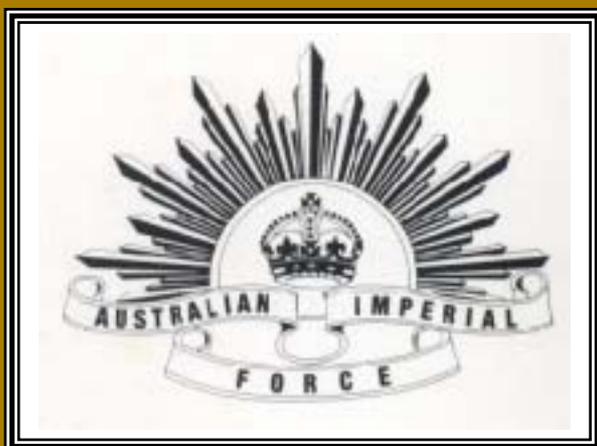


# The Swann Diaries...

A factual transcription from the WW I personal diaries so meticulously kept by  
Lieutenant Lyell Keith Swann MM 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion A.I.F. and  
4<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Australian Flying Corps,  
Regimental No. 2156.



Lieutenant Lyell Keith Swann MM



TRANSCRIPTION BY: ELDON R. J. BRYANT 2003

AN AUSTRALIAN AIF  
SOLDIER AND AFC PILOT  
AT HOME AND OVERSEAS  
Diaries commence: 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1916.  
Enlisted Adelaide, S.A.: 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1916  
Died France: 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1918.

Buried  
"ASCQ" Cemetery - TOURNAI.5.  
(ASCQ COMMUNAL CEMETERY Nord, France)  
Grave Reference: D. 12.

## THE SWANN DIARIES PRESENTATION



The Headmaster of Prince Alfred College, Kevin Tutt [right] accepts the original Swann Diaries from their editor, Eldon Bryant. [31<sup>st</sup> May, 2005]

## PRESENTATION GUESTS



>> Left to right...

**FRONT ROW:** Ron Gibbs – Historian, Eldon Bryant, Roslyn Bryant, Pat Voce, Kevin Tutt – Headmaster, Cynthia May – Head of Secondary School, Lew Keough – Representing RSL State Branch – South Australia, Brigadier Max Lemon [Retd].

**SECOND ROW:** Lyal Voce, Gerry Stevens, Lindsey Bowes, Jean Redman, Graham Redman, Tom Young, Major Jeff Ayles [Retd] – Representing the Army Museum of South Australia – Keswick Barracks.

**BACK ROW:** Wayne Stidston – Department of Veteran Affairs', Heather Menz, Gordon Kirby, Tony Aldous – School Archivist, Douglas Paterson.



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Lyell Keith SWANN  
enlisted on  
14 March 1916  
in the  
43rd Battalion, 3rd Reinforcement  
Australian Imperial Force  
with the rank of  
Private, Number 2156  
and was listed as  
Died of Wounds  
on  
14 November 1918



## Lyell Keith SWANN

Regimental No	2156
Birthplace	Keyneton, South Australia
School	Keyneton Public School, SA, and Prince Alfred College, Adelaide, South Australia
Religion	Methodist
Occupation	Bank clerk
Address	Jamestown, South Australia
Marital Status	Single
Age at embarkation	20
Next of Kin	Mother, Mrs Alvinna Swann, Jamestown, South Australia
Previous Service	28th Field Company Engineers
Previous military training or experience	Served in the Citizen Military Forces.
Enlistment Date	14 March 1916
Rank on Enlistment	Private
Unit Name	43rd Battalion, 3rd Reinforcement
AWM Embarkation Roll No.	23/60/2
Embarkation details	Unit embarked at Adelaide per HMAT A68 'Anchises' on 28 August 1916
Medals and Awards	Military Medal 29 June 1917. Conspicuous Gallantry at Messines
Rank(s) from Nominal Roll	Lieutenant
Unit(s) from Nominal Roll	Australian Flying Corps
Fate	Died of Wounds 14 November 1918
Place of death or wounding	France
Age at death	23
Other comments	Nominal Roll states 'died of illness'. This seems unlikely as his diary on the day before his death speaks of forthcoming action.



Other details

Graduated for Pilot Category A 30 July 1918.  
Category B 23 October 1918.

# **“THE SWANN DIARIES”**

**THE SIX [6] PERSONAL WW I DIARIES SO METICULOUSLY KEPT  
BY**

**Lieutenant Lyell Keith Swann MM 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion A.I.F. and  
4<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Australian Flying Corps.  
Regimental No. 2156.**

**IN THE GREAT WAR OF  
1914-18**

**RESEARCH, TRANSCRIPTION, LAYOUT AND KEYBOARD  
INTO A MICROSOFT "WORD 97" DOCUMENT/ AND  
PDF FORMAT**

**BY**

**Eldon R. J. (Don) BRYANT**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Geoff Moran, Sydney \* Judith Hinspeter, Townsville \* Roger Beckett, England \* James Cook University, Douglas Campus Library, Townsville \* Ron J Turner, Townprint, Townsville \* Townsville City Council Library, Aitkenvale, Townsville \* R S L Sub-Branch Library, Townsville \* Ambrose Pangrath, Townsville \* Barbara Parri, Jamestown, South Australia \* Margaret Bowen-Davis, Adelaide, South Australia \* Kym Bowen, Adelaide, South Australia \* Jean Redman, Adelaide \* Heather Menz, Morphett Vale, South Australia \* Chas. Schaedel, Park Holme, South Australia \* Dr Richard Hunter, Brisbane, Queensland \* Kenneth H. Borgges, Townsville \* Graham Redman, Reynella, South Australia \* Scotch College, [formally Kyre College], Adelaide, South Australia \* Jim Martin, Winston Hills, N.S.W. \* Lyal Voce, Henley Beach, South Australia \* The Advertiser [Simon Wilkinson – Features Editor] Adelaide, South Australia \* Prince Alfred College, Adelaide, South Australia \* Northern Services Courier Defence Community News [David Hall, Owner/Editor], Townsville \* Roslyn J. Bryant [my patient and understanding wife], Townsville.

Identical copies of this transcribed publication of 'The Swann Diaries' are available for special orders at a cost of A\$21.00 [ POSTED WITHIN AUSTRALIA ]. Cost of sending the publication out of Australia is available on request.

**FOR LYELL KEITH SWANN AND HIS AIF \ AFC FRIENDS**

**LEST WE FORGET**



## ILLUSTRATIONS

<> PHOTOGRAPHS <>

Page: 15 .....	On the 'Anchises'
Page: 15 .....	The Heads
Page: 61 .....	Jean Duncan
Page: 62 .....	Sergeant L.K. Swann MM
Page: 64 .....	Photograph taken at Hazebrouck 10/7/1917
Page: 64 .....	The Military Medal - Messines 7/6/1917
Page: 64 .....	Lieut. W.L. Davies MM
Page: 64 .....	Lieut. L.K. Swann MM
Page: 65 .....	London. March 1918
Page: 84 .....	Minchinhampton. August 1918 'My First Solo Bus'
Page: 84 .....	Wendover. February 1918
Page: 84 .....	Sawdust Club's room - At Ye olde Cheshire. Sept. 1918
Page: 85 .....	Wendover. March 1918
Page: 85 .....	Gordon's car. June 1918
Page: 85 .....	Along the Serpentine. June 1918
Page: 89 .....	Grave Stone - Lieutenant Lyell K. Swann MM CEMETERYNord, France

## FOREWORD

How did the six Swann diaries come into my possession? Where have the diaries been since the 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1918? Why did I decide to transcribe the diaries, newspaper cuttings and photographs inserted throughout the diaries into a book form? Having been in possession of the diaries for many years, why has it taken me so long to research, transcribe and arrange for printing in a book form for sharing amongst the relatives and friends of Lieutenant Lyell Keith Swann MM, AFC, AIF, my fellow Australians, especially our youth. Years back, several feeble attempts were made to start transcribing the diaries and it was only at the commencement of the year 2003 that a firm decision was made that the necessary research be undertaken and a national corporate sponsor found to support the publishing and distribution throughout Australia, however the Australian government and corporate bodies approached could not, or would not be convinced to undertake the sponsorship. **Very sad, as I believe millions of mature people, especially our youth of today, should be given the opportunity of reading and enjoying "The Swann Diaries" !**

After the wartime death of Lyell Keith Swann, it is obvious that his diaries and other W.W.I memorabilia, after the death of his mother and father, were kept in the cherished and loving care of his eldest brother, George Gordon Swann whose birthplace was Agaston, South Australia, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1884. G. Gordon Swann departed this life 24<sup>th</sup> March 1980, Brisbane. Queensland.

George Gordon Swann married Patricia Aileen Swann nee Irwin (dau of John) 23/6/1920, Patricia's birthplace was Cork, Ireland, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1894. Patricia Swann died 25<sup>th</sup> October 1986, Sandgate. Queensland.

Both Gordon and Patricia (Peg) are mentioned in several diary entries as a result of meeting up with Lyell Keith Swann during his wartime leave from the battlefields of France and visits to London. England.

Gordon and Peg Swann never enjoyed a family of their own and were treasured neighbours of my parents at Clayfield. Brisbane.

I was born in September 1936 and was often looked after by Peg Swann in their lovely home to allow my mother to do the shopping etc. in peace, or was it to give my mother a well-deserved break! Being the eldest of three boys, I guess Peg Swann would have been involved with the upbringing of the three of us. I remember that Peg Swann had me bluffed and I found it difficult to get into mischief when she was around or watching me from her house!

In the true sense of the meaning 'Love', Gordon and Peg Swann were truly devoted and genuine friends to my immediate family. When Peg Swann passed away, my mother was the sole beneficiary of the Swann goods and chattels, which included the personal wartime diaries and memorabilia of Gordon's youngest brother, Lyell Keith Swann.

Lyell Keith Swann spent some time at Kyre College (forerunner to Scotch College), Adelaide and then entered the Prince Alfred College, Adelaide where he spent 4 years as a Senior Cadet 74a area before transferring to Citizens Forces 2 yrs 9 mths - 28<sup>th</sup> Engineers and was still serving at the time of enlistment in the AIF, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1916. Lyell Keith Swann's name appears on both colleges W W I Honour Boards.

It has been established and confirmed by FRM Group Services 2052 033 Information Management & Archives for the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, that Lyell Keith Swann was in fact a staff member of the Savings Bank of South Australia, Head Office in Currie Street, Adelaide and his name is listed among those on the Honour Roll W.W.I. (most likely today in the building foyer).

'The Trustees' were the governing body of Savings Bank of South Australia as mentioned in their publication 'Our Century' - A history of the First Hundred Years of the Savings Bank of South Australia 1848-1948.

Mr W B Poole was indeed the Manager of the Savings Bank of South Australia, Currie Street premises and he retired on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1919 after serving the Bank for 50 years and one day.

At the commencement of diary # 1 'DEDICATED TO MY LOVING MOTHER', the term "THE GUMMY MOB" is used and as a result of my letter to the Editor, Adelaide Advertiser which was published 3 September 2003, a relative of Lyell Keith Swann in Adelaide, contacted me by E-mail and suggested the term relates to the town Lyell Keith Swann and some of his mates he enlisted with in the AIF with were from Gumeracha, S.A., about 50 km from Adelaide and would have been known as, "**THE GUMMY MOB**"!

I trust all readers of the transcribed "**THE SWANN DIARIES**", the personal wartime diaries so meticulously kept by Lieutenant Lyell Keith Swann MM, an educated Christian Australian that reflects in his day by day entries, will find them an enjoyable and heart warming experience. My efforts in researching and the transcription of his diaries have been a most rewarding task. E. & O.E.

Lieutenant Lyell Keith Swann's full service records and all associated correspondence form part of my research material and I would be delighted to assist any person requiring any details from these records. My contact details are as follows;

### " VILLA PAMPHILI"

7 Hibiscus Street  
CRANBROOK QUEENSLAND 4814  
AUSTRALIA

Telephone: (07) 4775 6579  
Mobile: 0419675894  
Facsimile: (07) 4775 3579  
E-mail: [artillery.oz@bigpond.com](mailto:artillery.oz@bigpond.com)  
[e.bryant@bigpond.net.au](mailto:e.bryant@bigpond.net.au)

**At the going down of the sun and in the morning... We will remember them.**

## Flight-Lieut. Lyell Keith Swann, MM



40<sup>th</sup> BATTALION. A.I.F.  
AND  
4<sup>th</sup> SQUADRON, AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS.

