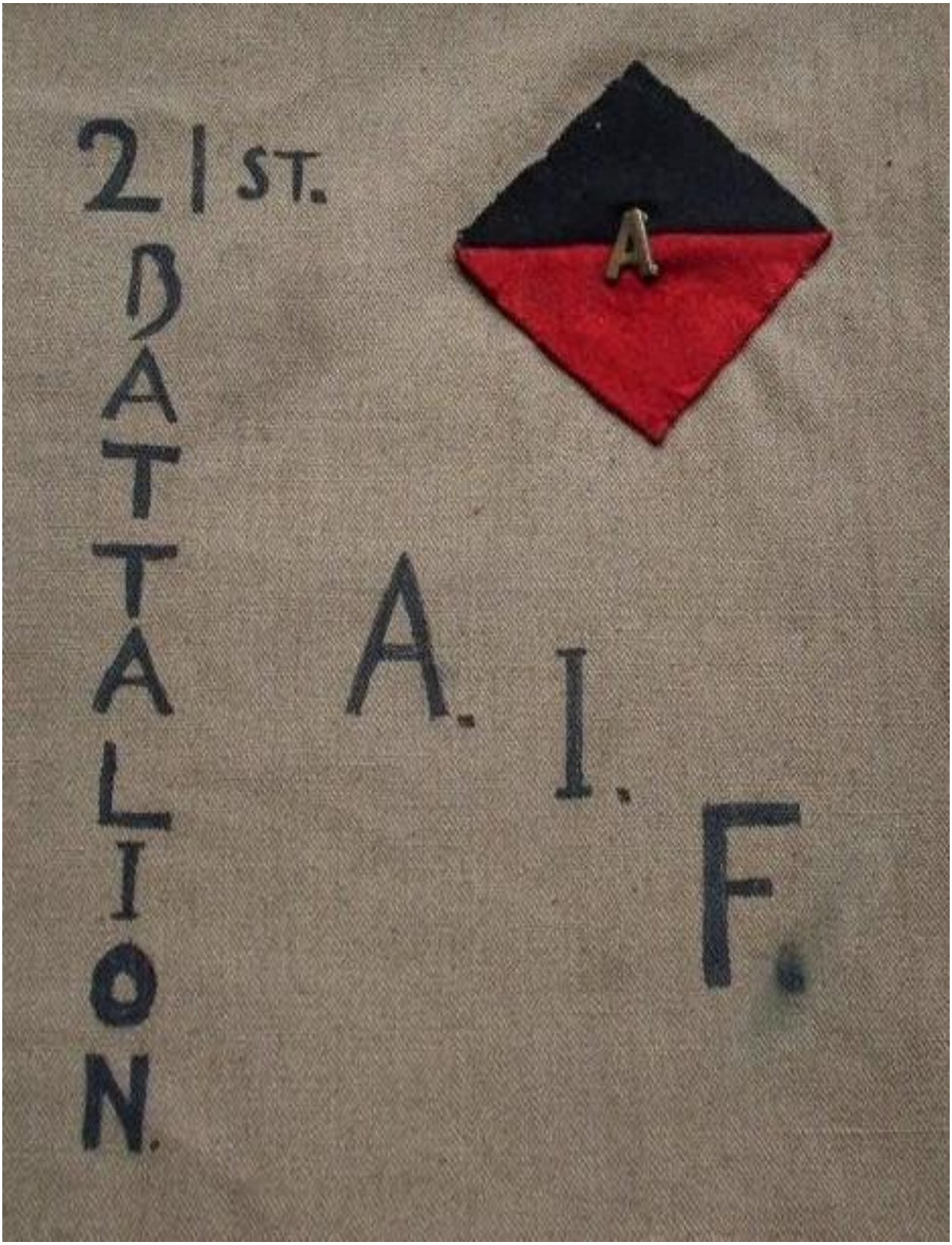
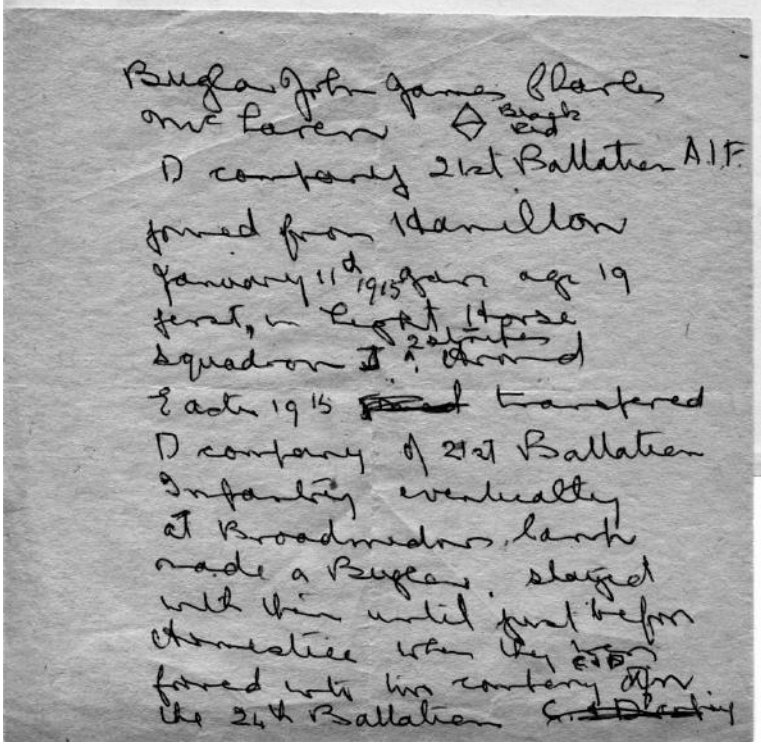

21ST.
BATTALION.
A
A. I. F.

PREFACE.

I have for a long time had a mind to set forth in writing a few of my experiences since I "took the shilling" but have always put it off. Now at last, however, I have been persuaded to put them down, and so here goes, trusting they may prove interesting to any who read them, as being true experiences of a "Footslogger" in the "Australian Imperial Forces". I must apologise for the absence of dates, as I have not kept a Diary, but will endeavour to place things in their proper sequence.


Bugler John James Charles
McLaren ◇ Black
D company 21st Battalion A.I.F.
joined from Hamilton
January 11th 1915 Born age 19
years, in Light Horse
Squadron 2 years Armed
Easter 1915 transfered
D company of 21st Battalion
Infantry eventually
at Broadmeadows, Camp
made a Bugler, stayed
with them until just before
Armistice when they sent
home with his company after
the 24th Battalion

FOOTSLOGGING WITH THE ANZACS.

By An Anzac Tootler.

C O N T E N T S.

Preface.

Part 1.
Training in Australia. Page 1.

Part 2.
More Training in Egypt. Page 5.

Part 3.
Gallipoli. Page 8.

Part 4.
Back in Egypt. Page 11.

Part 5.
A Sojurn in France. Page 15.

Part 6.
Further Experiences in France. Page 19.

Part 7.
The Last of France. Page 26.

Illustration Index.

PART. 1.

I was in Hamilton, working on a Farm when War was declared. It came as a distinct surprise to us all out there. Papers were editing extraordinary editions at all hours. It was shortly after this that Australia offered her support to the Mother Land. Patriotic Concerts were all the rage then, and I was able to lend a hand in the production of a Concert at Yulecarte, which was a distinct success. At the New Year, I was away with friends at Penthurst. One of the lads, decided he would join up. Then news came of the dastardly attack on Hartlepool and Grimsby. That settled things, and off I went to the Recruiting Office in Hamilton on January 11th. When I gave my age 19, the Major looked at me, and asked"when"?; I told him in the last November, but am afraid he didn't quite believe me. The Doctor was afraid they wouldn't take me at Melbourne, but agreed to let me go down. Before leaving Yulecarte I was given a "Send Off" by my friends, and a most enjoyable evening was spent. On the Sunday they honoured me at Church by a special Service, finishing up with that lovely Hymn "Till we meet again". I had no idea I had so many friends there and will be very pleased to return to them again. I wish to take this opportunity of thanking them all for their great kindness to me " May God be with them till we meet again ". The following week I went to the Barracks in Melbourne and was passed through without much trouble, and went out to the Camp with about 150 others. We arrived there about 4.30., and were met by the men already in training, who enquired "How do you like your eggs cooked?" one of the wags in our party replied "Not quite as hard as your face Cobber" (Cobber is Australian slang for Chum or Mate). We were then formed up into two parties, one for Light Horse and the other for Infantry. I was in the Light Horse. We were marched to our tents and had tea, we were then free to roam around the Camp. Next day we set to work on our training. We were issued a suit of Blue dungaries and a white hat, and you may guess we looked pretty fine objects in them. I was placed in J Squadron, and was there for about nine weeks. After six weeks I was given two stripes and also a week end leave to Hamilton. Then came the day when they decided that they wanted Infantry instead of Light Horse. The first four squadrons were taken out and formed into the 13th Light Horse, afterwards designated as the "Devils Own". The rest of the Light Horse was formed into Infantry. I was drafted into "D" Company of the 21st Battalion of Infantry. This took place about Easter time 1915. I had five days at Easter up at Hamilton. A test was held for all the N.C.O!s and I am afraid I was not equal to the occasion as I was reduced to one stripe. Shortly after this they called for Buglers and so I gave up my one stripe and took on the Bugler Stunt. In the end it has turned out well for me.

