

WALTER OTTO HERBERT ALLEN –

DIARY 1918 - JANUARY

1 TUESDAY

Arrived Le Havre in early morn. Marched 6 miles to A.D.B.O. arr – 11 am 2.pm – equipped for line – Wrote notes to J.P.Gray, Ern Pieper & Mr Parsons. (very rough passage across channel.) Left S.Hampton at 5 pm 31 Dec. Saw 1918 in – under disagreeable cond. Very tired.

2 WEDNESDAY

Left camp Le Harvre – at 6 pm – Met Les Denyer who arr. Camp at 5. Left Havre per train – 30 in truck at midnight.

3 THURSDAY

Arrived Rouen early morning. Stayed rest camp till 3 pm. Had a run down town – Good dinner – arrived Etaples 3 am.

4 FRIDAY

Had breakfast at Etaples – Started for Samer by train. Reached it after rotten march on slippery road. Very tired.

5 SATURDAY

Met Geo Duddle & many of the old boys. Arrived at Battn. Reported to No. 7 Platoon B Coy.

6 SUNDAY

Walked to MG Coy – Alford on leave to Blighty.

7 MONDAY

Battn Parade & inspection for NCO's. Coy & Platoon drill. Platoon in attack stunt. Walked to A Coy in afternoon.

8 TUESDAY

Snowed in Morning too wet for parade. Cleared snow from road at noon. Quiet afternoon.

9 WEDNESDAY

Woke up and found blankets covered with snow (drifted through walls & roof). No. 7 Platoon fatigue – shovelling snow of main road – started snowing again at 11 am. Miserable afternoon.

10 THURSDAY

Heavy wind – melting the snow – roads very slushy & cold. Gave Coy PT & B.F. Afternoon – walked to Le Turne – afterwards had a look at D coy sports.

11 FRIDAY

Battⁿ Parade – Platoon Drill. Rain – Musketry in Billets. Afternoon – 2.30 Parade for NCO's (some stunt – ceremonial). Warmer weather – wind died down. Wrote to Claude, G.S & Jas.P.G.

Personal Reminders.		1918	JANUARY
NO. OF BANK BOOK		1 TUESDAY	
.. .. WATCH	My TRAINS	Arrived at Le Havre in early morn	
.. .. BICYCLE	TO TOWN	Marched 6 miles to A.D.B.O. arr	
.. .. STORES TICKET	FROM TOWN	11 AM – 2 P.M. equipped for line	
.. .. SEASON ..		Wrote notes to J.P.Gray, Ern Pieper	
.. .. TELEPHONE		Mr Parsons	
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS	Riflo N: 27374	(Very rough passage across channel)	
SIZE IN BOOTS 9 GLOVES		Left S.Hampton at 5 P.M. 31 st Dec.	
COLLARS 16 HATS 2 1/2		Saw 1918 in – under disagreeable cond.	
HEIGHT 5' 8" WEIGHT 130 lb.		Very tired.	
Insurance.		2 WEDNESDAY	
ACCIDENT		Left camp Le Harvre at 6 pm. Met	
BURGLARY		Les Denyer who arr. camp at 5.	
FIRE		Left Havre per train – 30 in truck	
LIFE Mutual Life & Citizen Sydney.		at midnight.	
SERVANTS			
OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS			
POSTAL DISTRICT			

12 SATURDAY

Very cold. Shooting on Range in Morning. Inspection in Afternoon.

13 SUNDAY

Church Parade to Le Turna. Walk in afternoon. Fine day.

14 MONDAY

Rain on and off. Uneventful - & usual routine.

15 TUESDAY

Rainy weather – combined with snow. Went for short route march. Paid in evening – 70 francs. Alec Roddan marched in.

16 WEDNESDAY

Drizzling rain & high wind – jolly cold. Did Coy. Stunt. Advance guard & scouting through muddy fields – & along Neufchatel road. Evening – Walked to Neufchatel – had good feed. Met Wal Bex 53RD & several others.

17 THURSDAY

Rain – No morning parade after 9.30. Afternoon – Battⁿ Sports in rain – Ran in 440 – came 4th – Woods won miles. Received letters from Frank & Morley, Kerang - & Salisbury. Wrote home & G'burn.