-----

BORN. KEYNETON. S.A., MAY 18, 1895.  
ENLISTED. MARCH 14, 1916  
CALLED HOME. NOVEMBER 14, 1918.

-----

**" GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN  
THAN THIS, THAT A MAN LAY DOWN  
HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS "**

By J.W.G.

**It is not tale of years that tell the whole  
Of Man's success or failure, but the soul  
He brings to them, the songs he sings to them,  
The steadfast gaze he fixes on the goal.**

In the quiet little hamlet of Keyneton, the garden district of the State, Keith, the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. G.L. Swann, was born on May 18, 1895, and grew amidst beautiful surroundings, in an atmosphere of a godly home. After a term in the village school he went, at the age of ten, to live with his aunt and uncle. At the Unley Public School and at Kyre College he won many friends, but it was at Prince Alfred College, which he entered in 1908, that his larger life began to develop. He was enthusiastically loyal to the school of his elder brothers, and entered into its activities with all the vim of youth. He was a diligent student, a keen sport, excelling in cricket and tennis, and with a record for being clean in every department of life.

Inspector Charlton, who was headmaster of the Unley School, writes:-- "Of the brave soldier boy, whom we all loved for his winsome self, I dare not attempt to write, only to say that as a schoolboy I found him the essence of honour; as a young man, one of God's own gentlemen; and as one of the best of very many young friends, a choice soul whom I always felt the better for meeting, The world knows what he was as a soldier, for His Majesty himself has set his seal to his valour."

Mr. J.A. Haslam, with whom Keith was associated during his last term at Prince Alfred College, writes:-- "Keith Swann was a boy who believed in 'clean speech, clean sport, clean scholarship, and clean character,' and he practised his beliefs. His influence was healthy and pure, and those who knew him well will never forget the quiet force of his goodness. He lived a joyous life. Whatever fun was on, he revelled in. Often his pals called him a 'wag'. He was quick to see the humour of a situation and clever to express his ideas with refreshing piquancy. Life was never a joke to Keith, but he seemed to realize even as a boy that the cheerful spirit would pull a fellow through many a difficulty. And his buoyancy was infectious--many a friend will remember the uplift of his merry speech and his bright ways. But to my mind there was one quality in Keith, which dominated all others--he loved the heroic in life. He had his heroes at College. I don't think he was ever blind to their faults, yet in true schoolboy fashion he worshipped them. He never paraded his hero-worship, but he was unswervingly loyal. Small wonder that the 'Hero of Heroes' fascinated him and won his truest devotion. Small wonder that he became a hero himself. Brave, bright Keith! We, who knew you, have memories fragrant with your grace of character, your pure life, and your inspiring heroism."

On leaving school he entered the Savings Bank, and won the esteem of all with whom he was associated. He was proud of the institution, of its contribution to the great list of heroes who left Australia in the Empire's need, and his superior officers and his fellow-workers.

Mr W. Herbert Phillipps, Chairman of the Savings Bank Trustees, writing to his parents, said:-- "You have the great gratification of knowing that your son passed away doing his duty in the service of his country. It is with satisfaction I have to intimate to you that your son discharged his duties in the Bank in a very efficient manner, and was highly esteemed by his fellow-officers."

One who had worked by his side writes:-- "To know Keith was to love him, and this institution will never be the same to me without him. . . . If you could have heard the expressions of sincere admiration and sympathy expressed here today you would feel proud indeed of your dear departed son."

Of his religious experience only those of his kith and kin can speak fully, for Keith did not wear his religion as a cloak. He was a real boy-- courageous, truthful, vigorous. The writer encouraged his boyish confidence, entered into all the experiences of his developing Christian character, and cherishes the memory of a beautiful, strong, rich life. As a very little fellow he had the full assurance that his prayers were answered, and his sublime faith was a rebuke to the halting faith of his senior. His association with the Parkside Methodist Sunday school was a happy one, and when the call came to teach he responded.

Of him Mr. Chinner (the superintendent) writes:-- "When the shock and hurt of your bereavement have been mercifully lessened by time and your faith, the memory of Keith-- the happy, brave, and dear boy who at duty's call went out to fight for his God and country-- will be a blessed and inspiring memory; yours will be unspeakable pride. Keith is now numbered among the elect-- that immortal band of heroes who with brave hearts and smiling faces have given their lives in a great cause. In the keeping of his Eternal Father Keith has his great reward. We all loved the boy for what he was and what he did."

Some time later he transferred to the Malvern School, where he came under the influence of the Rev. A.R. Edgerley, with whom he corresponded while in England and France. Mr. Edgerley writes:-- "Keith was loved by everyone who knew him, and by his death Australia has lost a man whom she could ill afford to lose. His was a splendid life-- pure, joyous, self-sacrificing; he has laid it down for the Empire he loved and for the King whose commission he held."

Keith was an excellent correspondent. He had hosts of friends, and kept in touch with all of them. His bright, breezy, humorous letters revealed his happy temperament, but there were occasional glimpses of sadness which indicated his realization of the serious nature of the undertaking. His passionate love of home and that dear to him was always manifest. The many letters received expressing the joy of intercourse with Keith, the value of his friendship, and the splendid example set for his companions have helped his dear ones in their time of trouble. The characteristic reserve of the English people yielded to his charming personality, and the following extract from the letter of a home in Cardiff is typical of what these friends felt concerning the young Australian:--

"He is looking splendid, and is a fine type of citizen which any country might be proud to claim as 'my own.' We are all charmed with him, and though only with us for a few days, he made friends with everyone he met, and he has had invitations to spend furlough with several. The soldier's life agrees with him physically. He seems to find life a very happy state, abounding with humour, and this in spite of the horrors of war, which fortunately don't leave even 'the smell of the fire upon him.' . . . He never told us about getting the Military Medal; my brother noticed the ribbon, and when I asked Keith how he won it he looked very shy and said, 'Oh! They are not uncommon--it was at Messines. I had to take charge, and we came through all right.' He was painfully modest, and I didn't like to ask for any more particulars. . . . Tell Keith's mother that 'the man who has had his armour fastened by his mother's hands' (as Ruskin puts it) 'fights with it firmly fastened.' She need never fear for him, for he will ever stand fast in the strength of all her teachings, and I believe will come through all."

**Think! Would you wish that he had stayed.  
When all the rest The Call obeyed?  
That thought of self had held in thrall  
His soul, and shrunk it mean and small?**

**Nay, rather thank the Lord that he  
Rose to such height of chivalry;  
That, with the need, his loyal soul  
Swung like a needle to its pole;  
That, setting duty first, he went  
At once, as to a sacrament.**

His brothers, Roy and Gordon, enlisted in 1914 and 1915, and Keith for months felt the call, but he was young, and his parents and brothers felt that his place was at home. At the age of twenty, when at home for the Christmas

reunion, he urged his plea to be allowed to enlist, and his loved ones, feeling that their refusal would for ever sear the lad's conscience, consented that as soon as arrangements could be made he should fulfil his heart's desire. A great weight was lifted off his mind, and in March, 1916, he donned khaki, went to the N.C.O. School, and won the sergeant's stripes. In August, 1916, with others he was bidden farewell at a social gathering in the Parkside Methodist school, and his tribute of appreciation to the school's influence, the kindness of friends, and the beautiful self-sacrifice of mothers will live long in the memories of those present.

He reached the Old Land in October, 1916, and the meeting of the two brothers on Salisbury Plains was a great joy to each. In November, 1916, on the eve of crossing the Channel for the trenches, he wrote to his uncle:-- "You know we are up against it, and it's not going to be a picnic over there; but every man has an even chance. There's just one thing I'd like you to do as a last request. I don't want you to think I'm going away imagining I am to get killed, for I'm not. However, if I should stop one I'd like that line, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' . . ."

At the Messines Ridge attack in June, 1917, out of his small company of 23, only 4 went over the top (the others being the victims of a gas attack), and it fell to his lot to take the place of his superior officer in holding the bridge over the Douve under heavy shell fire. For this act he was awarded the Military Medal, and three days later was gazetted as lieutenant. He modestly disclaimed any virtue for this reward; but the story of the battle, the heroism of the men, the brilliant success of the venture are all recorded in his diary, and in the same diary is pasted a poem which would appear to have been a premonition of what might happen.

### **A Mother's Possession.**

**Memories of a boyhood's day  
When he went to school away;  
Letters in a schoolboy's hand,  
Telling all the things he planned.  
Limned in colour fair and bright--  
These are what she has to-night.**

**Visions of a soldier-lad  
In his dress of khaki clad,  
Saying, "Mother, do not grieve,"  
When he has his final leave.  
His tanned face and hers so white--  
These are what she has to-night.**

**Soldiers running up a slope,  
Hearts all gay and full of hope;  
One that stood before his men,  
Waved them on and on again.  
One that fought so well his fight--  
These are what she has to-night.**

**Letters bound and put away,  
Treasures to her dying day;  
Flowers growing by a grave,  
And a cross where grasses wave.  
One that walks with God in white--  
These are what she has to-night.**

In August of the same year he applied for a transfer to the Flying Corps, where he thought there would be better opportunities of service. His application was granted, and he went into training the following February, and was successful in obtaining his wings without any mishap. His latest letters indicated that he would be leaving France in a few days.

A cable came on November 11 stating the brothers were well, and the relatives thanked God that the three boys had been spared. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of November a friend brought the Military Medal which Keith had won, and the next morning a cable from the eldest brother, Gordon, announced that Keith had been killed whilst flying in France on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Thus in a "blaze of glory" the bright and beautiful spirit had returned to God who gave it.

**From the fields of fiery trying, where our bravest  
and our best,  
By their living and their dying their soul's high  
faith attest,  
From these dread, red fields of sorrow,  
From the fight for Thy to-morrow--  
Evening brings each one at last,  
To God's own peace in Thee.**

**(TRANSCRIBED FROM A BOOK TRIBUTE PREPARED AND PRINTED BY  
JOSEPH W. GILLINGHAM, UNCLE TO LYELL KEITH SWANN)**

HUSSEY & GILLINGHAM LTD  
ADEI AIDE



## ADDENDUMS

### # 1. Dated 23 January 2004.

Subsequent to “THE GUMMY MOB” term recorded under ‘FOREWORD’ in “THE SWANN DIARIES”;

A recipient of “THE SWANN DIARIES” transcription, L.V. of Henley Beach, South Australia writes;

“” NOW – I'd like to re-enter ‘The Gummy Mob’ debate.

After reading the diaries, I have my definite views.

The answer, I believe, is in Keith’s mischievous writing.

In Diary 1, Feb 14 – July 23 he was not stationed in permanency with any battalion. A source of annoyance to him.

He was in turn with the 4/5<sup>th</sup> Pioneers – then 18/10<sup>th</sup> – then to **A Base B Company**.

This by the way, was quite common procedure for new recruits.

**B Company** (June 21 entry) he humorously tells us was a dental crowd. He was probably assigned there as a clerk – he certainly didn’t have dental skills. But obviously found some tricks to get time off (July 7 and July 13 entries) never the less.

When he recorded his name in Diary 1 he recorded his unit **B Company** – ‘The Gummy Mob’ – his wit in reference to the Dentists he was attached to.

In Diary 2 he recorded exact details for 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion – and 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. No humour this time as he had an identity.

That’s my view Eldon.

And I rest my case. “”

### # 2. Dated 31 May 2005.

At a presentation ceremony which commenced at 1100h this day, Eldon Bryant personally handed the six (6) original WW I diaries so meticulously kept by Lieutenant Lyell Keith Swann MM 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion A.I.F. and 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Australian Flying Corps to Kevin Tutt, Esq., Headmaster, Prince Alfred College, Adelaide, South Australia for the future safe guardianship within the confines of their Museum and Archives in honour of Lyell Keith Swann, [born, Keyneton. S.A., May 18 1895] a past student of Prince Alfred College.

At the same ceremony, complimentary presentations of this transcribed book version of “THE SWANN DIARIES” were given to and received by representatives of;

- **RSL [South Australia State Branch] Library, Torrens Training Depot**
- **The Royal South Australia Regiment Historical Collection;**
- **The Army Museum of South Australia, Keswick Barracks**
- **RSL [Jamestown Sub-Branch]**



frivols, I revisited Glendonwyne & then proceeded home to Jamestown. The week spent there was glorious & dear old Mother is still wonderfully brave. She has truly made a noble sacrifice & has done her utmost for the Empire in this gigantic upheaval. However the dear person informs me that I am on a pleasure trip for my arrival at the theatre of operations (good). Peace will be declared & I will return home smiling. Let's hope so! I really can't understand why all this fighting is going on though, on the other side. What are all the policemen doing?