Perhaps a short description of Broadmeadows Camp, as I remember it may interest you

The Camp was situated about 10 miles from Melbourne, and was half a mile from the Station. To get to it you could either go along a very rough track, in which there were boulders from one to three feet high, or else along the road to the main gate. One thing a chap always noticed was, that when going home in the dark he would fall, and stumble all over the place, standing a great chance of breaking his neck, but here's the curious part, the chaps who had indulged too freely in the Brown fluid and were therefore apt to see double, could walk along that track without even a stumble or false step. But to the Camp, it was in a large paddock, from which all traces of grass had disappeared owing to the constant tramping. In one corner was a Cemetery, which was very handy for breaking Camp, as one could dodge round the tombstones. In the front of the Camp was a large Parade Ground, where we used to parade every morning. The C.O's tent and Headquarters were situated in the centre of the Camp. Behind the Camp were the Paddocks used for drilling and training the Recruits. The tents were ranged in lines of 16, each tent held ten men and our tent was the Company or Squadron Office. There were Y.M.C.A., Salvation Army and Church of England tents there, where the boys could read, write or play games. Then there was a canteen where one could buy anything you wish. There were other places, such as Photographers Fruit Shops etc. all over the Camp. Towards the end of my stay there, they were opening a Billiard Room, and were constructing a large Recreation Hall.

Outside the Camp was another smaller Camp, called the "Isolation Camp" where chaps were removed for a period until it was known that they were free from any epidemic that happened to break out in ones tent. I was sent there, but only in it two days. It came about this way, I was put in on a Thursday, on Friday it was suddenly given out that the final leave of four days was granted that night; we in isolation were told to take down our tents and report back to our lines. You may be sure we lost no time in doing this, it was late that night when we had finished, and we got our leave passes and warrants. You may guess what a crowd there was at the station, as about 4000 men were suddenly let loose and there was only one Booking Office. It took a man all his time to get to the Booking Office and then all his time to get to the train, however I managed to get to Melbourne about 11 o'clock and was able to get to my room, which a chum had booked for me earlier in the day. We proceeded to Hamilton next morning and had a jolly time up there. We left our Camp on May the 8th, our Battalion was the last to leave and left about 12 o'clock in the morning. As we were leaving Camp, two ladies mounted on horseback stood on each side of the road and held a Red, White and Blue Ribbon over us, and wished us God's Speed. When we arrived at Port Melbourne we had to march from the train to our boats and pass through a huge crowd who lined the route on both sides. Many were the tears shed that day and many the blessings showered on the boys, who were men,

going for love of home and England. We started four abreast, but before we had gone far we had to go two abreast, owing to the crowd that was pressing in on us, we finished up in single file and even then had to push our way through, many a girl kissed lads they had never seen before and might never see again, Souvenirs were exchanged and many a handshake given. At last we were on our boat, and as soon as our kits were stored we went on deck; by this time the public were allowed on the Pier, streamers were thrown up and held by the boys at one end, and the girls at the other, letters and cards with good wishes were thrown to the boat by all and sundry. Ah! there goes the syren, then gradually, almost imperceptibly, the space between the boat side and the pier widened, the streamers tightened and the shouts from both soldiers and people grew deafening, the boat moved forward, the streamers snapped and the people broke into long and prolonged cheers, then the soldiers cheered back and when the cheers died away, they broke forth into "Australia will be there". Twilight was deepening into night, and although we could not hear the cheering, we could still see handkerchiefs waving. Many a heavy heart was left on that pier, and many a Father, Mother, Sister, Brother, Lover and Friend there who would never see their loved ones again. Such a War. We passed out of the Heads that night, and felt we were fairly embarked on our mission of duty. Little did we know what the future had in store for us, may be, it is just as well we didn't, for we may not have been so careless and happy as we were then.

There were few incidents worth recording on that voyage, but I will give the most prominent in these pages.

There was one instance which was rather funny, the Cheese we used to get was awful, as it was proper Gorgonzola, but it tried to impersonate it, I must say that it succeeded very well, as its smell was convincing and its activity marvellous, some of the lads made a wreath and placed it on a plate; they then got the service of a Bugler (not I) and held a procession to the boats side, then there was an informal service held over it and it was committed to the deep to the strain of the last post. Of course there was a row over it but still the lads will have their fun.

Then there is the more serious side, we had eight deaths on the voyage. I had to sound the Last Post with other Buglers. It is an impressive service, a burial at sea, but I hope never to take part in such a Service again.

We arrived at Colombo eventually and were taken ashore for a route march in the baking heat. We were not supposed to buy any drinks, it is needless to say we managed to get them. Some of the boys stayed on shore for the night, and when they got back they got it pretty hot, in fact it caused trouble, and the boat was seething with unrest, and the boys upset things a bit.

It was far more interesting travelling along the Suez Canal, than when I went out to Australia, as we could see all the defences and troops out along its banks. When we reached Alexandria the ship berthed alongside the Quay, the order came round that N.C.O.'s would get leave for the evening, but not the men. Of course that did not suit us so we all trooped up to the deck and would not let the N.C.O's off. Meanwhile someone threw a rope over the side and then the fun started, in half an hour, there were not a hundred left on the boat. You may bet we had a jolly fine time in Alexandria and some of us did not get back till the next morning.

P A R T 2.

Next morning we disembarked and entrained, but none of us knew exactly where. The journey was interesting as it was a Country which we knew little about; every minute there was something fresh to see, something strange, something wonderful. It amused us to see the Natives using the old world wooden plough pulled by oxen, which were goaded by the spike on the end of a long rod. Then there were the houses made of mud with thin straw roofs (thatched); they are awful hovels, and it is marvellous the number of Natives that crowd into these quarters. You know that you are nearing a Native villiage without seeing it, as unless you have a terrible cold they announce themselves by their stench.

We at last arrived at a City of some decent size, which we found was Cairo, the City we had heard so much about. We were not destined to get out there, however, but were taken to some station about a mile and a half out of Cairo. Here we detrained, and had to march about two miles through sand. It was our first acquaintance with the sands, and it gave us a warm reception. When we got to our Camp, we were all about done up, and were jolly glad for the spell. We had to camp for the night in the shells that were intended for Mess Huts. Next day we were busy putting up our tents and getting the camp ready. We were camped at Heliopolis, which name means "Sun City" which we have good cause to know is a proper name for it. We were in this camp for about three months, which were spent between drill and visits around the surrounding country. Of course we all went to the Pyramids and the Sphinx; they are certainly marvellous and one could not help admiring the patience which must have been necessary to construct them. There was another side of Cairo, which I will not deal with in these pages, except to say that no one would believe it without seeing it. The Natives were a despicable set, although they were very religious but could not be trusted. It was rumoured that one of the native funerals was stopped and when the coffin was opened, instead of a body, it was found to be full of rifles and ammunition. The Authorities then searched the vaults, and found many more rifles and ammunition, which had evidently been placed there by Germanic Agents to arm the natives in an uprising. It was things like that which necessitated the keeping of a large Army in Egypt.

Some of the native customs were peculiar to us and caused much amusement. The poor class funeral is a weird event. The coffin is carried through the streets by native bearers, behind the coffin there follows the deceased's harem, or in the case of a wife, the husband and the rest of his harem, then of course there come the relatives and any other person who is concerned or moved by curiosity. The whole party chant a

dirge as they go along, and it is a mournful and weird sound. When the deceased happens to be a rich man, his body is conveyed in a hearse and bearers go in front carrying large wreaths with suitable inscriptions on them.

Whenever one went into Cairo one was immediately surrounded by a herd of little urchins who either insisted on cleaning your boots for half a piastre or else demanded "Backsheese". Little tots who could hardly speak could say "Backsheese". It is described by eminent people that this tipping is ruining Egypt, as it makes the Natives lazy and indolent.

One time, whilst we were on the march, we met a herd of Natives who were hauling a very large trunk of a tree along the road. They did this to a chorus of Ah,Ah, Ba-ba, Ah, Ah, ba-ba, in a monotonous tone; needless to say it caused much merriment amongst us all.

We went down to a place called Abbaseigh for a week on the rifle ranges, and I was the only Bugler in the Company, and as I was not much good on it then, - I am not much better now - but still, I had a lively time. There was one thing about it, however, I was credited with being the only Bugler who could get the boys out of bed early and in a good temper. I have never been cheered so heartily in all my life and never expect to be again.

Later on we went to Bab-el-Hudid Barracks, just near the Cairo Station, but managed much better there, it was there that we had the best meals we ever had in the Army, and we must thank the"Tommy Cooks" for it. The Barracks were built by our deeply lamented Lord Kitchener, during his reign in Office in Egypt. One day our Lieutenant, Mr. Bland, had a roll call in the Barracks, and twelve fellows were caught out, and consequently received C.B. I was out, but somehow they never missed me, so I got off scot free. On that occasion No 13 was lucky.

It was shortly after that, we were told that we were shortly leaving for Gallipoli. You may guess we were all glad to hear this, for after being in Egypt for three months, we were getting pretty sick of it.

At last came the day, and all was bustle in our Camp. Tents had to be struck and kits packed. It was a Sunday we moved out, and in the morning, as if to cheer us on our way, a large Mail in answer to our first letters from Egypt came in, and I think it was the largest mail we ever received. That night we were marched to the Station with bands playing, and the God speed from the chaps who were not going with us. The Bugler fell in just before we moved off and sounded the Last Post. We were a happy lot that night. Early next morning we went on board our transport, the

ill fated "Southland" or as her old name was "Vaterland". She was a large two funnelled boat. I was a Mess orderly on her, and was placed in the forehead well. We had a pretty good voyage for the first two days. It was on September 2nd that we were steaming along, about 40 miles from Lemos, and on our left was an island, which seemed about two miles away, but which was really about 17 miles off. There was an old schooner hanging off the island, and our ship could get no answer from her, either by wireless or signals. Our ship was turning away from her, when suddenly there was a terrific explosion in the forehead part of the ship, but the Captain had seen the torpedo coming and had stopped the boat and was turning her, so the second torpedo passed harmlessly in the rear of us. Our Gunners then let fire in the direction of the Submarine, but if it did not hit her, it frightened her, as we did not see any more of her. I was down the forehead well, in fact had only just got down to tidy up the beds for inspection, when it happened. I grabbed my lifebelt and went upstairs for my life. Some of the boys were swimming in the water for over two hours. We fell in on our deck, and our Chaplain came forward and we sang "Nearer My God to Thee", after that we sang "Australia will be there" and many other songs. Of course they at once proceeded in lowering the boats. One fellow was told to "Cast Off" and he cut the falls instead of undoing the hooks. The Captain and all the ship Officers were marvellous, and you may be sure no time was wasted. Some of the boats were stuck to the deck with constant painting, and it took an awful time to move them. At one time we thought we were done, for the ship gave a horrible roll to one side, but she eventually righted herself. At last after about two hours a Hospital Ship the "Nautalies" came dashing up, with her lifeboats swung out and and the crew in their places ready, so no time was lost. A very few minutes after one of our Auxiliary Destroyers came up at 22 knots an hour. It looked very much as if it were only a mass of spray coming for us. We were soon picked up and some of our Officers and men stayed on the "Southland" and stoked her. She reached Lemnos under her own steam. We were transferred to the "Transyvania" and were there for about four days. We lost about 30 men in that stunt. Two of the stokers were shot by the Captain for rushing the boats. We lost our Brigadier, Colonel Linton, he was drowned, owing to his lifeboat capsizing. He was buried with full military honours at Lemnos. Most of the boys lost a lot of their kit, but I was fortunate in getting all mine back

We were put on a mine sweeper and at dusk we set out for Gallipoli.