18 FRIDAY

Morning – Ran in 3 mile (19th) A Coy won most pts. Afternoon – Continued sports
2nd in high & long jump
3rd in hurdles
"B" Coy won Tug of War

19 SATURDAY

Bde. Sports – 55th BattIn, won – 3 mile – officers race – Band race – Tug-of-war – high and broad jump. Received 21 letters – all Aussie. Received word from Bank of N.S.W.

20 SUNDAY

Morning. Not well, so staying in Billets. Rained most of day. Received letters from Ern P, Les Denyer & Mrs Cady.

21 MONDAY

Feel better – Morn. Parade. P.T. & Bombing. Presentation of prizes for sports. Received letter from Annie. Posted letter home and to Bank of N.S.W. London.

22 TUESDAY

Gen. Birdwood attended Bde parade – presentation of Medals & honours. I went on Boulonge leave. Had good time. Bought post cards. Went & returned per transport. Boulonge – large place. Rained in evening. Back in billets at 9 pm.

23 WEDNESDAY

Coy Parade – fine day. B.F. for Coy. Covered tin helmets with sacking. Posted letters to Dad, Edie & Les Denyer.

24 THURSDAY

Bde Route march to Le Turne – full marching order wearing tin hats. Got back in time to see Aust rules football match 14 v 15 Bat. Easy win for 15th.

25 FRIDAY

Gave Coy P.T in morn. Afternoon – marched to Neufchatel for hot bath. Dismissed afterwards. Wrote to E & A & C.P. in YMCA. Had two good feeds. Got back at 9 PM.

26 SATURDAY

Bde Stunt postponed on account of fog. "D" Coy beat B Coy at Rugby. Got Mother's letter Nov 18.

27 SUNDAY

Went top O.P.D. Ch. Parade in morning. Afternoon – Met F. Alford – had good yarn & compared letters.

28 MONDAY

Preparing to move – cleaning up billets etc. Inspection of kits. Afternoon – played game of Rugby football. Walked to Neufchatel for notebook. Had good feed.

29 TUESDAY

Reveille at 2.30 am – moved off at 3.30 – Bright moonlight. Arr. Samer Rly Stn at 5.30. Breakfast in paddock – very cold – front – entrained at 6.30 left at 7 am. Nice bright day – arr Hazebrouck about 12 noon off train behind line – a few mls. Camped for night. Watched air fight.

30 WEDNESDAY

Morning - Severe frost – Given instructions & made preparations for forward move – 5 pm left camp for reserve line – arr Irish house (shell torn town) at 6.30 – occupied dugouts (Alberta dugouts) holding 4 men each – pretty uncomfortable – but better than nothing – made ourselves as snug as poss. & went to sleep.

31 THURSDAY

Heavy fog – on fatigue. Cleaning new dugouts for C Coy to occupy – various other jobs – getting firewood etc – cold – 8 pm, Bombardment to the left – very quiet afterwards. (Gas helmets worn at "alert").

1918 FEBRUARY

1 FRIDAY

Fatigue – building dugout for guard – near Coy H. Irs found old German snipers helmet – steel. Afternoon – Jack Oldfield & I improving our dugout – 4pm – Ration fatigue. Received letters & photos from Ern Day & Claude Pieper.

2 SATURDAY

Clear day after frost – 7.30 moved with 4 Platoons for fatigue – camped under observation Balloon – various fatigues loading limbus etc.

3 SUNDAY

8 am. 9 men & myself followed transport to Palmers Dump, loaded 18 roofs for dug outs in forward area. Very fine morning. Night – 9.30 pm. Walked 6 miles up to the line – fatigue till 4 am.

4 MONDAY

Arr from all night fatigue at 6 am. Slept till 2pm Dinner – Rest again till 11.30 pm. Left for line on same job – worked from 2 am to 5.30 – arr back at 7.30. Had soup & to bed. "Brekker" at 10 – Afternoon – went to Irish house – got parcel from Clm R.C. & 3 letters – 1 home & 2 G'burn. Rec pay.