The time at home was spent admirably - tennis, work (?) knocking the heart out of the poor old Fraud, playing all the classic music for Mother and devouring watermelon etc. with a vengeance.

After a delightfully beneficial week I came down with three drunks in the same carriage who imagined they were on board boat as "mal de mer" was their chief sport. However the outstanding feature of the journey was that I arrived at the required destination quite safely on March 13th.

#### **14th March. 1916**

Again presented myself for re-examination at the depot and at 4.15 in the afternoon, after having our photos taken, were paraded through the streets to the Exhibition Camp. As our noble band of 30 odd emerged into the crowded metropolis we were greeted with prolonged cheers & thunderous applause from the bystanders, by that I mean the three factory girls present, and I almost had to keep the crowd back with my little stick. It has been said (so I'm told) that no finer body of men have ever passed through Adelaide as this brilliant squad of raw recruits, and I believe this is quite wrong - I mean right, of course. At one time on the march down I happened to get on the footpath and lo & behold I espied a £1note. Instantly grabbing it I saw an old man who I had just passed and on its return to the owner his face lit up with a ruddy blush. It almost resembled the faint glow of the morning sun gently rising over the snow-laden hills. Really it was most pathetic, especially parting with my newborn wealth, and I could not suppress the tear which slowly trickled down my bronzed visage. However, I am proud of the training which the glorious 'Slavings' Bank of South Australia afforded me whilst there. What!!

I omitted to say that prior to marching down we were all sworn in. By that we declared "to serve our King and Country and be square unto 'em both". Let's hope so!

I was granted 48 hours leave and left the camp that evening a little after 6 o'clock. After a tasty little snack I proceeded to the pantomime, "Mother Goose" and spent a really enjoyable time. Once or twice I nearly sniggered.

#### **15th March. 1916**

During the morning I completed several small necessary jobs about the garden & of course they were carried out in the usual slip-shod fashion. I handed my Citizen Force kit in at the Engineers Depot in the evening & went to bed early to prepare for the coming fight or should it be - training. Thus ended my civilian life for a while at least and somehow or other I wasn't sorry. I must have a very kind face for an old "shick" came up to me and asked for 6d. to have a drink with. My anger arose immediately and on shrieking out the command "Attention" he sobered up straight away & did a Charlie Chaplain trot across the street into the wall opposite. To be continued in our next.

#### **16th March. 1916**

A little before 2.30 on this delightful afternoon I passed through, not over, the gates of my future home and presented myself at the orderly room. In a very short time I bared my chest and had the inoculation needle thrust therein. It reminded me of that little song "High Jinks" and the process was nothing to complain of but I just felt a little childish for a while. Then we signed a few papers & I was drafted to "D" Company in the H.Q. section. After I had autographed another sheet I was presented with two blankets, a palliase. a sheet, knife, fork, spoon, pannikin and a tin plate. I really wondered whether he thought I was getting married but his vacant look soon satisfied me on that score. We were then shown our sleeping abode

and it wasn't really a tasty boudoir, but just a common old horse manger. However after kicking up my heels & neighing once or twice I felt quite at home. We did nothing until teatime & then wired in to our initial feed of bread & jam. The bread was nice & fresh and I had two kinds of jam, namely marmalade & a new variety, magnum bonum. The milkless tea also quenched my parched throat & I had no complaints to make with the world in general. I am now writing this in the nice spacey Y.M.C.A. & I am looking forward to some good old singsongs with the Boys. I also note the Ping pong tables with pleasure and hope to take some of the lads down when I am really feeling fit.

A doctor gave us a very interesting lecture in the evening and on completion several of the lads sung until it was time for the "movies" to commence. They were not up to a very high standard & had it not been for a form breaking with a row of officers seated thereon things would have been fairly slow. Mother Earth gently rocked me in her cradle & had it not been for a rowdy lot of Victorians (who had missed the boat here) coming in at about one o'clock, I would have spent a very restful night. My inoculation did not trouble me at all.

### **17th March**

Went into the Head Quarters office & absolutely did nothing all day. Had a long yarn to Med. Nicholas who is in the Q.M. store & he provided me with some lovely apples. Fish for breakfast, Stew for dinner and bread & jam for tea. All the meals were cooked really well & the apricot jam was especially nice - real big pieces of the fruit. Tomorrow I hope to obtain a permanent pass. Had several games of ping pong with a very fair player, but yours truly remained unbeaten during the night. I have made up my mind to advertise the efficiency of the Y.M.C.A. as much as possible as it is really a glorious rendezvous for leisure hours.

### **18th March**

The usual morning march at 6.30 but we finished up under the beautiful hot showers of the City Baths and it was lovely to feel so fit and clean. During the morning I took a message to H.M. Goal for the Adjutant, but needless to say I did not stay long for fear of some of my pals recognising me. After a good dinner & a brush up we left the camp at 1.30 on weekend leave until Sunday 11 p.m.. Had a quiet read at home in the study during the afternoon, then Bon & Mary took me to hear Ashmead-Bartlett in the Town Hall. The place was crowded and his lecture most interesting. The slides gave a very clear idea of the country & much of his information was quite new. What he doesn't know about the Eastern countries isn't worth knowing. His lecture emphasised once again the gallantry & heroism of our brave lads & it brought to my mind those words;

" Wounded or hale, won home from war,  
Or yonder by the Lone Pine laid,  
Give him his due for evermore -  
The bravest thing God ever made ".

### **19th March 1916**

Sunday evening went to Mr Annells to tea & then to Pirie Street. Henry was as good as usual, but the organ wouldn't work & so the singing naturally wasn't as fine as they generally have. We walked home & after an early supper I assumed the offensive & worked my way back to camp.

### **20th March**

I awoke early on this crisp morning with a delightfully rotten cold but after seeing the doctor who gave me some medicine I was considerably better. As usual I did nothing during the morning but at 9.45 I had to take some letters to Mitcham & it whiled a fair amount of the day away because it was getting on for two o'clock when I arrived here. When I had completed the business there I went over to the Signal Unit & saw

the O.C. about getting my transfer through. I went away in high spirits of its successful issue. Then I proceeded to Fisher St where I had a very tasty little snack, which Auntie kindly prepared. At four o'clock I was sent on a special mission to get a key from a wounded chap in the Keswick Hospital. As I had 50 minutes to wait for a train I went over to the Cheer Up Hut near the City Baths & spent a very restful time in a nice lounge. At last I caught the train to Keswick & after wandering round for a long while found the man in question, but I was too late as someone else had forestalled me. Wearily I trained back to town & arrived there too late for tea, but as I had some of mother's cake and apples I dined fairly well. I had my permanent pass issued & it will be most useful. I also applied for a transfer to the Signal School at Mitcham.

#### **21st March 1916**

Passed a very quiet morning & in the afternoon went to Keswick. As I had an hour to wait for the train I dropped in at the Cheer-up & spent a pleasant time in a lounge on the top balcony. When I reported back at the camp I ducked for my life & proceeded to Fisher St. Auntie had a most enjoyable tea prepared which of course was most acceptable.

#### **22nd Mch, 1916**

I was vaccinated & again inoculated at 10 o'clock and also re-examined. To date I am feeling pretty right. We were issued with all our equipment & clothing except our uniforms, so you can imagine I am beginning to show fair signs of a budding warrior.

#### **23rd March 1916**

Nothing adventurous or exciting broke the monotony of the day, although I had several decent games of ping-pong & a stroll through the principal streets of our noble metropolis. In the evening Mabel Best brought a troop of highly trained animals, I mean artists & after a most enthusiastic welcome they favoured us with a very decent concert.

#### **24th March 1916**

Mel. Brooks, Opie & I went to Wondergraph pictures & we had a very enjoyable evening as the films were interesting especially "The Man who stayed at Home". Witnessed the march through the streets of some of the Boys who were leaving for the Front & on the whole the marching wasn't too good.

#### **25th March**

Left camp a little before twelve & got home in time to accept a good dinner. During the afternoon I gave Mr. Martin a lesson in car manipulation & he showed good signs of making a fair driver. In the evening the Dandres kindly took the trouble to give us a very interesting entertainment.

#### **26th March 1916**

Had to be on duty at 2.30 to undertake the responsible duty of looking after any pranks the telephone might play. Am pleased to report it behaved itself admirably & I was able to complete a fair amount of correspondence. At one time I was threatened with dire disaster in the form of drowning. Flooded streams poured down the stone steps & rushed headlong under the doors & it was only my fine presence of mind which told me to use blotting paper that I am now alive to tell the tale. (?) The officers next door supplied music & singing which considerably helped while away the weary hours.

#### **27th March 1916**

Have just had a very interesting game of ping-pong which by the way is the hardest work I have done yet, bar of course meal time. As a pal of mine was going to Mitcham today I took his place in a very nice little stall. It is much better than my previous abode and it is far more convenient in many ways. I also obtained a place in one of the messes & by paying 2/6 a week we almost live like lords. Take for instance tea, Salmon, hot buttered toast, pine apple, bread & jam, tea. Not to be sniggered at. what! Then someone washes up our plate's etc. It is much better sitting down to a table than on the ground in the dust. Somehow I think I

will be able to stand a fair amount of this. I received a cheque for the sale of my bicycle today, so will have to remain awake tonight holding a big gun in case someone robs me of this precious paper.

Am feeling wonderfully fit but am afraid my vaccination is not going to take. Applied for a transfer to the New Signal Squadron being formed but don't put much faith in getting in as they require men with wireless experience.

### **29th March 1916**

Was allotted a clerical job in the office so now I am kept fairly busy all day, which is a great change. Don't quite know how my system will stand the sudden change. Miss Moyes concert party gave a very enjoyable evening's entertainment. At five o'clock I met Renolds at the Pav & we had a good 3d worth. Saw Charles in Dough & Dynamite & he was rather humorous at times. In the evening Cpt. Chaplain Mortimer held a service in the Y.M.C.A. and as he was stuck for a pianist I volunteered, and of course as was expected everything went with a swing.

### **30th Thursday**

Rather uneventful day although the apple pie went down without touching for dinner. On duty in the evening and completed a fair amount of correspondence.

### **31st Friday**

Transferred 300 men to Mitcham and consequently had to partake of a restorative before the day was o'er as the unusual change was a little to sudden. At 5 o'clock sharp I flung down the quill and donned my full regalia then rushed off home. A very nice tea awaited me and then a nice book & a comfortable chair filled in a most restful evening.

### **1st Apl. 1916**

The old day passed almost without any fooling but several chaps fell into the soup at our mess. It was pay day, the first for me, and needless to say universal rejoicing. I received the huge sum of £1. 12. Again I went home and in the afternoon carred to Morton's Summit & across to Crafters. It was a beautiful afternoon and the ride most enjoyable. I also gave Mr. Martin further instruction and he is progressing favourably. In the evening I went out to the N.A.V. Jock Shearers home & we spent a most enjoyable time. I had stiff luck in trying for top place in two competitions but in the "cut" I lost both times. However I wouldn't be bored with carrying the prizes. No! No!!

### **2nd April 1916**

In the morning I went to church and had the opportunity of thanking Mr. Mudge for his kind gift of two khaki handkerchiefs, a pair of mittens and a nice testament which he had sent along to me during the week. It was most kind of them for I had never spoken to them before. All through we are treated with exceptional kindness. I went to "Waltham" for tea & as usual had a rotten (?) time. The lamingtons were very hard to take, I don't think! I went back to camp early to sleep the sleep of the blest. Yes!

### **3rd Apl.**

We were informed that we would be transferred to Mitcham tomorrow as the 8/32 reinforcements. I will be sorry in a way to leave this camp because it's better than a holiday but it will be nice to get settled & do a little of the real thing. However I don't fancy the infantry so will try & get a transfer to the Signallers.

### **4th Apl.**

Our transfer has been cancelled so we now can expect to go out on Tuesday with plenty of luck. Harry Pomeroy came into the office today and has taken my job. As I had a half day owing to me on a/c of working on a Sunday and as there was an another fellow to instruct the new clerk the coast was clear for me to be frivol. At 12 o'clock I left the camp, fixed up a little business, had lunch at Arcadia & then went to De

Monte. Ruby sang touching little love songs to me during the afternoon and after a little tasty snack & a walk up the jetty, I arrived home in time for tea.