PART 3.

We were quite surprised to find that "Anzac" the name of the part where we were to land was just like a town, as all up the side of the hills fires and lights could be seen. We anchored some little way out, and could hear rifle fire and machine guns going. We thought we should be landed and put straight into a charge. A tug came along side with three or four barges. We were speedily but quietly transferred to these and then off to the shore. It was quite dark when we landed and of course we had to keep close together. As we were coming across the water we could hear the stray bullets whining overhead, and sometimes they struck our boat or splashed into the water close to us. When we landed we were marched up into the gully and told to find a bed where we could. We lay down anywhere, but could not get to sleep, owing to the racket that was going on. Next morning we had to gather our firewood and cook our own breakfast. We were surprised to find ourselves in a gully with sides towering over us. In the afternoon we moved up to our position. This was a part of the line called "Courtneys Post". If it had not been for our being torpedoed we should have gone into "Lone Pine" but the 23rd and 24th Battalions took our place there. We relieved the 8th Battalion. Next morning our Platoon 15, was taken from the trenches and placed down on the beach for fatigue work. We were down there for six weeks altogether. We made the Brighton Beach out of a wild scrub patch into a landing station, Munition store and Hospital Base. We sank wells, laid tramway tracks, built dug-outs for storing ammunition and a hundred and one things. Whilst we were down there we lived well. We had fresh meat and bread, and in fact plenty of everything. Then we were relieved and sent to the trenches. Whilst I was down there I had ten days in Hospital with Influenza. Soon after we returned to "Courtneys Post" we were moved along to the right to a place called "Steeles Post". About this time the rough weather set in and we had an awful time of it. Boats were unable to land things on the beach and we had to live on bully beef and biscuits, and were only allowed ½pt. of water a day to drink. We then had a blizzard which very nearly finished us off. I got a touch of Pneumonia, combined with a slight attack of frostbite. I was in Hospital for four days, and then sent back to duty, but could only lay in my dug-out and do nothing. If it had not been for my pal Corpl.W Montgomery, who looked after me like a brother, I don't know how I should have got on. He was a <u>real</u> pal to me in those days and I have a lot to thank him for which I hope some dayto repay a little, for I can never repay him for his self sacrifice and devotion. I spent the most miserable birthday of my life there as it was snowing at the time, and I was out on fatigue most of the night.

During the early part of our sojurn there, I received a parcel from my Mater, it had a pipe and some first rate tobacco in it and I sat and smoked about three pipes straight off. I also had some cake in it and my chum, Tom Couzens and I had a real good feed. We enjoyed that cake I can tell you, as did all my chums, the sweets which we also had in that never to be forgotten parcel. I received other parcels after that but that one was the first, and came just when we were feeling right down and out.

I was sitting having my tea one afternoon when a broom stick bomb or a trench mortar bomb came down in the next post to us, and it absolutely smothered us. Naturally we did not wait for the next one. It spoilt three ounces of jam, a slice of bread and half a pint of tea, so you see it did enormous damage.

Another time, just after dawn, our lads jumped out of their trenches and Abdul did the same, and we exchanged bully beef, cigarettes etc, and even had a few words with them. We had to get back pretty lively though for the German Officers turned a machine gun over us.

Another time, the enemy were searching for one of our machine guns. They shelled us with "75", but they went to the post on the left of the gun first day, and the next day they went to the right, and on the third they had a go at the centre post, but needless to say the gun had been shifted. We lost a terrible lot of men through sickness, a few were killed, but the sick were by far the larger number.

Then Lord Kitchener came to Anzac, and soon after we knew that we were to be taken off. There was an awful lot of work about then, for it was a movement that had to be carefully prepared and put into effect. Anyone who was there will admit it was marvellous how it was managed without losing a man.

There was one gun on our right which caused an awful lot of havoc on the beach, for this reason we called it "Beachy Bill" it had been knocked out of action two or three times, but they always replaced it. It is credited with having got thousands of our fellows.

We used to see some wonderful shooting there by our Navy. We can thank them that we were able to stay on at Gallipoli at all. We could hear their shells going right inland a terrible way. They sunk some Turkish vessels that were in the Dardenelles right the other side of the Peninsula

One saw some most beautiful sunsets from our post, we could see right over the Bay, and right out to on our left flank. When the sun was setting over the mountain

tops of Island it made a magnificent picture. At the time of the snow it would have made a picture that would have pleased any Christmas card seller. Another pretty sight was the Hospital ships at night. They would be off from the shore and were brilliantly lighted with green lights with large redcrosses on them. We used to watch them and wonder when we should be lucky enough to get away on one.

Just before the evacuation we were moved round to "Lone Pine" which cost the Anzacs so dear to get. We were only round there a few days and were brought back to "Steeles Post". Then the evacuation commenced. I was in one of the first parties to go as I was not well and was counted useless. I should dearly have liked to have been one of the last, but it was not for me. My Cobber Montgomery was about the last of our Battalion to leave Anzac as he was one of the "Guides". The men in the trenches were taken in parties and when the last party withdrew they only left a few old rifles fixed so that they would fire at different times. This was done by fixing a tin on a string to the triger, just over the tin was another containing water, this water would drip into the lower one, and when the weight was sufficient it would release the triger. This was to mislead the enemy into thinking that the trenches were still occupied. As everyone knows the evacuation was completely successful, without losing a man.

The night before we left by some unknown cause our stores were seton fire, so we were nearly stranded. If the sea had been rough I am afraid it would have been a different tale.

When we got to Lemnos we were transferred to one of H.M's Battleships the "Russell". She had been out to help Greece to decide to allow our troops to land at Salonica. The sailors treated us real well, we had a feed and a great basin of Cocoa, after that we were all given a hot bath so you see what fine chaps our Navy lads are. Then they gave their day's issue of cigarettes for us. I am sorry to say although I am not quite sure but I believe the "Russell" has since been sunk. When we were coming alongside her, the band played, one of the tunes was "Who were you with last night" One of our wags shouted out "Abdul" at which there was a general laugh.

PART 4.

Then we were landed at Lemnos Island, our packs were taken to our Camp by an Indian Mule train, we had about three miles to march and were jolly glad to get to the end of them at last. Our tents had been already put up so we just had to walk in and make ourselves comfortable. Next day the rest of the lads came in and of course they had to tell us all about the last few hours. It was raining hard, and the ground was in an awful state, but owing to some mistake at Headquarters we had to shift our tents on to wet ground, it was a wonder we did not all get Pneumonia. We spent Christmas day there. In the morning we were all given a billy which had been filled and sent over from Australia, they caused delight, and if the people could have seen the boys faces as each freshthing came out of them, I think they would have felt well repaid for their trouble and kindness. Then at dinner time we had about eight ounces of Christmas Pudding, which had also been sent over by kind friends in Australia. In the morning we had a Church Parade. In the afternoon there was a football match and we were free to go where we liked. The only trouble was, we did not have too much money. One of my Chums, Jack Peck, went out with four or five shillings to get some stores for the mob. On his way to the village he came to a "Two-up" school. He joined in, hoping thereby to increase our funds. All went well for a while but then luck turned, he finished up with nothing, after having got to the one pound line. So we went short, but such are the fortunes of War.

We had another jolly day on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

One evening after coming in from drill, 500 men from our Battalion as well as from every other Battalion in the Brigade were taken about three miles out and we were told that it was to sort a very large mail, when we saw there were about 1000 of us all told we thought it must be an exceptional mail. When we got to our destination most of us sat down and did nothing. I carried one bag about 100 yards and it only had about two letters in it. We finished the job and started home. We went back by a different track and passed a party about half way. Theywere singing and so were we. When we got back to Camp we found that the party we had passed was the other half of the Brigade gone down to relieve us. I guess they must have been wild when they found that the work was finished, and we had gone back. One day the heads decided to march us to a place called "Thermos" where there were natural hot springs, and one could get a hot bath. It was about 8 miles inland. It was a very hot day and we had not gone more than two miles

when about half of us fell out, as the pace was too hot. We returned to Camp and had a good rest. We suffered for it after though, we were given all the fatigues that were knocking about

About the second week in January we were moved from Lemnos to Egypt. We had a safe voyage that time but we were all a bit nervous, and we never left our lifebelts far from us. They remembered the last time we had drawn to Alexandria Quayside, so they anchored out in the harbour till we were ready to disembark us. We entrained the next morning, and were taken to a place called Tel-el-Kebir, the old battle field where General Gordon had his great victory. It was a very large Camp, as it contained the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the Australian Forces besides a few other lots. When we got there it was raining hard and the lads were sleeping 18 to 20 in one bell tent. I found a large canvas laying out on the ground so I crawled under that. In the morning we had no tucker except our bully beef and biscuits but there happened to be a big mail in. I got five parcels and nearly everyone had a parcel, some more than I had. I had three cakes, two Xmas Puddings, Sardines, tinned tongue, cocoa so you see we were able to make a good breakfast and in fact it did us for two days.