5 TUESDAY

Standing by – ready for shift at 3pm. Didn't come off – so had good night's rest.

6 WEDNESDAY

Rose at 8 am – Fatigues about camp. Rumours of move. Dinner at 11.30 – Marched F.M.O. (less blankets) 3 mls. nearer line – arr 3 pm. Set to work finishing dugouts – Cpl Meldrum & I occupy one – Used Fritz overcoat for curtain over door. Blankets arrived 7 pm. Battn quite close.

7 THURSDAY

Not much doing – trying to rain – bought torch lamp at Canteen – Consolidation fatigue – supports – from 5 pm till 10 pm. Very slushy towards line. Plenty fireworks supplied by Fritz. Wrote letters home & to Clm. Red X – Issued with gloves.

8 FRIDAY

Breakfast at 8. Having a rest. Wrote to Jim Gray. Received letters from Mother, Edie & C. Parsons. Notified about parcel at Irish House.

9 SATURDAY

Went on fatigue to Preston Dump – making entanglements & salvaging, finished at 2.30. Walked to Irish House. Received parcel from Clm Red X. Saw Gen Birdwood.

10 SUNDAY

Same work but finished at 12 – Nothing doing in afternoon. Bombardment at 8.30 pm lasting 20 minutes or so. Raid by fifty-fourth.

11 MONDAY

Same job till 2.30. Improved dugout – more comfortable – writing letter to Ede – Had feed of tomatoes & salmon. Received Red X parcel from Coolamon.

12 TUESDAY

Same old fatigue, quite uneventful. Fritz sent over a few shells not far from us – Lost my table knife – Supper had feed of plums & milk – very wet.

13 WEDNESDAY

Rose at 6 am had breakfast & marched with No. 1 Platoon for bath at Hammel – Tres Bon – change of underclothes. Slept in afternoon. Wrote to Edie – (finished letter). After tea – had some pineapple & milk for supper. Again Tres Bon.

14 THURSDAY

Morning wet – Wrote to Claude. Afternoon misty – worked under cover of mist at strong point. Shells landed near by but did no damage.

15 FRIDAY

Got up at 4 am – put up barbed wire near supports 150 yds. Knocked off when it got too light – had breakfast & took things easy all day. Machine gun active.

16 SATURDAY

Continued wiring early in morning – nice bright day. Great aerial activity over line 5.30. Again wiring 200 yds. Few bullets came over.

17 SUNDAY

Aerial activity – Lost one of our planes accidentally. Fell near YMCA in sap – Wiring all night – shells came close. (Paid)

18 MONDAY

Uneventful – but for shooting at enemy planes. Wiring all night.

19 TUESDAY

11 am. Aust plane fell near YMCA both men killed. Plenty air craft shooting. Wiring fatigue as usual.

20 WEDNESDAY

1pm Satisfaction prevails. 2 Enemy planes brought down. Same fatigue.

21 THURSDAY

Another Taube brought down. Things lively – shelled out of wood. Moved back to Coy. Going up. Res.

22 FRIDAY

Fatigues. Pretty quiet. Rainy & dull.

23 SATURDAY

Do – Received 2 Gburn & 1 home letter. Comm letter to Edie.

24 SUNDAY

Fatigues as usual. Finished Edie's letter - & received letters – 2 from home with photo – 1 from Gburn dated Jan 2nd & 6th.

25 MONDAY

Dull day – work - do.

26 TUESDAY

Fatigues – Fine day. A few shells lobbing in close – no damage done.

27 WEDNESDAY

Moved up line – Good weather. Quiet.

28 THURSDAY

Cold day – gas guard. Monotonous job. Fritz raided on right – two wounded. Arty duel. Planes galore.

1918 MARCH

1 FRIDAY

Very cold day – windy & a little snow – difficult to keep feet warm – a few shells about.

2 SATURDAY

Very cold & dull, quiet – but for a few shells – Usual strafe.

3 SUNDAY

Very cold & cloudy – pretty miserable in trench. Raided Fritz at 11.45 pm – bomb lasting 1 ¼ hours. Last three days too cloudy for planes. Raid party Cap M.G.

4 MONDAY

Cold, windy & dull & bomb at night.