It was a most pleasant afternoon & the seaside air quite livened me up. In the evening I motored Uncle and Aunty over to Parkside & then went to, "Cranton" where I spent a pleasant hr. I then also performed another little mission, which was exceptionally well carried out. However boys will be boys!

#### **5th Apl.**

Passed a very dreary day as I had nothing to do except rule a book up and wait for 5 o'clock to come round. Went home for tea & then to Wondergraph with a pal in the evening. It was an exceptionally good program and the place was crowded. Ashmead Bartletts pictures of the Dardanelles were really interesting & most instructive & they were profusely applauded. Another special item was "A Little Pal". It was very decent & the "Mother Goose" song "A long long trail" added to its pretty effect very much.

#### **7th Apl.**

At 12 sharp I left camp for home. Went to National Park in the afternoon & had a glorious run. Syd Barratt and I went to a concert in the Town Hall in aid of the 43rd Batt. Band & it was a huge success. Clara Serena, Walter Wood, Eugene Alderman, Edward Reeves, Francis Halls & Dot McBride gave a fine program, which was thoroughly appreciated by the crowd and especially the two art critics.

On the previous day I was especially asked to play a fellow ping-pong, who was rather good (in his own estimation). He had not been beaten up to date & it was quite a common occurrence for him to impart this information to the common populace ranged around & I was earnestly requested by scores of his defeated enthusiasts to do my best to slay the creature. Well we had two sets & I just won each time 6-5. 6-5. They were good games, the best I had had. Imagine my surprise next morning when I was comfortably seated at breakfast enjoying a scrumptious repast when the whippet appeared again eager for another duel, "Well", thought I "this boy must be severely whacked for his forwardness in interrupting my eating" so we journeyed to the arena. I dished it up to him hot and strong 6-0. 6-1. and the poor youth walked away like the proverbial pup. Ah! but this is the life for me - the cows & chickens are not in it.

#### **9th April**

At an invitation from Mr. Cragie to dine with him on this evening I forthwith journeyed to his home at about 6 o'clock. I was just in time to play a game of croquet with Gwen against Frank Sanders & Lance Stidston and we had a nice game on their fine lawn. After a delightful repast we had a enjoyable sing song and heard interesting tales from the returned soldiers. I was very lothful to leave but as I had to go to Eric White's 21st I left at about 9 o'clock. Gwen had made a delightful pair of socks, which she kindly gave me and wished me the best of good luck. I was really sorry to leave as I had enjoyed myself immensely. I arrived at Eric's just in time to wrack my brains over a competition - needless to say I didn't win the prize. As I was due back at 11, I had to rush away & leave a good supper. Rotten luck!

#### **12th Apl.**

After three attempts to send us to Mitcham they eventually succeeded and we had a dreary march in the rain to the new camp. Eight of us secured a nice tent and we soon made ourselves comfortable. Things will be a bit different here compared with our former home. Bread & jam for tea is a bit different to our usual sardines on toast, however we are brave boys giving up our lives for the King & country (so they tell us).

#### **13th Apl.**

Squad drill all the morning - lovely - delightful, really interesting (?). Theoretical examination for N.C.O's in the afternoon. Very simple test so naturally passed. Went home in the evening & had a real good feed. The food is very different to the Exhibition tack.

**14th**

Had practical test for School & I think I got on fairly well. Went for a long route march after seven o'clock & came home ready for bed.

**15th Sat.**

Got home a little after 12 o'clock. Went to Henley & round the city in the afternoon - lovely weather. To Waltham in the evening & had real good games of ping-pong.

**16th.**

To Cronton & Pirie St in the evening. Good service by Henry, which I enjoyed immensely.

**17th Apl.**

Learned results of N.C.O's exam & I was among the lucky ones. In the evening we went to an invitation from the Cheer Ups but as they were full up & over-crowded Harold Moody & I strolled along to the Dandies where we had an enjoyable time.

**18th Apl.**

Had final medical examination & it is a noteworthy fact that no one was tossed out. Was again vaccinated as the first had not taken.

**19th**

Home for tea & two nice little parcels awaited me. On opening them I found a lovely pair of socks from R.K. & a money belt from Muriel. Both extremely nice.

**20th**

Left here for Victor via Yankalilla at 9 a.m.. Arrived there after a glorious run a little after 10 o'clock. Strolled across to Granite Island & saw quite a lot of people I knew. Arrived home at 7. Car ran wonderfully well & the roads were in fine condition. Marj gave me a bonny pair of socks, which were hard to take. I.D.T.

**23rd. Sunday**

Cronton to tea & Pirie Street to church - seems to be quite a regular custom now. As it was pretty wet on Sat. we only went for a little run around the suburbs. Took Ethel & Muriel. In the evening Les King & I went to the Royal to see the "Dancing Mistress" pretty fair show. Muriel gave me a bonny money belt & Ethel a lovely knitted chest protector.

**25th Apl.**

Anzac Day but no procession of any description - more of a mourning day. We were given leave at 2.30 so as to get things ready for the school.

**26th Wednesday**

Reported at Cheltenham at 9 o'clock for the Musketry School. Very nice surroundings but rottenly inconvenient.

**27th**

Started work with a will & kept going hard on care of arms, trigger pressing, standing & prone position, judging distance & visual training until Saturday.

**29th**

Home to dinner. Took auntie & uncle to Mt. Barker to see Mr. Edgerly & then back via Echunga. Good run but roads rather bad. To "Our Miss Gibbs" with Len King in the evening. Goodo.

**30th Apl.**

To church in the morning & to Mrs. Mudge's to dinner. Very nice people & they made me feel at home. Don't have to go back to camp until tomorrow morning - another soft bed. What! Pair of mittens from Miss Boucart & a lovely vest from dear mother also beautiful box of cakes. Some clans cook sure.

**1st May to 6th.**

Still working hard in the school. Did fairly well in the judging distance & shooting tests. Saturday we went up towards Fifth Creek & were all agreeably surprised with the delightful scenery.

**7th May Sunday**

S.S. Anniversary here. Went to Pat Andrew's home to tea.

**8th Kings Accession Holiday**

Delightful run in the hills covering 83 miles & passing through Oakbank, Nairne, Woodside, Mt Barker & Belair. Machine ran O.K.

**10th Wednesday**

Took 1/3 ration and journeyed early to the Port Adelaide ranges. It was a rotten day but I managed to put up a very fair show. Got back to camp just in time to catch the 5.16 train. Had tea at home, made myself look pretty (?) & then drove uncle & auntie over to Parkside S.S. to their farewell to the six fellows leaving. I made my first public speech and although I was very nervous at first, my nerve came back during the latter part of the oration. I experienced a aching void which nearly crippled me with disgust. I wondered why my hat kept blowing off coming home but I have found out the reason - she loves another. I caught the last train home and am afraid the early hour of my retirement did not improve my next day's shooting.

**11th May 1916**

Another day at the Port shooting & some very interesting demonstrative firing. Out of a 6 inch jarrah post, 5/16 inch steel plate & a 2 ft sand bag give me the latter every time. Stewed during the evening for the final exam.

**12th Friday**

Finished our practical exam & should just about scrape through. School closed at 5.30 & we were given leave until 9 o'clock Monday morning.

**13th Saturday**

Bought a few necessaries during the morning and got Gordon's photo with "ye little mo" framed so that I might gaze upon it with silent envy & contempt. Also had the intricacies of the camera explained by the Kodak people. Uncle & auntie gave me a beautiful little vest pocket & all its essentials so that I could become efficient in the art before leaving here. In the afternoon we took Mrs. Chinner for a run to Montacute but it was rather fresh out. I went to Hugh Nick's for tea & then out to P.A.C. where we were given a jolly send-off by the dear old school. I felt prouder of it than ever & was jolly glad I had the fortune of being educated within its honoured walls. Bill Bayly as usual was fine & delivered a great speech in toasting "Our Fallen Men".

**14th Sunday**

Anniversary at Parkside also of my second months soldiering. Drank my health in water, because I thought I oughter. (Stale, frightfully stale Keith old boy). Motored over to Parkside in the afternoon & 9 or 10 of we soldiers took part at the conclusion of the service in the Sacrament. It was very fine. A beautiful little testament was given to us by Mr. Chinner.

**15th Monday**

Reported at the N.C.O's school at 9 a.m. at Mitcham. Hugh Kelly & Conigrave are in the same tent & two

other decent chaps. Commenced the old elementary work right from the beginning. Heartrending absolutely.

### Report in Advertiser

May 10th 16.

( NEWSPAPER CLIPPING )

*On Wednesday a social was tendered to a number of young men at the Parkside Methodist Sunday-school, who are about to leave for the front. Altogether 100 of the men at the seat of the war or in training have passed through the school. Mr. J.H. Chinner (superintendent of the school) presided, and addresses were delivered by the Rev. W.A. Potts, Messrs. M.M. Maughan, B.A. (Director of Education), and R. Thomas. The guests received presentations. They included Messrs. C.L. Featherstone, Harold Davidson, Roy Atwell, Keith Swann, Stanley Tiver, and Norman Vigar. Messrs. Eldrid Roberts and George Sim, who have also enlisted, were unable to be present. On Sunday last Mr. Chinner, at a public service, commended to the young men as a message from the school, Psalm 121, and presented to each of them a copy of the New Testament.*

#### 18th May 16

Woke up to the fact that I had reached the age of 21 & was beginning to become a man. Mother sent down a beautiful box of cakes & a fowl with which I commenced festivities. I had very tender thoughts of my youthful days, my dear brothers & my loving parents & relations & somehow or other I didn't feel like celebrating the event very boisterously. However I am looking forward to the time when the war is over and I'll have a slap up flip then. Kind of make up for lost time. I stayed at home during the evening & wrote up a lecture. Received a nice letter from Mrs. Withall, my old school teacher.

#### 19th May 16

Slept home as we are not due on parade until 7 a.m. & most probably will do so as I don't like those nice springy boards we get at the camp.

#### 20th May 16

Learned results of Musketry school, received a Good certificate. Took Conigrave with us in the afternoon & had a good run to Waverly. Wrote up lectures in the evening. Took snaps & filled up my film - first attempt.

#### 21 May 1916

Remained home in the morning and studied. Went down to Mrs. G. Evans in the afternoon. Heard the band concert & remained to tea. Scored a couple of very nice pairs of socks.

#### 22nd to 27th

Extended order work entrenching & bombing very interesting indeed. Received two nice handkerchiefs from Rotha Cox. Friday evening did a little business & also visited the old bank, my heart literally ached for my chums working so hard whilst I was calmly & without any fuss rooking the Government quietly of 5/- per diem. I wouldn't be out of the old khaki for worlds.

#### 27th Saturday

Beautiful day & a good run to Mt. Lofty. In the evening I went to Harold Moody's farewell evening & they gave us (four soldiers) a tiptop send-off. The topping supper provided was enough to make any man feel he could fight for his King & Country until he stopped one most willingly. I wandered home on the early hours of the morning feeling very contented, knowing Sunday followed.

#### 28th

Wrote all the morning & part of the afternoon getting my lecture up-to-date & was extremely pleased when the painful operation was over. In the afternoon we called in for Mrs. Deane & I took them up to the camp & gave them a little lecture on trench warfare. Then we went for a run over the camp & home. Met Bon in the

evening & walked home. Enough said.

### **29th Monday**

They evidently took my kind face for a mug because I was informed that the responsibility of Orderly Sergeant rested on my shoulders for the ensuing week. So far I am still alive & kicking & seem to wander home of an evening as usual. It's strenuous - I don't think.

### **29th & 30th**

Road reconnaissance, outpost & guards - practical schemes. Very interesting & beneficial.

### **31st May**

Preliminary exam by Sgt. Major - nothing startling.

### **1st June**

Pay day: Too right! "Oh Happy Day", sung he.

### **3rd June 16**

Commenced our exam by giving a short lecture on any subject chosen by the O.C.. The sensation was not very pleasant & I am sorry to say no one proved himself a Mr. Hughes. As it was too wet to go out during the afternoon I did a few little odds & ends about the home. Took Marj. to Queen's hall to Cawthornes "Pops" & a most enjoyable evening we spent. Clara Serena was O.K. but the German touch was most pronounced at times.

### **4th Sunday**

Remained at home writing & cooking the din. Pleased to say both proved a huge success. Went to Cronton to tea & as usual I enjoyed every minute of their delightful company.

They are truly noble girls. Exhibited mother's vest & promised them leather so they might be able to copy one.

### **5th King's Birthday**

Good old George! May he live long & die happy. We had a glorious run to Mt. Barker - 65 all told. Came home at a very fair bat. Went to Nick's to tea & then to the pictures after. Just able to get a couple of seats right in the front row. The place was crowded. Question - Is there a war on?