When we got settled down there my Chums and I made a ring of our own. There was Corporal Montgomery, Corporal Couzens, Jack Peck, Herb. Cook and myself, we used to put 50 piastre in to the "Kitty" every pay. As I was bugler and had more time than the others I was the Secretary and used to buy the stores for us. We hardly ever had any of the issued tucker except perhaps tea. We lived high those days.

We were next moved out to the other side of the Suez Canal. We were taken to Ismalia by train, travelling in open trucks. We marched from the Station to Ferry Camp the other side of the Canal. We were there for a few days and then moved out into the desert, about eight miles from the Canal. It wasaterribly hot day when we moved, and we were about done when we reached our Camp. Then we had to put up our tents and as usual they were put up in the wrong place and so had to be shifted a day or two later. We worked hard there as we had to construct all the Defences. We would have to make trenches about five feet deep and five feet wide at the top, but when we had got to the right depth and we were congratulating ourselves that we had finished one piece, about two tons of sand from one of the sides or sometimes both sides would slide into the trench and we would have to clear it out again. Then we would leave it for the night and the next morning we would return to find that the wind in the night had filled the trench with sand.

One of the trials we had to put up with, was the sand in our food. All our food and the water was brought out to us on Camels and as Camels always walk in file the rear ones get all the sand that those in front stir up, then of course the wind blew a little more sand into the dixies, so you may guess that by the time we got our food, there was plenty of sand in it.

There was quite a stir in the Camp one night. A large patrol of Indians came in and reported having seen Turkish patrols away out in the desert. The Camels which the Indians were riding were fine animals and had a good turn of speed; it is marvellous the rate the ponderous animals are capable of moving at.

There was an out post stationed not far from our lines, it was supplied by another Battalion. One night they heard something moving out in the darkness. The sentry called out "Halt! who goes there" receiving no reply he called out again and still receiving no reply, opened fire. In the morning when daylight came, they went to see who or what it was that had ventured so close to our lines, to there surprise they found an old Camel riddled with bullets and one of our Camels at that.

Moving day came round at last, and none of us were sorry to be leaving that desert. I had had two days leave to Cairo and had been able to bring a lot of stores out to my Cobbers. We packed up our kits and started one day. It was a typical Arabian day, hot, sultry and plenty of sand flying about. We got down to Ferry Post eventually and turned into our tents. We were then told we could go down to the canal and bathe, and you may be sure we took full advantage of this.

Two days later we crossed the Canal and moved into Camp at a place called Ismalia. On our way we had to give in our old rifles and received new high velocity ones in return. We were able to go for bathes from the Camp to Lake Tinsa, and you can guess we made good use of the privilege. We were there about two weeks and then got marching orders and we knew we were going to the Front, but of course we were not sure which one, although most of us fancied France

On the Sunday we were to move off H.R.H. The Prince of Wales accompanied by Lt. General Birdwood "The Soul of Anzac" inspected the 6th Brigade. We were the first Australian Brigade to be inspected by H.R.H. in Egypt. It was a terrible day, as it had been raining, and there were continual showers. Our boys gave H.R.H. a great reception, and after the inspection

we lined the route for him and cheered until we were hoarse.
That night we entrained in open trucks and luckily it finished raining, or we should have had a worse journey than we did.
On the Monday morning we embarked and Monday night we set sail to what turned out later to be a far worse fight than Gallipoli.
We were on the "Miniwaska" and about the time we passed Malta the Minipolia" passed going to Egypt, and was torpedoed.
Luckily she was empty and I believe the crew was saved.

PART 5

We reached Marseilles on March 25th and disembarked next day. We then entrained and were in that train for three days and two nights. There is no doubt that France is a beautiful Country and no wonder every Frenchman is proud to fight for such a Country. We passed through Vineyards and then the pasture lands. There was one thing we noticed among the many, that was the horses, they were all fine specimens. In travelling through the Southern France, one would never think there was a terrible War raging, except for the absence of young men, and the presence of Hospitals. At some of the Stations where we stopped, the Nurses, or as they are called in France "Les femmes de la Croix Rouge" were most kind to us and supplied us with tea or soup. Everywhere we passed we were asked for "Souveniers". We passed through Lyons at night time so did not have an opportunity of seeing that beautiful City. We passed within about five miles of Paris. When we were nearing the seat of the War we passed Hospital trains, camps and guns and every person seemed to have some specified work to do and with a cheerful determination to carry this War to the very end, and no matter what the cost, to carry it to Victory.

When we at last reached our destination at a place called AIRE it was raining hard, and by the time we had marched out to our billets at GLOMINGHEM we were wet through. We spent about two weeks there, training and fitting ourselves for the firing line. Whilst we were there we went through a miniature gas attack and also saw what was liquid fire, and in fact were under it for a few minutes. As long as one has a bank behind which one can lay, the liquid fire cannot touch you, although it may scorch. We also got a dose of liquid gas or tear shells. They are terrible things for although to the taste they are sweet they get into your eyes and make them water and of course they temporarily blind one.

Whilst we were there, Monty, Harry Rawson and myself went into AIRE and had a supper together. It was a delightful feed and we finished it up with a liqueur and cigars. On our way back we took the wrong turning and consequently went about three miles out of our road.

Then we moved to a place called ESTAIRES It took us two days to march there, and then we marched into all the Tommies there lined up to see us. I am afraid we presented a sorry spectacle as the cobbles had played up with our feet and it was as much as we could do to lift one foot after the other. As we were passing a Laundry the girls came out and two of them attached themselves to one of our Lieutenants, Mr. Kelly, who is about 6ft 2 inch tall and as

the girls were rather short, it made a comical picture and of course it set the lads going. Although we were a sorry picture when we marched into ESTAIRES when we marched out about two days later we were quite spruce and springy and quite happy as we knew we were to go into the firing line that night. We changed over in the trenches about midnight, relieving the

I was sent next morning from the front line with a dispatch to Headquarters to be there by seven o'clock, but I made a mistake in the turnings and went to the right instead of the left, consequently I got lost and it was nearer nine o'clock than seven when I did at last reach Headquarters.

We were in the firing line for about 10 days and then back to the trenches. Whilst we were in supports, C Company of our Battalion was shelled out of its billet which was burnt to the ground. Fortunately no one was injured. The second time we came out of the front line it was given out that English leave of ten days would be granted. There were only two men at a time allowed to go. There were certain conditions to be fulfilled before one could be eligible. There were five of us eligible and so our names were put in the hat and I was fortunate to be one of the two. We had to go back to a place called STEENWERK to get our train. The night we left the Company they moved to a place called JESUS FARM where I found them after returning from a most enjoyable ten days in England. Owing to a mistake on the part of the Major who was in charge of us we got a day extra which you may be sure was very acceptable.

When I rejoined the Company at JESUS FARM they were on night fatigue. We had to go about seven miles to our work, which could only be done at night time, under cover of the darkness. When we got there every man had to dig one yard of trench six feet deep and as wide as you liked but the trouble was that after one had got about four feet down the trench started to fill with water and the last two feet were awfully sloshy and wet. Then we had to fill it in again and then march home again. We did that about every other night at first, but towards the end we were doing it three nights out of four.

We were out at JESUS FARM for about six weeks and then back to the trenches only we went into a different part this time. Just after we went in again the Artillery started to work to shake Fritz up and in consequence we got a pretty rough time. We had two hours bombardment one afternoon, and the New Zealanders were waiting in their lines with stretchers

etc., as they thought we should nearly all be wiped out, but the twenty-first's luck held with us that day and no one was injured although my pal Monty was very nearly killed, owing to the parapet being blown in on him, and making him a prisoner against the parades. He got out with nothing worse than a few bruises and scratches although he had a bad leg for some time after. The parapet is the front protection and the parades is the back line of trench. I was very near being blown sky high owing to a shell bursting in a place where the parapet was already blown down.

There were three chaps in a long dug out under the parapet. Two of them had a dream and cleared out, but the other stayed there. A shell burst right through the top of the dug out where the two had been but the other fellow was not touched, of course he got out at once and had hardly left the bay when another shell burst just behind him, but he got out safe and sound.

Soon after this we were taken out and after a few days just behind the line we moved back on our way to the Somme. We were stationed at STEENWERCK for a few days. One night we were taken out for a fatigue and after marching about five miles we were told that they could not find the place called STINKING FARM so we went back without doing a stroke of work. We were told we were to get in the train at STEENWERK but when we got to the Station they said there was no train, but we should get one at about ten miles down the line. When we got there we were told the same tale and we had to go another eight miles. Then we did another five miles and at we got a train, which took us to ST. ROCHE from there we marched about eight miles to billets, from there to VARENNES From this place we could stand at night time and see the firing line where our first divisions were. It is a wonderful sight to be in a position to see a charge going in, we could see the shrapnel bursting and the Verry Lights going. Then there would be a lull in the guns and they would break out with redoubled energy only you would notice that they had lifted and where bursting further out, then you would notice the lights would die down and that our boys had won a bit more ground. It's a marvellous sight, but one can not help thinking what a murderous and silly thing war is, for men to be killing one another for the sake of greed.

We then moved to our last camping ground where we left our packs and when we next went forward we went in fighting order with 100 rounds of ammunition extra and a bomb in each pocket, and two sand bags in our belts. The last are used when we have captured an enemy position to consolidate it.

That night we moved up just behind the firing line at a place called LA BOISELLE On our way we passed through Albert. There is a most wonderful sight there with a legend

to it. During one of the many bombardments of the Town a shell passed through the Cathedral just beneath the figure of the Virgin Mary which summounted the dome, the statue fell facing the ground, but washeld up there by the rafters. The legend is that when that falls to the ground the War will be ended. May it fall soon.