5 TUESDAY

Quiet – & fine day

6 WEDNESDAY

Shell close – narrow squeak. Rel at night.

7 THURSDAY

In Supp. Quiet time – rest – fatigues in evening. Fine day. Night Bomb near Ypres.

8 FRIDAY

Bonzer day. Wrote letters Les D & Castle St, Salisbury. Thousands of birds flew over. Plenty planes up. Bomb 8pm. Gas shells about.

9 SATURDAY

Morn – wrote letters to Mum Ede & Dorrie – 11.30 Bath & post letters.

10 SUNDAY

Wrote to Miss Raward & Carter – Fine weather – Fatigues at night & Gas.

11 MONDAY

Clear day – same work.

12 TUESDAY

Good weather, same work, carrying p201arty – road B.W. – shelled – gas etc

13 WEDNESDAY

Fine day – special stunt. Dum. at night 12.30 – worked OK.

14 THURSDAY

6am Hinson killed H Burns wounded. Raining & dull all day. Ration fatigue to line – Brought Dr in.

15 FRIDAY

Cold wind – fine day. Nothing doing.

16 SATURDAY

Drew gumboots – cleaned up trench etc – had good sleep – not feeling too good – bad cold.

17 SUNDAY

Moved up line – very quiet night – except for (pineapple) gas.

18 MONDAY

Very fine - & great aerial activity – moderate shelling all day – on gas guard as before – Reading 3 magazines & a book.

19 TUESDAY

Very wet dreary day. Very quiet. Night – Gas – shells.

20 WEDNESDAY

Rain in morn till 11 am. Cleared off about noon – remainder of day fine & bright. W.Wind. Art active – 10 pm Left Post – 11 pm Slightly wounded. Shell. Sent to CCS after inoculation.

21 THURSDAY

7 am Arr No. CCS. Wound dressed - had bath - turned in & slept soundly all day & night. Offensive by Fritz commenced.

22 FRIDAY

Rose 8 am. Had wash. Wrote to Mrs Parsons after wounds dressed. Afternoon – wrote home & Gburn. Enjoying a spell.

23 SATURDAY

Do.

24 SUNDAY

Wrote some letters, reading etc.

25 MONDAY

Lazy life – reading etc.

26 TUESDAY

Do

27 WEDNESDAY

Do

28 THURSDAY

Same

29 GOOD FRIDAY

Same

30 SATURDAY

Nothing fresh

31 EASTER DAY

Went to Hosp. Church. 11 am & 3 pm. Enjoyed service by Canadian Padre. Volunteered to give blood if required.

1918 APRIL

1 MONDAY

Had a bit of fun in No. 10 ward. Caught "Uncle" the orderly properly. Helping in ward a bit.

2 TUESDAY

Went in car to No. 10 CCS. Blood tested - & passed. Awaiting the chance.

3 WEDNESDAY

Wrote letter to Btn to get my letters sent in – Light jobs & reading. Evac took place.

4 THURSDAY

Rain & mist all day.

5 FRIDAY

Start painting No. 4 Ward.

6 SATURDAY

Same L.D. having good time.

7 SUNDAY

Church - & reading.

8 MONDAY

Painting No. 4.

9 TUESDAY

Off Messines comm – wounded coming in. Fin painting ward 4.

10 WEDNESDAY

Busy day S.B.

11 THURSDAY

Busy day S.B.

12 FRIDAY

S.B. wounded CCS. Afternoon – received word evac. Busy day. Hot weather.

13 SATURDAY

Evac CCS – all day. Train journey – arr Etaples late at night.

14 SUNDAY

Anniversary of sailing from Aussie. Etaples very windy & dusty. Awaiting orders – walk around.

15 MONDAY

Arr Base Haivre

16 TUESDAY

Being equipped – Med ex – etc.

17 WEDNESDAY

Paid 80 fcs.

18 THURSDAY

Leave to Havre. Good time.

19 FRIDAY

Left for Calais as conducting NCO with party of PB men.

20 SATURDAY

Rep to A.V.Cps – met Bob Farrall, J Rigg & Fred Ward. Had good yarn of old times.