### **7th Wednesday**

This day will long live in my memory as one of the most enjoyable I have yet experienced. (I say yet because they tell us there are very fair maidens in France). Kell. & I applied for leave which we were granted. We were well down in time to welcome back Jimmy Throssell V.C. our old P.A.C. hero. By-the-way Kell. was in the same trench during the night when Jimmy won the coveted cross. As soon as he showed his head he was carried shoulder high through the cheering crowd into a car waiting for him outside the station. Keith & his pals also demanded a car & we entered a 100 pound Daimler & as no argument came forthwith we had a great run out to the College. It was a good procession as there were over 30 cars and some were nicely decorated. Several times I was mistaken for Jimmy but I simply accepted the compliment modestly in a way which I am sure he would have liked. Once I even blushed at a fair young damsel & almost felt sorry for so deceiving her. Talk about cheer & clap him, oh no we didn't just. Bill spoke well & Crawford Vaughan, Konk & several others also said appropriate words. Jimmy made a fine speech & we all felt more proud than ever of the grand chap. He is a big fine fellow & looks well in his clothes. The function came to an end with prolonged ringing cheers & we assembled outside to be photographed. I had the pleasure & honour of sitting at his feet. After this we hoisted him up & the movie-man was highly pleased. I had hold of one of his legs & was proud of the fact as it was heaps better than shaking his hand. When I had calmed down sufficiently I strolled home feeling more proud of the old school & its associations than ever.

We also received the extremely sad news of Kitchener's death & it staggered us completely. He will never be replaced, as an organiser, in the British Empire, I am sure. I went to Christopher Smith's home in the evening. We had a beautiful treat of delightful music. Syd Barrett & I had a long farewell yarn prior to his departure for the front.

### **8th**

Bon's birthday. Went to Jack Keith's euchre evening & had a good time.

### **9th Friday**

Finished our exams, & were granted leave until Monday.

### **10th Saturday**

Caught the early morning train to Angaston arriving there at 11 O'clock. Had a ripping time amongst the girls at tennis in the afternoon - the stripes seemed to be a great success. Took Doris & Molly Stevens to the pictures on the evening - very slack show.

### **Sunday**

Beautiful day - to church twice. Saw Aubrey Stevens at the Cong. Anniversary. After a very nice little weekend I caught the first train to the city, arriving at camp in time to get allocated to a unit. Received a Sgts. certificate but could get a Cpls. job. Had stiff luck in not getting a Sgts. job though. They wanted 4 Cpls out of we 15 Sgts. 3 had been chosen & I happened to be the unlucky fourth. Was first of all attached to the 4/5th Pioneers. I was greatly rejoiced as Norm Sommerville was in that unit, however I was again transferred to the 18/10th, which were supposed to sail within a fortnight. Was jolly glad though to have old Kell & Mel Bulloch as chums. Applied for long leave so hope to go home tomorrow.

### **12th Monday**

Carried out squad & company drill during the afternoon.

### **13th Tuesday**

Was informed at 3 o'clock that I could commence my long leave. I managed to catch the train after a mad long rush & was glad when I was calmly reposing in a luxurious second class carriage on the way home. Arriving there at 6.30 the next morning after a long cold trip. Bed soon felt me & I had a good old sleep until 12 when I arose to enjoy a fine dinner which mother had prepared. I had a ripping time home. Took auntie & uncle for a run & visited Norah & Del Monte. Passed every blessed car on the road - I really quite enjoyed myself.

### **19th Monday**

Fixed up all my little business worries & went to Stumps & Hammers to get photographed. Returned to camp at 1 o'clock feeling eager to get away as the holiday had unsettled me a trifle.

### **20th**

At the Port ranges all day with a squad of musketry, Oh it wasn't cold some. Leave in the evening so I went to say adieu to the Annells girls.

### **21st**

We were that is the 3 new Cpls., transferred out of the 18/10th because 5 returned men with stripes were joining the unit, and it meant we would either have to revert to the ranks or get out. As it was a bleak day & my feet were a trifle on the cold side I adapted for the latter course. I was transferred as a Sgt. to A base & was attached to "B" Company, the dental crowd. Haven't any idea what my duties will consist of, although I'm afraid I'll make a bit of a muck of things if they want me to lug any maulers out when they get busy or short handed. As usual came home in the evening, did some writing & made my will. All the surplus I left to charities. Yes!

**22nd Wednesday**

Went down to the Port ranges all day with a musketry squad. Very cold & wet.

**23rd**

During the morning I had my first lesson in bayonet fighting and its wonderful how many muscles you find you have. They tell us 4 inches is quite sufficient but the chap will have to be a good runner to get 1 inch into me. It rained heavily in the afternoon so we had a lecture to pass the time away. General leave in the evening.

**24th Friday**

Down at Portland again, but instead of teaching them to shout I gave an exhibition of swimming which was the more useful. Liar! Home again in the night.

**25th Sat.**

Left 18/10th this morning after wishing all my pals good luck & got leave from 11 o'clock until the Tuesday morning. Had a nice little run during the afternoon & caught the train for Angaston at 7.15 for the weekend. Had a good yarn to Roy Jenkins going up.

**26th Sunday**

It rained like mad all day but we were able to go to church once.

**Monday (Holiday)**

In the morning Eric drove us out to Keyneton & on to Mrs. Goodes. The roads were in bad condition but the old Ford hardly sniggered at all & ploughed through the slush & mud without a murmur. Going through a deep ford some of the water got in the sparking plug & we had to dry the connection. However the car gave us a grand exhibition of the magnificent capabilities possessed by the Ford. Mr. Goodes was very pleased to see me & we had a good time together although it was so short. We also called in and saw Rene & then made a bee line for home & dinner. In the afternoon Doris & I went for a walk around the park & then I caught the train back to town.

**Tuesday 28th**

Reported to "B" Coy & they bullied me like a big dog for not reporting earlier & wanted me to go on guard straight away. "Don't be silly", say I, & simply smirked unseen. Filled in the day by doing a little office work.

**29th**

Was Sgt. of the guard (the first time I'd ever been on since enlistment) and had a fairly easy time although ones rest is occasionally disturbed.

**30th**

Had a touch of the "flu" & didn't feel too good however auntie's careful treatment when I got home did a lot towards checking it. Passed the remainder of the week as a Sgt. should - most leisurely.

**July 1st**

Had a very fine run to Mt. Barker. Beautiful day & the hills are glorious. Went to the Dandies with Alan Coats in the evening & had a great time. Dampier was back & as good as ever.

**July 3rd**

As the majority of the company were on fatigue & guard duty we had individual lectures all day.

**4th July**

Nothing doing at all. Took Molly S. to the Dandies & had a pretty fair time.

**5th Wednesday**

Developed another fine cold in the head. This seems to be getting a favourite hobby of mine now. Thursday evening we went for a silent night march but it wasn't a huge success although one squad pushed about 10 yd's of a fence down & the owner snorted somewhat boisterously.

**7th July**

On guard again but nothing unusual happened. Yesterday I forgot to say that I had the afternoon off & proceeded to town to complete a little business. Teeth was the "gag" & I hope to try the scheme again in the very near future. I went into the bank and the rush & bustle of the balance brought back very tender memories. I saw George & he's going to fix me up with a recommendation. Saturday afternoon we went out & had quite an eventful trip. On the Magill road I could tell she wasn't pulling properly & so I turned up a side street to see what was wrong. Of course I couldn't find anything crook & on trying to start her again I succeeded in getting nothing but perspiration. I fiddled round a bit & tried to kid I was a mechanic but no! the bluff wouldn't work. Uncle in the meantime had procured a mechanic who fixed it up in no time. He had to take the magneto to pieces & I am quite sure I would still be there if I had obtained no help. We proceeded again but had to stop and put the hood on a/c of the rain. When nearing Morialto we were passing a cart & he didn't give me any room I had to get almost in the gutter. The wheels only turned round in the clay & therefore it necessitated getting about 10 motor drivers & conductors to give us a push out. At last we reached the falls without any more mishaps but on the return journey the oil wasn't working & I had to get out & fix this up. It was quite an exciting time & we are extremely lucky to be alive to tell the tale. What say you auntie? I went to bed a little after 8 & had a good old dose of several mixtures to try & get rid of this cursed cold.

**9th Sunday**

Had bed in breakfast & it was very nice too. Went for a stroll in the afternoon & called on Muriel for a bit of a yarn.

**10th Monday**

During the week we carried on with very good training & the lads put in real well.

**13th July 1916**

Applied the tooth gag again and it worked wonderfully well. Was home a little after one o'clock but as there was no one to greet me my entrance was through the window. Had a very good time doing the block and made several small purchases, of course the dentist was a very minor consideration.

Friday evening I scrambled away very quickly after parade and journeyed to the townhall (Unley) where the M.L.C. girls were giving a concert in air of patriotic funds. They gave us a fine show and there was a fine attendance. My kindly nature spurred me on to go home early and get the car so as to be able to take auntie & uncle home in comfort. After a rush home I discovered that uncle had the key of the garage and consequently I composed myself with a feed of fruit & cake.

**15th Saturday**

It was a glorious day and there were fine prospects of a good game between the lads. Of course Princes won by a large margin 11-9 to 5-11 and they ran rings around the blues a treat. Eric played a very nice game & kicked 3 goals & two behinds. At the finish P.A.C. played a great game and were easily the better team. In the evening I went to Cyril Andrews and we had a nice little evening.

**16th Sunday**

Went out to the College in the morning to the Old Boys Service. It was a glorious day and I drove the car

out. I picked up a couple of pals and also Noel Webb. The attendance was not quite as good as usual but considering 555 have volunteered a large number was not expected. The minister was not a very great success as he read every word of the sermon. As usual the singing was fine and it was grand meeting the old pals again.

#### **17th Monday**

Commenced orderly Sgt. duties at reveille and up to the present am not altogether impressed with the duties. I'd much rather sleep home for one thing besides many others. It is blowing a gale outside and the second sheet of iron has just blown past. We will be lucky if we're alive to tell the tale tomorrow.

#### **18th Tuesday**

The storm during the night had done a tremendous amount of damage as all the officer's tents were blown down etc and it took the whole of the camp on fatigue nearly a week to clean up the mess. We had nearly 40 hats & caps in our office, which had been lost during the night. I went out to the Town Hall this evening to hear two Russian musicians - a pianist & a violinist - and they afforded us a musical treat. Of course it was classic & therefore just suited me. (?) The next morning I received a nice little talk from the Major for being absent without leave but there again the question arises "Do you care". This business of staying in each evening is no good at all & I reckon it should not be allowed. However by letting the Cpl. go out each night I will make him do the weekend duty. Of course I will also get two days compensation leave for (not) staying in as I should do. Oh! Keith you shrewd head! I seem to be struggling along all right on this job but prefer the outdoor game anyway. Indigestion is troubling me a little lately - I think it must be too much pudding.

#### **19th**

General leave again and poor old Keith has to while away the weary hours by himself again. Oh! cruel universe.

#### **20th Thursday**

Received Gordon's letter when he was on his way to ---- and he was having a good time.

#### **21st Friday**

Leave for the unit so I did a little writing & went to the movies in the Y.M. Publicly declared to have my revenge for these leave nights when my reign of duty finishes.

#### **22nd Saturday**

Things moved with a brisk swing on this fine morn and I found myself in the soup before the day had far advanced. An orderly Sgt's. call was blown at 8 o'clock and as the major was receiving a little lecture on "Mess Etiquette" from me I didn't answer the call & consequently missed the order that orderly sgts. had to report to H.Q. with their crime sheets at 8.30. Of course when the court sat and "B" Coy's crime sheet were not there somebody wanted to know why. Orderlies rushed round and I was summoned to H.Q. at the double. Then the camp S.M. nearly ate me and finished up by placing me under open arrest until Monday morning. I had visions of the "clink" and could feel the rope around my neck already. Having to stay in camp over the week-end also stung considerably also. However, never say die, and a little while afterwards our coy S.M. fixed things up and I was again able to lift the head & look the world in the face. In the afternoon I went home but couldn't go out as poor old uncle wasn't feeling too good. Went to "The Merchant of Venice" with Hugh Kelly & his sister in the eve, but wasn't in the mood for it - I felt like something snappy.

#### **23rd Sunday**

Went to Cronton to tea & as usual had a good time. In the morning

To be continued in our next. Ed.

# DIARY 2

(2) On the "Anchises."