We camped in OLD TRENCHES for the night, and next day we were sent on a bomb carrying fatigue to the 18th Battalion. We lost five men on that trip. Two were killed, whilst I was wounded. One of the chaps that was killed just in front of me, was hit by a nosecap from a shell, and it took half his face. I got my little bit in my back, passing through my liver, and lodging just under the skin in my chest. One of my pals, Corpl. Carroll tied me up and two bearers from the 18th Battalion carried me to the dressing Station. Our stretcher bearers are fine fellows, and here's to everyone of them. They have to work hard, but they take all care with one, I never had such a comfortable ride in all my life. I do not know who they were, but I thank them, as many another has cause to. From the Dressing Station I was put in a horse Ambulance, from that into a motor Ambulance. I was taken to PUCHVILLERS and was operated on there. The Nurses over there are fine women and look after a chap well. I was there for about seven days and then was sent to Boulogne. I was at Boulogne for about six days and then Blighty. When I got to Southampton I was put on a train to Cardiff and eventually found myself in Hospital at Whitchurch. It was a fine Hospital and we were well looked after, but I think the food could be a lot better. We had five Nurses there, who did anything they could for us. I was there for about two months and was then sent to a Convalescent Camp at Woodcote Park, Epsom. I was there about six weeks and had a jolly time.

This finishes my account of a Footsloggers travels, and I trust they may afford some slight insight of the troubles of an Infantryman in War-time. It is a common enough account, and many could tell a better yarn, and express themselves better, but as I stated in the beginning, I wrote this under persuasion.

For all the rough times I have had, I still want to stick to the Infantry, for one has some good times with the boys. I expect I shall shortly be back in France and I hope to be able to come back some day and add another account to this.

The Photos shown in this book were nearly all taken in Egypt, as I was not fortunate enough to have a Camera with me at Gallipoli, and we were not allowed to carry them in France.

AN ANZAC TOOTLER.

PART 6

FURTHER EXPERIENCES IN FRANCE.

After leaving Epsom I had fourteen days sick furlough and had a right down jolly time. After that I reported back to No 1 Command Depot, at Perham Downs. Here we all paraded into a hut for the medical inspection and classifaction. When the Doctor came in he looked at the party waiting for him, then turning to the Sergeant in charge remarked, "There's about fifty here, I think I can get through them in the ten minutes before dinner", and so he passed us through, most of us being marked "A" Class, fit for Active Service, without being examined. Two days later we went down to Rollestone and joined the 6th Training Battalion. On December the 31st, we entrained for France, arriving at Calais late at night. From there we entrained to Etaples, arriving there about 4 o'clock in the morning.

We were inspected that morning and marched down to the Armoury to get our rifles. Next day my friend Sgt Harry Rawson offered me the job of an extra Duty Pay Corporal, but a little while later I met Jack Peck, Corporal of the Town Police, and he offered me a job in the Camp Police. I took the Police Job, and it lasted me for nearly four months. We had some very cold weather and we felt it badly enough up there; Goodness knows what it must have been like down on the Somme.

Just a few experiences of a Policeman, to give you an idea of the humorous side of his life — I was on duty on one of the Bridges leading into the Town and my duty was to let no one through without a pass. A party of five, three Sergeants and two privates came across the bridge, apparently, one Sergeant in charge and the others an escort and a prisoner. "Well lads, where are you going" I asked them. "Oh! we're an escort with a prisoner" answered the Sergeant. "Oh! you are, are you, then where are you taking him". "We have got to take him to Headquarters" "Well" said I, "have you a pass or a warrant?" "No, but we're on duty". "Well you had better go back to the Headquarters which are the other side of the bridge, and get a pass then you can go through". Where upon various imprecations were hurled down on my head. It was rather funny for they turned off from the bridge and they tried to cross the railway lines. An English Colonel came up to me and said, "Those men you turned back are trying to cross the line, you had better warn your picket" I told him that he needn't worry as the picket was already warned.

Again, parties were allowed across with trek carts to obtain supplies for the Officers Messes. One such party was coming across the bridge, with five men pulling or pushing it. I noticed some

were Jocks and some were not. I let them get a little way past me, and then called to the 3rd Division men to come back. The one in the lead had his nose nearly rubbing the ground and the man at the back was pushing for all he was worth. When I pulled them up they said they were only giving the Jocks a hand. Itold them that the Jocks would no doubt be very thankful for their help and would be sorry they would have to leave them. They went away very crestfallen. It seems hard to turn them back, but then there was a Tommy Red Cap with me, and he would soon put a man away.

One night we were on duty in Camp when we got the warning of an Air Raid. We had to dash round and get all lights out and as it was only about eight o'clock, you can guess we had a little trouble. We told the boys once, we ordered them the second time, and if not out then we went in and hurled the lights out. It was some fun and there was a good bit of "grousing", but for all that, we always got on well with the boys, and they never gave us any trouble.

One of the most well-known figures at the Base Camp was Padre Gault, he was a great favourite with the boys. We had a Concert Party there every week, and he would amuse us all until the Party came. One of his favourite gags was to send up rockets. First everybody had to make a whistling noise, then all would clap to resemble the rocket going off. Then each man would turn to his neighbour and say " First she's red, then she's white, then she's blue. Ain't she a Bonzer". It was great fun.

Another of his many jokes was, at the end of a Concert he would say "Just to show the performers what a large audience, every man will strike a match and hold it up when I say 'Go'". It had a most striking effect I can assure you.

I left Etaples on April 19th for the Battalion, and went down to Albert. We stayed therefor the night and next day we moved up to the Battalion. At least we marched about fifteen miles, and as it was rapidly getting dark and no one knew where the Battalion was we camped in the ruins of Vaux. Next morning we found the Battalion two miles further on. One thing that struck me most forcibly was the absence of many old faces, in fact there were only about fifteen to twenty men there that I knew. That night we all went to the Front line, carrying bombs.

Next day I went out with a party to carry stew and tea to one of our outposts. It was a pretty fair carry, and when we found them in sunken roads we were pretty tired. We found out we were in full view of Fritz's observers, for we had just put the dixies down and the men lined up for their tucker, when over came some Whiz-bangs. There was only the shelter afforded by the bank of the road, you can guess we got pretty close to it, too. One shell landed fair in the middle of the road, but fortunately it"got" no one although it was only about two yards from us.

That afternoon we moved out to a camp and pratised the formation of a stunt we were to do in the near future.

We had some rough times, but we had rougher times in store.

Eventually we moved up to a sunken road from Nornaul. Here we were loaded up with the various things with which a man goes into action. We carried6sandbags (empty) 48 hours rations, four mills bombs, wire cutters, ground flares, 150 rounds of ammunition in our pouches, and 100 rounds in two bandoliers, also smoke bombs. So you can imagine how loaded a man is when going into action. We moved forward to the jumping-off tape in the early hours of the morning. We were lying down then, impatiently awaiting the laying down of ourbarrage, when Fritz must have seen something to make him suspicious. Up went his S.O.S. Flares, and down came the shells. We laid under his barrage for about fifteen minutes. It is a marvel to this day that we were able to move forward at all when our own barrage opened up at Zero time; but forward we went, leaving many a good man behind. At one time, as we were moving forward, our own barrage in front Fritz's behind us, we were in between and not a shell worried us. It brought to my mind the passage in the Bible telling us how the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, with two walls of water on either side, only in this case it was a wall of falling shells Really, a man should be helpless, the strain is enormous, but a man has less thought of being hit at such times than when we are in the comparative safety of a trench.

When we got to Fritz's wire it was in a terrible mess, and our "waves" were all gone, we were all mixed up in one big push, but we got Fritz out of his trench, and moved forward to the second objective. We had a bit of trouble there, as Fritz was well prepared, but after a lot of hard fighting and close bombing we got him out. To advance further was impossible owing to the features of the ground, although some tried, but were taken prisoners or else killed. We consolidated in the second line, and all day there was constant bombing between us and Fritz's strong post. The "Contact Planes", Aeroplanes whose work it was to find out our positions and let our Artillery know, were flying over us, and we had no ground flares. He flew along our line for about three hours and eventually must have picked us up, for off he went. Then we found that our left flank was in the air, as the Tommies on our left had failed to get up. Our "heavies" laid down a barrage for us and it was that which kept Fritz from making use of the position.

We were relieved that night and went back to the railway embankment which had been our old line. We were in there for a day, and we were subjected to constant fire from 5·9's and we lost a terrible lot of men there.

Whilst up in the second objective I saw one of the prettiest stunts ever seen on the battlefield. We were on a bit of a rise, and could over look the position. the 5th Brigade had been forced to fall back to. They were entrenched along a sunken road on our right flank, and Fritz launched a counter attack against them. The Fifth let Fritz get up right close, within about thirty yards, then they hopped on top of the embankment, and bombed Fritz to pieces. He never got to his objective.

We moved back to another sunken road and were there for three or four days. Once we went up on a carrying fatigue and had to do two trips. It was very exciting as a man was often in full view of Fritz. He shelled up and one shell landed amongst a party at the dump and killed Lieut. Hauser, who had only just rejoined us and was one of our old Sergeants. We moved out after that and were out for what turned out to be a four months spell.

We spent some of our time at Mametz Brigade Camp, and then moved back to Bapaume, when we were in reserve. Whilst there our time was occupied by practise "Stunts".

There was one village, Villers-au-Flos which was captured and held, from all directions, about fifty times; then our afternoons were spent in Cricket. "D" Company came out champions in the cricket. During the first two weeks that the Battalion were at Bapaume I was away at a Sniping and Intelligence School. Let me try and give some idea of that School's position, asit may give you some light on the beauties of France. It was in a village named Vadencourt, about three kilometres from Warloy. The School Buildings were the Chateau. The village lay down in a hollow, off the main road and was approached through an avenue of fine tall Poplars. The village consisted of the Chateau, a Church and about nine or ten houses. Traffic and its consequent dust and noise never troubled Vadencourt, as it was a cal-de-sac. The whole village was in a small wood, also a quiet little stream : flowed along side of the Chateau. The Chateau, a large turreted building forming three sides of a square, in the centre of which were well kept gardens, bright with the many hues of flowers. The Church was very picturesque. Although we were at aSchool, it was more like a fortnights holiday in a quiet country resort. One Sunday I travelled from the School to the camp at Bapaume and back by motor lorries for our mail, a distance of forty miles or more.

