste to Paignton and caught a car back to town a bit wet and disappointed with the English weather. I have secured some fine snapshots about here and would like to see the place when in its summer glory. I have been booked to leave for N.Z. by the "Remuera", which leaves early in March.

Saturday 9th March. Every fine morning I go for a walk into the country and have seen most of the beautiful and interesting spots about. Yesterday I was in Compton where there is an old castle and in Marldon an interesting old village where roses and thatched roofs prevail. I expect to leave Torquay in a few days time.

Wednesday 13th. Yesterday I got marching orders for this morning. Left Torre by 9.7a.m. train and reached Plymouth at 11a.m. We boarded the "Remuera" by lighter at 12.30. The ship seems fairly comfortable but we are crowded a bit, as there are 500 of us in the two

holds. The food is good and plentiful so we are likely to have a pleasanter trip than mine from N.Z. It is hard to realise that I am bound for N.Z. and Home so soon.

Friday 22nd March. We steamed out of Plymouth at 4.45p.m. on Saturday 16th. in company with 6 other steamers and a number of destroyers and trawlers also a balloon as escort. After the second day out the destroyers left us. We have kept a SW course away from the usual route and have met with no incident of note. At first the strong sea air made me bilious but I am right now. Weather has been good so far and today we can feel the nearness of the tropics in the warm air.

Thursday 28th. Arrived at Freetown (Sierra Leone) at 11a.m. to take on water. Numbers of niggers came alongside in canoes and we secured plenty of fruit at a reasonable price. The weather is tropical now and it is good to sleep on deck.

Friday 29th. Departed at 5p.m. with H.M.S. Kent second-class cruiser as escort and we are all glad to be on the move again as the heat became oppressive whilst we lay in the harbour.

Sunday 7th April. The trip is becoming a bit monotonous and we are travelling slowly. We have deck sports and concerts at frequent intervals and I read and play cards a good deal but still time hangs heavily on my hands and we shall all be glad of the few days break at Cape Town. Auction Bridge is my favourite game of cards and I have had some good amusement out of that game.

Friday 12th April. Arrived at Capetown 11a.m. After dinner we all got ashore and were right glad to stretch our legs and have a look at the town, the European quarter being clean and well laid out. I visited the garden, museum and public library and in the latter got full news of the German offensive in France, which was sorry reading especially as the enemy advance still continues. After tea I took a tram to Camps Bay where I met a Mr Griffiths who kindly invited me to his little bungalow where I spent a very pleasant evening.

Saturday 13th. Ashore again at 9a.m. I took a tram to the Rhodes memorial and back, had a bath then lunch and then out to Camps Bay again. I took a couple of photos of the breakers and then to Mr Griffiths again where I had tea. They are very interested in New Zealand and I gave them a lot of information and of course learned a lot about South Africa.

Sunday 14th April. Coaling by niggers has been carried out during the past two days and finished today. It is a dirty job, coal dust being everywhere. At 4p.m. we sailed again for old N.Z. which we expect to reach in about 23 days.