--- The Heads. ---



Sept. 23rd 1916

2156

Sgt. L K Swann  
" C " Company  
40th Batt  
No. 8 Camp  
Lark Hill

18.11.16

ex

Sgt L K Swann  
3rd reinforcements  
43rd Batt  
A.I.F.

With kind and  
tender thoughts  
of my darling mother

Keith  
18.11.16

--- 2nd Epistle ---

23rd Sunday 1916

I strolled up to the camp to relieve my Cpl. for a few hours. As he had been out every night it was his turn to stay in over the weekend, and he was entitled to 2 days compensation leave for this. However 5/- did the trick without any noise or fluster.

We had frightfully dusty day on Monday and were jolly glad when it commenced to rain towards evening. During the week we carried on with the old routine including extended order. We were also preparing for Aus. Day on the 28th.

### **27th Wed. July 1916**

We were fixing and unfixing bayonets for our lives. Then we were all issued with equipment and had to put it together which entailed a lot of supervision on the part of the over-worked N.C.O's. Heard the bad news re John Blackets & George Davies deaths. Two of the whitest men I know but what grander death can a man want?

### **28th July. Aus. Day.**

We were all lined up in full marching order. infantry, light horse, A.M.C. artillery in fact every available man in camp on the gravel patch. At 9 sharp we marched off with bands playing & it was pretty fair sight & the boys marched well. There were huge crowds in town & we got a pretty fine reception. But didn't the old rifle & pack get heavy Keith? Oh, law yes! I could willingly have slung them both in the gutter. After the march through the streets we were taken to the Parade Ground where we packed our rifles on to waggons. It was about 1 o'clock & we were dismissed for the day. I had a very nice luncheon and then went home.

Refreshed myself and then caught the 4.50 train home. I had leave until the Wed. morning which was very hard to take.

### **29th July**

After a very cold trip home I was just strolling in the gate as mother came out the door. At first she did not recognise me but when she got over the surprise things were very sloppy for a time. Had a glorious time home of course. Ma & Pa were quite well and I took a few photos of them. The country is also looking a treat.

### **1st Aug. 1916**

Caught the train back to town and arrived at Malvern feeling pretty fit for the struggle.

### **5th Aug 1916**

Saturday afternoon we went for a little run and came home feeling pretty hungry to a nice snack of bacon and eggs. Went to Hugh N's in the evening to a little farewell he was giving Eric & Norm who are supposed to sail on Aug 12th by the "I tria". Had a most enjoyable time.

### **6th Sunday.**

Went to church in the morn and to Mrs. Mudge's to dinner. After that unpleasant operation I proceeded to Henley to Del Monte. It was very nice listening to songs sung in the drawing and then inhaling the ozone. Took a nice little girl home too!

### **7th Monday.**

Allotted with a squad from "B" to instruct in musketry. Sent in an application for the bombing school. Received my photos from Hammers and they made a fair job of a bad case. Spent several minutes in sending them to my unfortunate friends. Heard from Gordon's letter that he was in France.

### **10th Thursday.**

Made all arrangements during the day for the arrival of our unit to come up from the Exhibition. I have been attached to the 3/43 as a Sgt. & it's just the one I was after. They arrived at about 5 o'clock and we had the usual rush to satisfy their many wants. I had an absolutely rotten cold and a very poor impression on my squad. Was given command of No 1 platoon, and they are a fine lot of chaps.

### **11th Friday.**

Twas moving day in the workhouse. We left our tents and made ourselves very comfortable in the huts. Was again created orderly Sgt. - poor simple-looking mug!

### **12th**

It rained all the morning and made things very miserable for the troops embarking. About 900 marched off & we gave them a very hearty send-off although the weather was so bad. Sat. eve. I went to bed early to try & rid myself of the beastly cold on my chest. Remained in bed Sunday morning and felt much better when I got up. Returned to camp Monday morning.

### **14th Aug 1916.**

Fifth month of my A.I.F. training and its just about time I was going. No 1 platoon commenced a course on trench warfare.

### **16th Wednesday.**

Leave tonight - Bert. Carroll & I went to the Majestic but it was a very third rate show.

### **17th Aug 1916.**

Received orders that we would be sailing on the 28th instant & things began to move. Medical examinations allotment papers & long leave passes kept us employed very busily all day. Have great hopes of another long leave.

### **18th Friday**

Took a photo to Muriel's & then went on to "Waltham" to spend the evening. Jim & I had a good game of ping-pong & billiards & we finished up with music.

### **19th Aug 16**

Nothing much doing in the morning as all the chaps were away on long leave. It was too wet to go out so I remained at home & wrote several letters & posted the majority of my photos off. Received two letters each from the boys & both were O.K.

Took Marj. & Bon to hear two very fine singers in the Exhibition as a final flutter & everybody seemed to enjoy themselves.

### **20th**

Sunday morning I remained in bed - had an excellent dinner and then walked up to the camp to relieve the corporal. The dull monotony was agreeably broken by the appearance of two fair damsels who were looking for a Sgt. We allowed them to spread the repast on our mess table and I can tell you things went with a swing. Jelly, custard, cake & tart etc disappeared surprisingly, and although I'm ashamed to relate it I was well-nigh at the uncomfortable stage when I arose. I am fast going to the dogs. Wrote several letters to pass away the time. Am going for long leave tomorrow.

### **21st Monday.**

Fixed up a few final things for the O.C. during the morning and at 12 o'clock left camp for another long leave. Had a miserable trip home as the way was long and weary, wet & cold. Arrived there at 6.30 and went to bed at 7. Slept very peacefully until 2 when I awoke much refreshed. Mother is quite convinced I won't wither up for want of sleep in the trenches. As usual I had a grand time home and dear old mother was extremely brave with her farewell. The glorious news of Gordon's arrival in England pleased her immensely as she thought he would look after me so well. Needless to say I was very jubilant at the news. Returned home Friday evening after bidding Jamestown a final adieu.

As we had to have our kits in by 5 o'clock on Saturday morning and I hadn't my kit packed or name branded on it you can imagine I had to bustle. I purchased a few things, said goodbye to nearly all of my bank pals and then rushed home to pack my kit, or rather to get it packed by auntie & uncle. It was marvellous how much they stuffed into that bag and dear old mother's cake was placed well into the centre. Re the cake.

It will be a truly wondrous cake I am sure for mother and father & I helped make it. I gave it two stirs and was politely told to leave it alone as I would make it heavy.

I then went out to the camp and left my kit bag to get it branded. I retired fairly early feeling very tired. I was up early next morning and we had a busy morning returning blankets etc. to the Q.M. store. At 12 we were given leave until 7.30 Monday morning.

### **26th Saturday.**

Although it rained very heavy in the morning we were able to go for a fine run to Mt, Barker and I enjoyed it immensely. During the evening I did a lot of final affairs and wrote a few letters.

### **27th Sunday 1916**

Malvern anniversary and Henry Howard gave us a fine sermon. Said goodbye to a lot of my friends and then went home to a big fat dinner. In the afternoon I said goodbye to Mr Craigie and then went into town to get Bert Carroll. We went out to Parkside S.S. as they were giving us a farewell. It was a very impressive service and the new roll of honour is really fine. After saying goodbye to all my pals I then went round to Mrs. Gillianhams. Cronton & Hugh Nicks. After tea I went around to Waltham and said goodbye also. I felt darn sad and the parting was very hard as they have been so good to me always.

### **28th Aug 1916**

We left camp at 9.30 a.m. for the boat and arrived there at about 11. The boat "Anchises" is very fine and we ought to have a grand voyage. I took several snaps as we were leaving the wharf and the coloured ribbons looked extremely pretty. There was a large crowd of people on the wharf and all the people were out waving to us coming down the line and the people of Pt. Adelaide especially gave us a great farewell. My legs are beginning to feel a bit faint so everything looks hopeful towards a pleasant trip (I.D.T.).

### **29th Aug 1916**

We were very crowded in our hammocks but I felt very weary and had a most restful night. It didn't take me long however to realize that I was up against Madame Mal-de-mer. I experienced all the glorious feelings attached to this pleasant pastime, and naturally felt very "vomy" all day. We have a great mess for the Sgts. but the meals tempted me not although I made an attempt at each. We didn't do any drill all day for the men weren't feeling too good. In the evening we saw a large boat out all lighted up. I yelled out for her to stop & take me home but all my pleas were in vain. The sea is not rough but there is a heavy swell on and the old boat is doing pretty well. She has just been renovated and is as clean as a whistle, no lice, or rats at all. There are 6 tables in the mess with 12 men at each table and we have a waiter at each. The meals are A.1. and we have a specially printed menu for each meal.

### **30th Aug 1916**

I woke up feeling much better this morning and was able to have a good breakfast. We have boxing & sports mostly all day as there was no room for drill. The wind has changed round and we have a nice sea on. I can quite imagine how Gordon describes his voyage as a hideous nightmare for those poor devils down in the well deck had a hell of a time. The place absolutely stunk foul and I don't know how the poor men could sleep down there. However now the place is much better ventilated and things are decidedly changed. The men are being fed splendidly and have no complaints at all. Cards form the main amusement and they don't play for fun either.

### **31st**

Medical inspection and usual routine. Ate like a horse all day.

### **1st Sept. 1916.**

Got auntie's pudding warmed up with some sauce & we had it at our mess table. It was great and we all enjoyed it. Saw two large whales, but was unable to entice them within spearing distance. Prepared our men

for guard for tomorrow.

### **2nd Sept**

On guard all day and was darn glad when it was over. Had to wander all round the boat to each of the 17 sentries every half- hr. and it was a specially rough night. Sing of joy, sing of bliss, home was never like this. Did not feel too good as my "stom" wasn't up to the mark.

### **3rd. Sunday.**

Had my delightful golden locks shaved off this morning & I looked a hardened criminal as you can imagine. It feels nice & cool and there will be no need for a careful toilet of a morning. At 10.30 we had a church parade but it wasn't extra good as the decks were so crowded.

### **4th Monday**

Had a very good athletic morning's sport and was able to polish off a good dinner. Had a go with the gloves in the afternoon and got a pretty rough house. However its all in the game. We had a submarine alarm today and the lads turned out fairly well. The procedure is to rush down on the deck & and take cover from the shrapnel as submarines now-a-days carry 4 inch guns. If we are struck by a torpedo we get downstairs in the well deck and place ourselves round the life belts and get up opposite our boat on the top deck. Then we wait for orders & the crew gets the boat ready for lowering.

### **5th Sept. 1916.**

During the afternoon it commenced to blow and by night time we were in for a rough time. One large wave broke clean over the deck and into the mess drenching nearly all its occupants. I was very lucky & only just got a little damp. Then another exceedingly big roll completely swept all the crockery & dishes from the tables on which they were piled prior to being washed and the crash was heard throughout the surrounding area. Am able to report satisfactory progress with regards to the "mo" irrigation scheme. Wrote several letters to my beloved friends.

### **7th Sept.**

On guard again but it is a beautiful day. Had a submarine alarm but we were fully prepared and carried out our duties well. The S.A. units have to supply guard until we arrive at Cape Town and then the N.S.W. reinforcements will carry on, the reason being that our men haven't completed their musketry.

### **8th Sept. 1916**

The sea was as smooth as a quiet little lake and I had no idea it could be like that right out in the middle of the Indian Ocean. It was a glorious day & we picked up a little of the lost time caused by the storm.

### **9th. Saturday.**

During the afternoon sports were indulged in & a very nice concert was arranged on the aft well deck in the evening. Ate like a starving hyena all day.

### **10th Sunday**

It was a delightful day and the sun was quite warm. Went to church parade in the morning but did not hear a word of the sermon as it was too windy. During the afternoon I wrote a lot of letters. It was our mess president's birthday & we put a 1/- in and had a few extras such as nuts, oranges, ice cream and a lovely cake for each table. It was a treat having a taste of real good cake & the function proved a great success. Afterwards the minister conducted a nice little sing song service on the deck & gave us a very interesting address.

### **11th Sep 1916**

On guard again but it was a nice day so didn't mind. At about 10.30 p.m. my pal Berriman & I had a little

feast on the boat deck. It was a grand night - moonlight & the foaming waves looked very pretty. First of all we started off with chocs. & then finished up the dates. Two bottles of lemonade were easily dispensed with and to complete our revel we cleaned up a tin of preserved apricots & a few coffee biscuits. After a chat & the cooling breeze on our toilworn brows we decided to go to rest satisfied with our hard days work.