After a good spell at Bapaume, we moved down to Avuloy and from there entrained to Arques. We were billeted around Arques for a few weeks. Whilst there we were inspected by F.M. Sir Douglas Haig. It was a grand parade and for once was almost free from the usual "Red Tape" which generally accompanies such ceremonial parades.

Sir Douglas, with his four guards, one carrying a silk Union Jack, and the long train of Staff Officers formed a very imposing sight. General Birdwood was there, and he looked quite pleased with himself and the boys.

Our next move was up to Stanvoorde and from there on to Dominion Camp at Ouderdom. It was whilst we were at that Camp that I was called over to Brigade Headquarters and given charge of the Brigade Observers. We left for the line on a Sunday morning, as we always go in before the rest of the Brigade. Our first incident in the line was to see two of our planes brought down by one of the enemy's within ten minutes. The first came down from a height of 800 ft. nose first and crashed to the ground on our left. The second

turned a summersault then righted, again it summersaulted and once more righted. It appeared then to be coming down fairly steady, although at a steep angle. When about 60 ft. from the ground, the machine dived nose first, and hit the ground with a sickening crash about ten yards from us. We got one poor chap out of it, the observer. He had tried to right the machine, but it failed him at the last minute. His pilot was shot dead, but he lived, suffering from shock and a few scratches. They are brave, our airmen and good sports.

When we went up to Belvarde Ridge, there was no Corduroy Track or light railway, within 1000 yards, but the Tommies had both down right up to the line by the Wednesday. They suffered heavily from shelling, you would see them scatter and after the shelling had knocked off, back they would be at their work. Our Brigade went out on September 18th and on the 20th the 5th and 7th Brigades hopped over.

We were back in Ypres, and got the news by nine o'clock that the attack was successful and were able to give our lads good news as they went through Ypres, on their way to close supports. I heard, unoffically, and therefore I expect, somewhat exaggeratedly, that the British guns had 18, 000, 000 shells for use in that stunt. I should not be a bit surprised if it were true though, for we had thousands of guns at work that day. The barrage laid down was considered the finest ever seen by our fellows. There is a little joke I will tell you. It was after the "Stunt" and the Officer of a certain Battalion was calling the roll. Presently he came to the name "Brown" "Anyone know anything of 'Brown'" "Yes Sir" said on of the boys, "The last time I saw 'Brown' he was leaning up against the barrage and when it lifted, he fell in the enemy's trench"

During the morning we were ordered up to Menin Road to Birr X Roads, where we had to interrogate the prisoners. There were hundreds of them brought inand they were a very poor standard of men, mostly old chaps or extremely young. One fellow was only fifteen years of age, which when we remember, that the German Army is conscripted, shows that they are drawing upon their upmost re-sources. The prisoners one and all seemed to be pretty thankful that we had taken them, and it is a fact, that many of them had given themselves up and had found their way back unescorted. Next day we moved up to West Locke Ridge, and took over O.P. and our boys went in that night.

The following day one of my boys was wounded in the arm I was next to him, so was unlucky, as it was a good "Blighty".

We were relieved after 48 hours on duty and went back for a weeks spell. The next time we went in, our post was moved to Sans Souci and on the following day, the 4th our Brigade "hopped the bags" again. We took a lot of prisoners, and I got a souvenier watch off one of them. My Cobber, Horace Woods was wounded in the stomach before the stunt and I have since learnt that he died. He was a fine chap and had just returned from his "Blighty" leave.

Our brigade was relieved the next night and moved back, but we were only allowed to stay in our dug-outs, as three days later we went on duty again.

On the 9th our boys, or what was left of them, went over again. There was a great doubt as to whether they would, as the ground was in an awful state, owing to the rain, but "over" they had to go, and our barrage on that day was poor as each shell had to be wiped dry before being put in the gun, and the guns, were horribly under-manned.

Our boys met the "Jaegers" or Sniping Battalion and had a very hard fight lasting all day, to get their objective. The boys were brought out that night, and moved back to Belgian Chateau. Two days later they were taken back to Abecle by train. Whilst there we played football and had a pretty good time. "D" Company was fairly successful in the games, which were the first of the season. We also had a sports day. We were there for a fortnight, and when the Battalion moved up again to hold the line, I was left back in details. Whilst at the details, I was sent to a Physical Training and Bayonet Fighting School for ten days. I had a good time there and left the school for the Battalion on Friday the 23rd November, who were at Locre. The boys were having a good time there, drilling in the morning, and foot-ball or sports in the afternoon. The Battalion Sports were to have been held on Tuesday November 27th, but owing to the ground being too hard, they were put off to the next day. I would not have been at the Sports though, as I was away on a job for the Army Corps, making a map of Corps Defences with Lieut. Farnham. Whilst we were out working we heard an aerial fight going on, but we could not see the planes engaged owing to clouds. About five minutes later, we were standing alongside a small willow fence, when a plane came down suddenly and almost landed, when, seeing the fence, switched on again, and hopped over the fence, passing over our heads by about six feet. Seeing a fairly clear patch the plane landed, but unfortunately there was a small trench running across it. The wheels of the plane caught in the trench, there was a burr, as the propeller blades were ripped off, and the machine buried her nose in the ground. Fortunately neither the pilot nor the observer were wounded, but they had to land owing to engine trouble. They were Australians, flying an old R.E. 8, one of our slowest machines.

The Sports came off the next day although it was very cold and the ground was very hard. Two of us went into Baillent for the night. We visited the Australian Squadron of the Flying Corps and had a good look round. Then we had tea and went to a Contest by the "Optimists". After the show there was a sketch given by the "Intelligence Corps" entitled "X 4 Brussels" or "The Spy from the Sky". It was a good little sketch with a moral. It endeavoured, very successfully to bring home to all who saw it, that the German Espionage system is very complete in France and how easily spies can pick up knowledge from the soldiers, through their agents in Estaminets etc.

On the following Saturday, December 1st the Brigade sports were held, and we enjoyed a good day. There had been great

excitement over the cup to be given for the winners of the Australian Football match. Every one thought it was a foregone conclusion that the 24th Battalion would win, as they had an exellent team, and were the best trained, and had beaten all other teams they had met. The final was played on the 12th December the 24th and the 23rd Battalion. You can imagine the rejoicing when the whistle blew, and left the 23rd the winners. It was a terrible blow for the 24th's pride, I can assure you, On Saturday we moved further forward to Bulford Camp and we hoped we should spend Christmas there, but on the 20th we moved up again to the Catacomb at Plogsturt, here we spent Christmas Day.

You have read in tales, about"Ye Goode Olde Christmas Days", when the snow lay all around. Well this was the kind of day we had, the bright but wintery sun shone out above us, making it an ideal day. We had dinner, not at mid-day as you might think, but at 11 o'clock at night. We all received gifts from the people of Australia consisting of parcels, mine was a jolly decent one, also I had a fine parcel from Mother, so I had quite a good time. In fact I had quite a good store of things, and lived like a lord for some time.

New Years Day came round, but there were no celebrations, but I had a good gift New Years night. I had written home telling all that I hoped to be in Blighty before long, and had gone to bed, and was sound asleep, when the Corporal came to wake me up. I thought it was some of the boys and started roaring. Then the Corporal broke in and in a quiet voice said, " I'm sorry to wake you Mac, butyou have to go on "Blighty" leave to-morrow". Now before going to bed we had all been remarking that it was a "Rotten War" so I sat up in bed and caused a commotion by shouting out "It's a good War". Next day I moved back to the Battalion and got cleaned up etc. On January 3rd we left Stunwenke Station at 11 o'clock, arriving at Fontinittes at Calais at 3 o'clock. We were then marched to a camp for the night. Next day we embarked at 1 o'clock and left the harbour at 2. 30. for Dover. We had a good crossing and reached port at 4 o'clock. We arrived in London about seven and were marched to our Headquarters. They had not been expecting us, so there was some delay at Horseferry Road, and I was not fixed up until half-past one in the morning. I slept the night at the War Chest, and was up at 6 o'clock, ready to start out and have a jolly good furlough.

P A R T. 7.

After a most enjoyable leave I arrived at the Battalion with many delays. On January 25th I rejoined the Details at Romarin and on Sunday January 27th we moved back for a spell to Neuve Eglise, from there we went by train to Bullescamp, a very quiet village about 20 Kilos out of Boulogne. We were billeted in the loft of a Farmhouse, and quite a long way from our Battalion Headquarters. Most of our time was spent in Sports. Quite a craze for Base Ball was developed, andone of our Companies considered themselves "Some Class" and issued a challenge. Our Company "D" took them up, and well - we won. It was a great match.

I had a leave to Boulogne and had to go through a "Gas Stunt" before being allowed on leave. There were about 20 of us, and as we attended the Parade, with only our Respirators and no equipment, they put us into a special stunt for a demonstration of "Liquid Fire". The apparatus to be used was a captured one-man affair. We were placed now in a trench, and the Demonstrator was to spray the trench with the burning flame, but somehow the show did not work as was intended, for instead of us getting the flame, the Officer who was demonstrating was smothered in oil. We quite appreciated the joke, but strange to say, the Operator failed to see it as such.

Our spell at Bulescamp came to an end the first week in March, and we returned to Romarin.

I was called away from the Battalion to go on to the Brigade Observation Post. I was there eight days, and then went onto the Battalion Post. We were in a little Pill Box, about 200 yards behind our front line. There were only three of us and we were only working during daylight.