21 SUNDAY

Leave to Calais – had good time with Sgt Scott – 53rd. Stayed Hotel Metropol.

22 MONDAY

Left C for H 5.30 pm.

23 TUESDAY

Arr H. 5.30 pm

24 WEDNESDAY

Went pictures evening. Fatigues. Concert by Sons of Guns. Good.

25 THURSDAY

Anzac day – Comm service Cinema. Sports in afternoon. Met Coleman – Play in Cinema – Tom Maher – company – good time.

26 FRIDAY

Wrote Ernie

27 SATURDAY

Wrote Edie – wet day.

28 SUNDAY

Church at YMCA in morning. Good Lantern lecture by Padre Gault in evening.

29 MONDAY

Nothing to report

30 TUESDAY

On leave to Le Havre – had a good day with Pte Warner 54th. Saw sports programme in Central YMCA. Arr in camp 9pm.

1918 MAY

1 WEDNESDAY

Quiet. Pictures in evening - & concert.

2 THURSDAY

Same as above.

3 FRIDAY

Lantern lecture by Padre Gault.

4 SATURDAY

On fatigue at I.M.S. with party of 10. ~~Concert~~ in evening (lantern lecture on W.Aust rather) by Mr O'Connor of Perth.

5 SUNDAY

On Guard at 40 Stationary Hosp. Rain all day. Wrote to Blighty. Fire at 10.30. Soon put out.

6 MONDAY

Came off Guard at 40 Stn Hosp. Rainy day. Went pictures.

7 TUESDAY

Rain again – sent P.C. to Syd Moncrieff – Jean Cady & wrote letter to Stan McDowell, M.C. & to Parsons. Played draughts to pass time. Went Pictures & concert in even.

8 WEDNESDAY

Cloudy but dry – Tug of war practice in afternoon training to pull "yanks" at forthcoming sports – Good team under selection. Went pictures evening – with Leabeater, Goodwin & Sloan.

9 THURSDAY

Very nice day. Warm sunshine – reminding one of N.S.W. – Seated on side of road reading "Australia today". Went to pictures in Con. Comp – Cinema & heard good concert afterwards (Mates. Pte Geddes & Thomas).

10 FRIDAY

Lovely day – In afternoon played cricket match bet 3rd & 5th Div. won by 19 runs. 5.30 went with party led by Padre Gault to Duc. D Harcourts chateau & grounds – Beautiful Beech wood & flowers. Good view. Arr camp at 9 pm after a merry march through Harfleur. Chateau D. Orchaise.

11 SATURDAY

Another good day – Umpired cricket match in afternoon. Went to pictures with Gus Duddle & heard concert in evening.

12 SUNDAY

Quiet but nice day. Writing to Mother (Mother's day). Wonder how they all are today.

13 MONDAY

14 TUESDAY

15 WEDNESDAY & 18 SATURDAY

Cricket, duties, pictures, guards, pickets etc & concert

16 THURSDAY & 17 FRIDAY

Usual routine. Very hot days.

19 SUNDAY

Service in YMCA

20 MONDAY

Training for sports tug of war

21 TUESDAY

22 WEDNESDAY

Met Barney Flannigan. Usual routine

23 THURSDAY

24 FRIDAY

25 SATURDAY

26 TRINITY SUNDAY

Went to Havre – had a swim in the surf with Arnie Leabeater

27 MONDAY

28 TUESDAY

29 WEDNESDAY

30 THURSDAY

Went to Yank sports at Etretat – had good day & great fun coming back per transport car. Lost tug of war.

31 FRIDAY

Left A.I.B.D on draft. Met Clive, Mr Brien & saw Geo Duddle – fine day. Hot. Met Cpl Booth 55.

1918 JUNE

1 SATURDAY

Arr A.D.R.W.

2 SUNDAY

Good rest. Hot day

3 MONDAY

4 TUESDAY

5 WEDNESDAY

7am left R.W. for march up – Good weather. Picquet.

6 THURSDAY

Contd journey – good weather.

7 FRIDAY – 30 SUNDAY – no entries

1918 JULY

1 MONDAY - 4 THURSDAY – no entries

4 THURSDAY: Killed – Battle of Hamel.