#### **12th Tuesday.**

Washing day for the unit & one of the men did mine very well. I had a nice warm bath in the morning & felt O.K. after it. In the evening we saw some of the boxing events but there was a lack of class all round. One fellow is washing his dungarees tied them on to a rope & let them hang overboard & wash in the sea. Brains again!

#### **13th Wednesday.**

Daw, Berri & I had a little feed on our own before we retired. A tin of pineapple & one of pears & some biscuits constituted a very fair whack. We got stirred up re the discipline of our platoons & I gave my men a very fatherly little talk.

#### **15th. Sept.**

One of the N.S.W. officers died today & the funeral was of course carried out with all military honours making it very impressive. We were calling in at Durban to put him off but now we are heading for Cape Town. The weather is ideal & the sea beautifully smooth.

#### **16th Sep. 1916.**

We fitted our equipment together during the morning as it is supposed that we are to have a route march in Cape Town. We were afforded a good afternoons enjoyment by the boxers who were in the contests. There were some real good "goes" & one poor chap received a very sudden knock out in the first round. A grand concert was held in the evening & the 43rd were excellently represented, there's no doubt about them being a talented crew all right.

#### **17th. Sunday**

We sighted land for the first time since leaving Aus. & it was welcomed accordingly. It was the South African coast and the land inland seemed very hilly. We also spied a lighthouse and two ships. During the voyage to Cape Town we only saw 3 ships so you can imagine the trip was pretty monotonous. Last night Berri, Daw & myself had a little refreshment before retiring. Berri had a tin of Royal puffs & I produced that pot of cheese & with some lemonade we had a good time.

#### **18th Monday.**

After a very pretty view of the coast we picked up our pilot who brought us into the wharf about 3.30 p.m. Orders were given that all men were to be in full marching order as a march through the street was anticipated. Of course we were all ready but we patiently remained there until 6 o'clock when we were dismissed. It was a splendid taste of our brilliant system shown by the O.C. troops. However I won a drink as I thought we wouldn't get off that night. We were all extremely disappointed at not getting off of course. Table Mountain looks fine & forms a great background for the town. One would obtain a nice view from its huge height. We all went to bed early as we were promised a day's outing tomorrow.

#### **19th. Sept. 1916**

We were all looking our best on the early morning parade & at about 10 am we were all marching in full order to Green Point Oval where the people of Cape Town were going to entertain us. It is a delightful little oval with those huge hills at the rear & the sea in front & I should think for prettiness it would be hard to beat.

The ladies supplied us with oranges & tea and the fruit is especially good. We then participated in sports & at 6 o'clock left the oval, marching through the streets to a large place called the feather market where we were going to have tea. The roads are excellent and a car & a week to spare would do me right down to the

ground. The trains & trams can't compare with South Aus. at all. Ours are far superior in every way. Also the skirt. This black tack is no good at all & the white population is a long way behind our own dear girls.

The inside of the place was all gaily decorated with bunting & nicely laid out for 1600 hungry men. Pies, cakes & fruit were there in plenty & every one was satisfied. After a concert we arrived home very tired but feeling very pleased for our little taste of land again. No cables were allowed to be sent which brought forth shrieks of anger from our timid lips. The citizens were very kind & posted as many letters as we gave them so most probably the censors will be relieved of a lot of blue-pencil work.

#### **20th Sept. 1916**

Again at 9.30 we were on the march but this time it was a square dinkum route march with a full pack up. We went to Camp Bay a distance of 8 miles along the coast & it was some class. Talk about a motor run - Oh! cut it out! I took several snaps as there were some some tasty little views. We camped in the grounds of a fine hotel & they had everything fixed up O.K. for us. They had a tasty luncheon prepared & I enjoyed it immensely. We were lucky enough to be relieved of our packs coming home & it was considerably easier. We were all dead tired on our arrival at the boat but it had been a very pleasant day. Several men from the different units broke away during the day but the old 43rd only had one man.

Dissatisfaction was caused through other units on other boats being given free leave as soon as they arrived in port where as although we had behaved ourselves on the previous day leave was absolutely cut out. It was unfair & an unwise move. After tea things began to move. Although there was a strong guard on about 300 hopped over the side & were citywards in a very short time. The colonel tried to stop them but he was counted out & potatoes & lumps of coal got moving. Immediately after that a roll was called & the absentees were in the majority. At irregular intervals the wanders returned home & were given the impression of being hit up pretty heavily. However next morning much to our surprise they were all let off "scott free". Does the colonel wish to encourage mutiny or is he trying to get disliked? Anyhow I'd like to spend a few weeks in Cape Town doing the sights.

#### **21st. Sep.**

We moved off after breakfast for England with half the distance of our journey done. There were only two deserters out of 1800 odd.

#### **22nd Sep 1916**

Beautiful calm sea although after their little frivol on land some of the men felt a little "groogy".

#### **23rd Sep.**

Our 4.7 opened its mouth this morning to test her bed & she fired two shots at a box & it was wonderful how soon she knocked it to bits. We are having a lot of alarm practice now and I'm not a bit sorry that the N.S.W. units have to supply guard until the voyage is over. We saw two turtles & they looked funny old things swimming in the water.

#### **24th. Sunday.**

As usual we could not hear the sermon and Fred Daw & I were having a little talk on the hatch. One of the officers, Stopp, espied us & we were reported. What a brave & noble thing to do!

#### **25th Monday.**

We had a case of meningitis in the unit & we were consequently quarantined. We had our throats painted twice each day & the men were not allowed to leave their part of the deck.

#### **26th. Tuesday.**

Washing day. It cost me 1/6. Too extravagant altogether. Carried out some of the eliminating contests for

our dog & wheelbarrow race. Quarantine still continues & we Sgts. were not allowed to sleep in the mess. Spent a delightful night on the hatch & sleeping there caused a certain amount of jealousy because we were covering up some of the open hatch & the men below objected most boisterously. However nothing dangerous occurred.

#### **27th. Wednesday.**

We are getting into the tropics now as it is mighty hot. We expect to cross the equator tomorrow. Thought of uncle.

#### **28th Thursday.**

Getting hot as ---- & they are putting awnings up. We now have 10 cases of mumps in the hospital & the meningitis case has got out of danger. We continue to have our throats gargled twice each day.

#### **29th Sep.**

Carried out a few of our contests & I won my first round of quoits & the heat in the potato race. We (Berri, Daw & I) had our photos taken for sending home to our loved ones. We trust that our quarantine will be over tomorrow. Forgot to say that on the 27th I wished Uncle many happy returns & the triple alliance drunk his health. I have to relate a very interesting purse episode. I changed my trousers one night & put my purse in my pyjamas pocket. It contained 4 pounds. Imagine my surprise when, on waking next morning, I found it had disappeared. Of course I looked everywhere for it but all my efforts were in vain, but I didn't worry (naturally). Well nothing occurred until one bright Sept. morn, just 5 days after the event. Seven of we Sgts. were sleeping outside & on waking the one next to me said "I wonder whose purse this is". Lo to behold I once again gazed on my long lost pal again. A detective was immediately employed & the verdict was that in my sleep I must have turned over & that the purse slipped out of the pocket & fell into his hammock. I got the other fellow on the other side of me to look through his blankets but it didn't strike me to get the other one to look in his as I was too bowed down in sorrow. If this luck continues I am sure everything will be O.K. Now comes a little class. My pyjama seat was all torn as the stuff was getting rotten & so it needed a lot of repair. Well I got the machinery out & sewed a khaki hanky over the opening & fixed it up in the latest Parisian fashion. Well to tell you the truth you couldn't see the join as I did it so well.

I indulged in a little gambling to pass away the time & I was quite successful. We crossed the line today but there were no celebrations as half of the boat is still in isolation. Everybody was exceedingly pleased with a little event up forward. The boys were hosing themselves with sea- water & the ships S.M. & the Adjutant came down the stairway to tell them to stop. They both finished up with a severe drenching & all parties were glad because both men are most hated. The sea is still as calm as ever & the weather hot.

#### **30th Saturday 1916.**

Witnesses some good boxing and had a singsong after tea.

#### **1st Oct. Sunday. 1916.**

My word the time seems to be flying & I can't imagine we'll be in England in a weeks time. Must say I don't relish these tropics too much. Church parade in the morning & I did some writing later. All lights went out at 6 o'clock & we spent a very miserable evening just mooning round.

#### **2nd October 1916.**

Very hot indeed. In the evening we had a very enjoyable lecture with the lantern slides on the boat deck by the colonel on Constantinople & by Lew Stapp on "Anzac & the landing". He (the latter) was particularly interesting.

#### **3rd October 1916.**

We sighted land at about 8.30 am. and they told us it was the Cape Verde Islands off Cape Verde. We arrived at St Vincent just before dinner and the place quite surprised me. It is a fine harbour and there

were a large number of boats in. Six were captured German prizes & the Highflyer, a light cruiser, which has been in several successful engagements was also anchored there. The place belongs to the Portuguese. The town is only small but the buildings appear fairly decent and the hills or rather mountains are extremely barren & desolate. As soon as we reached the entrance to the harbour swarms of the niggers in their boats came out & sold their wares & dived for pennies. I secured a couple of very nice little bags made of beads.

We took on water & received orders & at 5 o'clock Wednesday morning we left for England. We heard some awful rumours & the poor old "Wiltshire" was torpedoed. Last Thursday we had a most instructive & interesting lecture by a major who is returning from East Africa to England about the campaign being waged there. It was an eye-opener for me as I had no idea that so many difficulties were placed in the way of the generals who had charge of the operations. There were all kinds of reports about submarines & I am sure some of the poor fellows had very tender thoughts of home. We are now in the danger zone proper and of course all precautions with regards to lights after six o'clock must be strictly observed. Even smoking is not allowed. There are about 200 men on guard now & a very vigilant watch is kept.

#### **4th October 1916.**

After parade we had one of the most interesting lectures by a returned Belgian parson (R.C.) on Belgium that I've heard. He was a very eloquent speaker & naturally spoke right from the heart. Finished tea in the dark but a small dish of ice cream somehow or other eventually found its way to my rosebud.

#### **5th Thursday. 1916.**

After two very strenuous heats I just got pipped for first place in the potato race. It absolutely knocked me out as I had a touch of influenza & for three succeeding days I was very much off. The monotony of the trip & the food is becoming somewhat boorish & I haven't had a real good meal for a long time.

#### **6th Friday 1916.**

On guard. Felt very crook. Poor old Freddie went into hospital with the mumps. There are now over 60 cases.

#### **Saturday. 7th.**

Received our pay in the morning - a whole 12/-. Witnessed the boxing finals & most of them were good. Our tug-of-war team won its first heat.

#### **Sunday 8th Oct 1916.**

One of our poor fellows died this morning from meningitis. They thought he was getting quite well but he had a relapse & went worse. Sgt. Berri was in charge of the party & the ceremony was carried out very well. We are about 3 days sail from England. Am going to write Roy to wish him many returns of the 27th.

#### **11th Wednesday 1916**

We commenced preparing for our disembarkation today. Our little destroyer which we had picked us up a couple of days ago, still continued to carry on its tedious job of clearing the way for us. We arrived at Plymouth at 3 o'clock and the entrance was very pretty. After a long wait we were taken from the old Anchises in a little tug to the wharf where we quickly entrained. I was sorry to part with the old boat as it had been a real good home. We saw Drake's stature & the memorable bowling green of days of yore. We slipped through to a little place called Codford arriving there about 10 pm. The trip through Devonshire & Somerset would have been very pretty I am sure had it been light. We got settled at about 12 p.m. & I was feeling darn tired.

#### **12th Thursday.**

Last evening we were given leave and naturally we went to see the sights of Codford. There are small shops all along the street & each seems to be doing a roaring trade. We saw a rotten movie show, got some post

cards, had a drink, saw the sights & then strolled home. After a lot of waiting I managed to send a cable home & wire Gordon. This camp is a huge place but the system still lacks. We anticipate moving this afternoon.

#### **13th Friday.**

We moved about a mile along the road to No 3 Aus. Camp and after much fooling round we finally got settled. The system of doing things here is on a par with Aus. and I am very disappointed as I thought everything would be so well managed. However it's all in the game. In the evening I had a long chat to Harold Moody & Hugh Kelly. Arranged to go to Lark Hill to see the battalion tomorrow.

#### **14th Saturday.**

Nice day and anticipated a good trip out. However were told we were to be isolated on account of mumps. Much righteous cursing & swearing. Said goodbye to the 43rd reinforcements as we will most probably reinforce the 50th Battalion. I believe the original 43rd will even be turned into reinforcements. Pretty hot too. Completed a little correspondence during the afternoon. Said goodbye to Lieu Watts & Symons yesterday. They are either going to France or to further schools.