One night I was awakened from my sleep by the sound of a heavy bombardment. I woke the others up and we held a debate as to whether we had better dress. Whilst the debate was in progress there were two direct hits on our Pill Box. We thought that Fritz had hopped over, but soon the barrage began to fall back again. Next morning we heard all about the show; Fritz had raided us. We lost a jolly fine little Officer and a good few men.

After eight days in the line we went back to the Brigade Out Post. One morning about 5 o'clock a chap was up on the Post alone. It was only a wooden hut affair. A light bombardment was being carried on by both sides at the time, when a "77" shell came over and landed right in the aperture of the Post, and poor Radcliffe was seriously hurt, and it was feared he would

lose the sight of his eye, but I have since learnt they were able to save it. If the two men had been on the Post, as is the case most of the time, they would both have been killed; this we could see by the marks on the walls. So really it was a fortunate escape for them both.

As everyone knows, Fritz started his Big Push on March 21st 1918. Well, we were well out of that at the start, but things were getting so serious, that on April 1st they pulled us out of the line at Warneton and passing through Meterin, where we camped a night, they moved us down to Amiens. The Amiens that we saw this time was a very different town to when we had left it. The Shops were all shut, and there were very few people indeed. Amiens had always been a very busy place and rather gay, but now, at this time War had got its grip on it. We only saw it whilst we were marching through and Croissey where we camped for a night.

The next morning we put our packs in the store, and away we went for Motors to the line at Laviville. It was raining torrents when we got there, pitch dark, and we were all wet and tired and far from being in the best of humour. We were being guided to our position when we were halted and told to space out, one man to three yards and to get into the trench. Well! we looked for that TRENCH, and eventually one man found it, by tripping over it. The trench was quite eight inches deep, and the rain coming down in tons. Of course we were all very pleased at the prospect. I, was fortunate, as I found a respectable dug-out with a Tank Corps Officer in it, he let a pal and I share it with him. The other less fortunate chaps had an awful night and in consequence many went away with trench feet.

I was called back to Head Quarters, and had to mount an Out Post in a place called the Pimple, which was to the left of the village of Laviville, on the road to Hennencourt. We had a few lively runs there as it was a prominent position, and Fritz was a bit too fond of putting his 5.9's over at us. There was a quarry at the back of us about 250 yards, and I can assure you we put up some records for that 250. Our time for the next few weeks was spent either in the Pimple or away in the "Out Post" line, or back in the reserve trench. One day whilst up forward, Fritz started to shell my dug-out, which was merely a trench about eight feet long and eighteen inches wide and about five feet deep. I knew he was after my trench, as would anyone else with my knowledge of Artillery registering, for have I not done the same to Fritz. So I cleared out, and he, well, he got my dug-out, but not me. Then once again I was on duty in a forward post, and he started shelling the section of the post I was in. No hero stunt for me, I ran away, and he just blew my maps and telescope etc all to pieces, but as before, not me. You see that is part of our game, he is watching for us and when he spots us, crash, and

we get a 5· 9 to ourselves. We do the same, I've had the satisfaction of seeing Fritz running for his life.

You will no doubt recall my reference in Part 5. to the legend,with regard to the Statue of the Virgin Mary falling to the ground when the War was going to end, but this was not to be the case as you will see. Fritz was holding Albert and our artillery set to work and with a well aimed shell brought the Virgin to the ground. The humorous part,was the account in the papers the next day, ascribing the downfall to German atrociousness, but I saw it fall, and I know the Observer who was correcting the gun fire, with the Virgin as the target.

On April 22nd I was back in a rear Out Post and had information that a Welsh Regiment was to hop over, on our left at about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, for Aveluy Wood. I was in a position, where, with the aid of a telescope, I was able to see the start. It was a sight to watch. I could see the barrage playing and the lines of men steadily advancing, then a shell would land right in the line and when the smoke lifted that awful tell-tale gap would be seen, but the gap would be filled up, and the line continue to advance, irrestible and majestic, laughing Death to scorn, with cigarettes glowing, just as if nothing had happened.

Shortly after this we were pulled out for a few days spell, and then we went in on another part of the line, further north, in front of Ville-sur-ancre. My post was in an old chalk Pit, on the edge of Merret Wood. On May 19th, our Brigade went over and took Ville-sur- Ancre. It was a very tricky and difficult position to take owing to the natural defences of swamps, but the Boys got it and held it.

Whilst we were there, I had four Yanks attached to me for instruction in Observation. They were keen and wanted to know everything there was to know, they were very amusing too. I was bringing one of them home, after a trip round the front line, it was dark and as we were coming across the open ground, one of our own Machine Guns on our right, and some distance away commenced firing, before you could say "Knife" the Yank was stretched out flat on the ground, and what is more, he pulled me down too. Of course he was fresh to war, but it struck me as humorous. Another night one of my pals had to go up forward to construct a new Post. He took a Yank with him. The place where they had to work was in an old trench, which was partially refilled. My pal was shovelling the loose earth out, and whilst so doing a Mills Bomb got caught in his shovel by the lever, he naturally threw shovel and bomb over the parapit. They carried on with the work, however, but the Yank was not taking any risks, he went down on his knees and felt the earth with his hands and every time he felt a hard piece of earth, he would get up and walk down to the turn in the trench, and tell my pal that there was another bomb, then would leave it to my cobber to get it out. The Yank didm't mean to be classed as "Accidently Killed" did he?

Another Yank was very anxious to go out on Patrol, eventually they let him go out with some of our Scouts, before he went they primed him up with plenty of Rum. He had a great tale to tell when he got back. He said" We were right away up against his wire, I guess, we could hear the galoot working the bolt of his Machine Gun, and we couldn't bomb the darned swine." Heavens help him if he had bombed him.

Our next position in the lines was to the north of Villers Bretonneux. On July 4th, the American Independence Day, our 4th Division went over on our left and our Battalion went over as well. We took a few Americans over with us, at least I should say the boys did, for I didn't go over, my job was to look on and watch, and to help the boys by finding out everything I could about Fritz's positions and movements. The barrage put down in this stunt was the finest ever heard or seen. All night long our planes had been over Fritz's lines bombing him, then just before the stunt, allwas quiet, that still, that one could have heard a pin drop, then a barrage opened out falling about a thousand yards behind his lines. This was necessary to allow our tanks to get into position unobserved by the enemy. Then in a flash, as if one master hand had fired them all together, our barrage opened up on his front lines. Our heavy Stokes Mortars were firing a shell which contained Thermit. This is a metal, which when exposed to air, goes incandescent, and gives off a great smoke. It is said, that if a piece of Thermit, the size of a threepenny bit falls on a man, it will burn right through him. That was our reply to Liquid Fire.

I was in a trench some hundred yards or so in front of our Jumping Off Tape, so when the boys went over they had to jump over our trench, We could see their faces in the sickly glare thrown out by the flash of bursting shells. Never a face showed fear, No, some were smiling, and some had that serious determined look, just as one would expect on mens faces who were going forward to life or death. Its a grand sight, but horrible, if you can understand what I mean. There faces were of a sickly colour, not through fear, but owing to the light thrown on them. Then behind them came those clumsy, but terrifying death dealing conceptions of mans brain - The Tanks. They did good work those tanks, besides wiping out and annoying Machine Gun Posts, they carried ammunition, food and water for the troops in the new line. When they reached their objective, they stopped at the different Posts where our boys were"digging in"and gave them the "Ammo" and food and water. One Tank was not satisfied to remain prowling about just in front of our line, so off he went and we heard afterwards that he got over a thousand yards into Fritz'z lines and had what he called great sport with stray Huns. He came back quite safely about 12 o'clock in the morning. Our planes did good work too. They tried a new stunt, which was quite successful. They dropped boxes of ammunition to our new front line on Parachutes, and only one or two boxes were lost by being carried out too far from our lines. A Fritz plane came over very low in the afternoon. It was so low that we could see the Observers face and eyes. Well, he came flying apparently straight for us, and we saw him throwing some dark objects over the side. We thought at first they were small bombs, and as there were

no explosions, we thought that he had come too low down, and the safety air-screw on them had not had time to work free. Of course we dashed into our dug-outs like wise, if not brave, chaps. We found out afterwards that the plane had not been dropping bombs, but water bottles and food to his Infantry, who were unable to get food up any other way, owing to the heavy barrage our people had been putting down on their lines of communication.

We were then pulled out to some trenches about three miles behind the line for a spell, and had a good time there. We did quite a lot of swimming. Our work consisted of burying cables behind the lines, in preparation for the Big Stunt that was destined to be the beginning of the end. At the end of about eighteen days we were relieved by the Americans, and we went forward to the front line system in front of Villers Bretoneux. Our Company was in supports. We were out at night time digging new communication saps. On July 22nd, about 10'o'clock at night, Fritz started a Gas shelling stunt on Villers Bretoneux, of course we got our share of it. He kept it up till about 4 o'clock in the morning of the 23rd. I was in the fashion and got a dose of Gas. We has a lot of casualties through that shelling. I received it in the eyes and about the face, but fortunately did not get any in my lungs. I was sent out to a casualty clearing Station. It was awful, it felt as if a ton of sand had got in under the eye lids. It was impossible to open the eyes, and was terribly painful to keep them closed. We could not see where we were going, therefore those who could,led us about. Eventually I reached No 44. Stationary Hospital, and there I stayed for some weeks. I was blind for about four days, and one got a pretty fair idea as to how a blind person feels. The Hospital was at Pont Remy, from there I was sent to No 2. Stationary Hospital at Abbeville, and from there to our Convalescent Camp at Harfleur, near Le Havre. I was in the Convalescent Camp for about a month and then over to the base, from there I went to rejoin the Battalion, I caught them at Cappy. They had only just come out of the line the night before, after taking Mont St. Quentin. So I had another three weeks spell.

We had our divisional Sports out there, they were some sports, and would have done credit to any town in peace time. We had three Arenas, and the days sport included running, horse races, and band contests. There was a Totalisatoron the course, bookmakers, and Tattersals Sweep, and refreshment booths. Quite"classy" you see.

It was shortly after this we heard about our Battalion having to be broken up. Well, that hurt us, we formed a delegation to wait on the Brigadier to find out why the"21st" had to go. We were the senior Battalion and had the most honours, and a record equal if not better than the other Battalions, but we got no satisfaction from the Brigadier nor from the G.O.C. of the Division . The day came at last when we were to be split up

and transferred to our new Battalion. Our Colonel, Colonel Daggan, came round to each Company and gave the Officer Commanding his orders to hand his Company over to the new Battalions. It hurt him very much. Then he came to "D" Company. He had sailed from Australia with "D" Company, and consequently he had a very warm spot indeed in his heart for our Company, it absolutely broke his heart to have to give our Captain such orders, and strong man that the Colonel is, he broke down, and could not get the words out. Now, it had been agreed upon by the whole Battalion that after those orders had been given, we were to refuse to move. The Officers, on the advise of our delegates, went over to the new units, and we were left to carry on on our own. Sgt. Major ___ took command of the Battalion, and my pal, Sgt. Montgomery was made 2nd in Command and Adjutant. That afternoon we paraded to football match as if nothing had happened. That evening about 6 o'clock, Colonel Daggan put his head out of the window of his billet and announced that the Battalion would not be broken up. On receipt of such news, the cheering was tremendous, and Officers and men went mad.

A few days later we moved off up forward, the first march, we had to do at night, for the sake of secrecy. Of course we had to get lost , and took the wrong road, when we did manage to find a main road, we found it full of Cavalry, moving up forward also. Our Commander enquired of one of the Cavalry Officers how many of them there were. His reply was "Oh! there are only about seven miles of us", but you will find a break about half way that you can get into. It looked cheerful for us, but after awhile we were able to get on the road. We camped that night in some old trenches, and the next night moved on to the village of Rossell. We were there for a few days, and then moved forward again. We reached Nauroy, where we stayed for a day or two, then off again and eventually found ourselves in the Hindenberg line at Estees. After two days there, I was called on to Battalion Headquarters again, and learnt that we had a stunt to do. We moved off that night to a position further over to our right. The boys were marched straight on to the J.O.T., or"Jumping Off Tape", whilst we were left back at Headquarters. They went over in the morning and Montbrehain was their objective, they got it and held it.

I had to go up into the village to collect all maps and papers left behind by Fritz, Pte R.A.W. Burn was with me. We had picked up an American Field Dressing tin, it had a ring on the side to open it with. Well we were entering one house, when my pal Bob, saw a German put his head round the corner of the door leading to the cellar. Now, we hadn't a single bomb, bayonet, pistol or anything with us. Bob had a brilliant brain wave, and tore out the American Field dressing , holding it in his left hand, put his finger of his right hand in the ring, and held it up, so the Hock could see the ring, but not the box. The Mills Bomb had a ring on it as well. Well, that Hock went quiet and six more besides. We were going to hand our prisoners

over to two walking wounded chaps who were coming out, but when one of them got up to us, he said "Go for your life, we are surrounded". Just then a Machine Gun began firing down the street, so we collected our Hocks and off we went. There were eleven of us in the party and not a bomb amongst us. Well they all got moving smartly, but one Hock was hanging back and kept saying "Me Maladi" or in other words "I'm sick". Well I wasn't looking for a wooden cross, so I just had to kick him along. We got to the cutting safely and handed our prisoners over, and we two,went back to report.

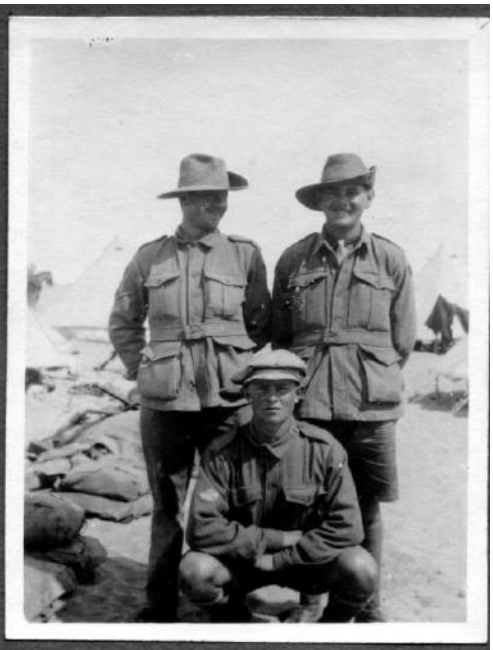
That night we were relieved by the Yanks, and we went back to Nauroy. The next morning I was told that the Colonel wanted to see me, when I saw him, I learnt that I had to return with two other chaps, to find all our killed and get their identifications, personal property, and the Map references of where they fell. That was the worst job I ever had, I can promise you. Well, we did that and about three days later we re-joined the unit at Tirancourt, on the Somme, where they were spelling. Whilst there I was sent to a Signal School, where I had a good time. It was whilst we were at Tirancourt that we were formed into two companies and put into the 24th Battalion as "C" and "D" Company of that Battalion. We were sorry, but we were too weak in numbers to remain as a Battalion on our own.

Then came the glorious news of Armistice, some of the boys went mad. For myself, we had a half Holiday, and a few of us went for a quiet walk. Then came the move to follow up our advancing and victorious Army. We went by train from Varennes to and marched from there to Bohain, from Bohain we went to St. Suplet, then to and from there to Boulogne Sur Helpe. I went on English leave from there on December 13th, and when I got back I found the Battalion at Nalinnes Lez Chaleroi, in Belgium. I was only there a few days, then back again to England, and the camp at Hurdcott, on my way back to Australia. I received another fourteen days leave before sailing.

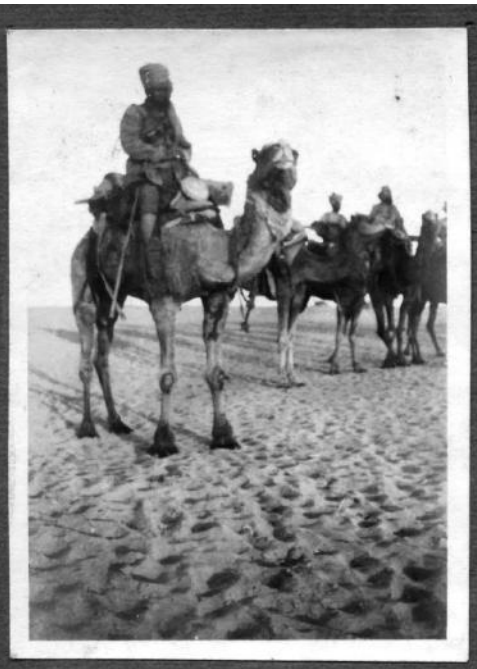
ILLUSTRATIONS.

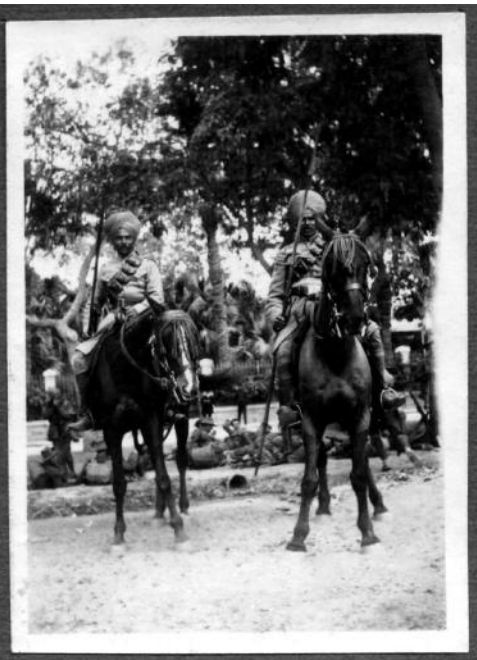
Frontispiece - An Anzac Tootler. (The writer in Egypt)

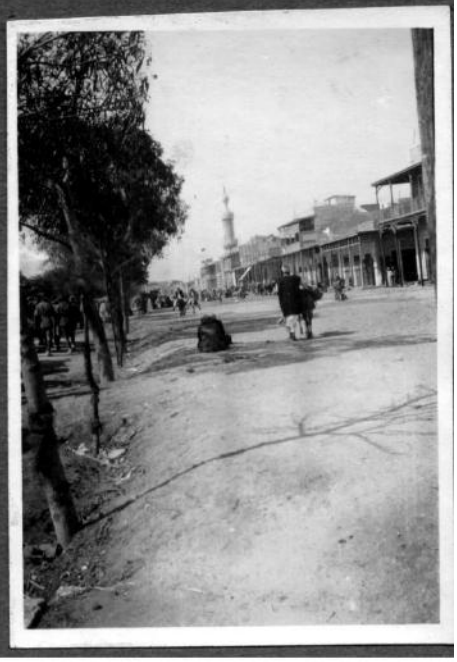
No.
1. Corpl. W. Montgomery
2. Three Anzacs.
3. Worried.
4. Smoko.
5. A Clinch.
6. Pals.
7. Gas Alarm - Helmets on.
8. Oranges.
9. Mounted at last.
10. Camel Transport.
11. Native Funeral in Cairo.
12. Harem Following Funeral.
13. Statue of Abram Pasha in Opera Square Cairo
14. A Transport Limber.
15. A dip in the Suez Canal.
16. Part of Native Quarters in Cairo
17. A Sudanese Hawker.
18. Native Bandsmen.
19. Vengeance.
20. Indian Camel Patrol.
21. A closer view of above.
22. Two Indian Lancers.
23. Indian H.Q. Patrol.
24. Main Street in Ismailia.
25. A beautiful scene in Ismailia.
26. H.R.H. Prince of Wales inspecting 6th Bde. A.I.F.
27. A French Peasant Girl.
28. Entrance to Marseilles.



COIFFEUR
BAR DRESSER







40