#### **15th Sunday 1916.**

Commenced the eight month of my training. Orderly Sgt. for the day, but the duties weren't very strenuous. We are still isolated & so could not go out. Corresponded a treat. It is getting darn cold now so I don't know what it will be like when the real thing sets in. Saw the first aeroplane flying over camp today. We have a very nice little mess and the baked potatoes are grand. The strawberry jam is also especially good. I don't reckon the men get a fair go though with regards their meals especially the bread.

#### **16th Monday.**

We are isolated & consequently can't do any drill. Have taken up the game of darts very seriously. Will be extremely pleased when we receive a little of the necessary. Berri & I went into Codford after tea & made several purchases, the most important being a bonza little cane for 1/3. I wrote Gordon as I found out his correct address from a pal who I recognised in a car as being in AMTS by his colours. Saw another bonza biplane.

#### **17th October 1916.**

Despatched about a dozen pcs. books & parcels home & several letters as the mail closes tomorrow. Battalion Ord. Sgt. today. Sweet cop. It was very cold & rained most of the day. Mail came in but none for the 3rd. Saw Stan Davis & had a long chat about his experiences & old times. He has been through a whole heap of fighting. Voted for conscription yesterday & today we received a special message from Birdwood on the subject. You can't get away from the fact that the army is run in a classy ragtime way. System is absolutely lacking everywhere.

#### **18th Wednesday.**

Had a mornings physical jerks & company drill on top of a large hill and it was very bracing in the fresh mountain air. During the afternoon we went for a route march and the scenery was exceptionally pretty. Strolled into the village after tea. Received my first letter from Aus. today & it was from Mrs. Hurn.

#### **19th. October 1916.**

Black day in Keith's little book. I relieved one of our Sgts, for a couple of hours as he wanted to sing at a concert and he was on guard. During my tour of duty I dismissed a couple of posts as I thought they were quite unnecessary. Of course it was senseless thing to do but naturally that was expected. Next day when the guard was mounted of course the officer wanted to know why the other sentries had been dismissed. Well after tea the S.M. took me up before the officer in his private room & there I received a good dressing down. He finished up by placing me under open 'arrest' & not allowing me to leave the camp or dine with the Sgts. I had to have my meals brought up to me in my hut & I felt like a darned prisoner or convict.

Next day I went up before the O.C. & was remanded to go up to the Major. I could see my stripes gone a treat. However next day Mr. Packard the officer came & had a good talk to me, giving me some good advice and shook hands & said goodbye. He is an absolute sport & I consider myself particularly lucky. Went into Codford in the evening & brought up fruit etc. Received wire from Gordon wishing me welcome.

**20th Friday 1916.**

Went for a bonza route march through extremely pretty country & the air is blithe.

**21st Oct 1916. Sat.**

Coy Ord Sgt. again. Hope to get off to meet Gordon at the station. Secured necessary leave & went into Codford Station to meet Gordon. I was delighted to see him looking so well & the old boy looked well in his togs. We had a grand talk about old times & wished Roy could have been with us.

I surprised him when I opened mother's cake & it was as fresh & moist as possible. He slept in our room & dined with us & altogether we had a real fine time. I was battalion Ord Sgt. & consequently we stayed in & yarned & yarned & yarned.

**22nd Oct. 1916.**

Had another fine day & saw Gordon off to the station by the 5 train. We were loath to part for it had been one of the happiest weekends imaginable. Long leave is anticipated this week.

**23rd Oct 1916**

Day of much rejoicing throughout the unit as our first mail came to light. I received a batch of seven and wasn't I just pleased! One from home, uncle & auntie at Sydney, Muriel, Bon, Gordon & Bessie Sharland. Replied to five of them in the evening & sent the first book of my diary home.

**24th Tuesday 1916.**

Went for a route march & did extended order and platoon drill.

**25th Oct 1916.**

We received the huge sum of £1 today for our pay and it wasn't before time either. The majority of the unit were penniless & I had become a benevolent society during the last few days.

**26th Oct.**

Received another pay for the extra duty & every little helps. We still have a £10 to collect for extra duty on the boat so that will set us up for London. Leave still hangs fire. Went to a lecture by a returned Lieut. on the Lewis gun but he wasn't anything startling. Got inoculated against par-typhoid just before bed. Arm got very sore & swollen but it wasn't half as bad as we expected.

**27th Oct 1916.**

Roy's birthday and I thought of the old boy & wished he had been over with Gordon & I. We were exempt for 48 hours drill & we stayed in & slept most of the day.

**28th Saturday Oct.**

The boys went for a 14 mile route march & they came home absolutely blown out. As I was mounting guard at 6 p.m. I was exempted.

**29th Sunday 1916.**

Spent a very miserable day on guard & it's the most ragtime affair possible. The prisoners just wander round as they please themselves. Had a long yarn to Percy Chase one of my old Unley School chums. Came off guard at 6 and went to bed early.

### **30th Oct 1916.**

Drill as usual & Physical exercises. We got absolutely drenched through coming home. Oh! it was fun. In the evening we had to give the men a 3 hour lecture & I partly amused them for the whole time. We are getting it pretty solid now with regards to drill but it is what we need. Had a very heart to heart lecture by our Major on discipline etc & he appears to be a pretty fair sort although a very strict disciplinarian. Leave anticipated Friday.

### **2nd November 1916.**

We were all in a fluster & excited on this fair morn. We received our pay, mine totalled up to £16 odd, and made issued the leave passes.

### **3rd Nov 1916.**

Up at 5.30 & it didn't take long for us to dress, have breakfast and get on the way for Codford. We caught the 8 o'clock train and the run to Paddington was absolutely superb. The various tints & the different greens were immensely pretty & it was a fine trip. We reached London at 11.30 a.m. marched to Horseferry Road & were dismissed. I had 5 days leave on a/c of going to Edinburgh. Shrewd head!

Styant, Daw & I immediately hailed a taxi & we went to find our lodging hole. The place we intended staying at was full up so we went over to the Imperial Hotel in Russell Sq. It appeared to be O.K. & we were immensely pleased all through. After a good dinner Fred & I booked seats & went to the London Opera house - a rotten vaudeville show. In the evening we saw Seymour Hicks in "Broadway Jones" and it was a real scream. Couldn't get a taxi so we walked home. Had supper in the Winter Garden. Very nice too!

### **4th November 1916.**

I like this scheme of calmly strolling out of the front door & ordering a taxi. It is the life sure. Saw St Pauls, the Houses of Parliament & Westminster Abbey. They were very interesting of course and the crypt in St Pauls especially took my fancy. My word it makes one feel proud to think of our fine old ancestors. Went to see "A little bit Fluff" in the evening. Gordon was also there & we had an enjoyable time together. Had my first experience of the tube warfare, I mean travelling & it seemed rather peculiar that the theatre should be underground as well. The play was really humorous. They have been playing it for over a year & naturally each knew their part pretty well. Caught the 11.30 train for Edinburgh after. I had a most enjoyable time as there were two Scotchies who had come straight from the Somme on leave and they told me many interesting tales. Had a nice little snack at York all for nothing. Scotchie sure! We reached Edinburgh at 8 & I immediately went up Princes St. to the Soldiers & Sailors Club where I had a real good plate of ham & eggs for 1/-.

I then took a run round the town in a taxi & it cost me 5/- for the 1/2 hr. Extravagance galore. I then strolled about the street for a while visiting the Holy Road palace & Edinburgh Castle in my travels. Both bought forth exclamations of surprise & wonderment. Just after dinner I got in a charabanc & went for a bonza run to the Firth of Forth Bridge. The roads were good were the scenery pretty. I was sitting next to an English major and he was very kind in explaining & showing me all the interesting parts. The Firth of Forth is a marvellous piece of architecture (?) 1 3/4 miles in length & it takes a gang of men just one year to complete painting it. Spent the rest of the afternoon in the museum & there were some fine exhibits present. Caught a lovely bit of skirt too. Teaed together & she took me to church after. It was a good old Methodist Church & I enjoyed the hymns and service immensely. It was the first real good sing I had since leaving home & I enjoyed it immensely. After a touching little farewell to my little girl I caught the 12.20 p.m. train to London.

### **5th Nov 1916.**

Arrived in London at 8 o'clock, had a good bath, shave and breakfast & I felt none the worse for my restless sleep. All told it was a very enjoyable trip.

### **6th Monday.**

Went for a morning's bus ride, had dinner with Fred at Lyons Popular & it's a classy little show. The food is exquisitely cooked & the surroundings superb. Met Gordon at the hotel & with Fred & his sister we went to "Home on leave" at the Royalty. It was a great play & was darn sad at the finish. Went with Gordon to the Chelsea Garage & after he fixed up his affairs we went to a tasty little restaurant & had a fine feed. It was the old boys birthday & we had a nice little time together. He showed me into Maskelynes Hall of Mysteries & I spent a very topping little time there. They did the cabinet trick that I saw in Adelaide 10 years ago & it was as good as ever. Supper then bed. Very sleepy too.

### **7th Tuesday.**

Fred & I took a walk through Piccadilly & Bond Street to view the skirt & we weren't disappointed at all. My word I like these short skirts & little silk stockings on dainty ankles. The girls are dressed exquisitely and one sees the pick of the basket there. The windows are also beautifully decorated and make a wonderful show. We dined again at the Pop & after called for Fred's sister at the Ivanhoe from where we took her to the revue "Razzle Dazzle". It is a wonderful theatre & beautifully comfortable & convenient. We went back to the hotel, fixed up our a/c's & I beat them for 4/6, had tea, caught a taxi & set out for Paddington. We just got there in time as we had only got seated when the puff puff moved out. We had both had an excellent time & enjoyed ourselves immensely. £2 a day saw us through comfortably. We arrived home at 10 to 11 feeling very tired but that was all dispelled when I received 10 letters from home etc. It took me about an hour to read them & I can tell you it was a very pleasant time.

### **8th Wed. 1916**

Loafed around all the morning & instructed the guard in the afternoon. Mounted at 5.30. Wrote letters until 2 a.m.

### **9th Thursday 1916.**

Went for a route march during the morning. At 5 o'clock we had orders to clear the 900 men out of camp by 8.30 a.m. the next day. We worked all night, I went to bed from 4 to 6 and worked on after that until we fell in. I didn't have time for a snack or wash but managed to eat a little on the march. We stood on the parade ground from 8.30 until 12 waiting for them to finish things off. At last we moved off for Lark Hill. We had full packs up & the distance was over 14 miles. We arrived there at about 6 o'clock weary & ill at ease. Another wearisome wait & then we again moved off. Now comes the foul part of the story. The 1st, 2nd & 3rd reinforcements were lined up in the dark and an officer came round with a lantern & just detailed us off anyhow. The 1st & 2nd went to the 43rd, but the poor old 3rd were divided amongst the 36, 7 - 8, 39 & 40th Battalions. I happened to be on the left and landed into the 40th (A Tasmanian battalion). We were then marched off to their head quarters, were examined, had tea & went to bed straightaway. I can tell you it didn't take long for me to go to sleep. Just as we were leaving Codford I saw Charlie Lawrie & Ken Coombs. They were off to France on the morrow. I was the only Sgt. with the men as all of the others are going to schools. I was sorry to lose them indeed but one just has to grin & bear it. I tossed old Fred to see who should go to school at Chelsea but I lost & here I am without a pal. The N.C.O's & officers are very decent & have made me feel quite at home.

### **12th Sunday 1916.**

We got issued with a new web equipment & all other articles which we had lost. The battalion will go into action very shortly. In the afternoon I went over to the 43rd Batt to see some of my pals. I saw Lieu. Clarke & old Charlie Sexton & we had a good yarn over old times. I saw Syd Barratt, we had tea together & then strolled along & visited Bill Boon and Nick Carter. We had a grand talk & they are both O.K. Our colours are Red and White in an oval

### **13<sup>th</sup> November 16.**

There was a divisional march on & we had our kits all packed with only marching order articles. It was a hard & we covered about 16 miles. There were about 20,000 men all told & every kind of arm possible. The

column covered 14 ½ miles & it was some parade. Am going for another 4 days leave on Wednesday. Hope to go to Cardiff. Expect to lose stripes at a moments notice.

**14<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1916.**

Had a squad for rifle exercises all the morning. Our company was away on leave & we only missed going because our training was so far behind. Crook luck for another 4 days in London would have been very hard to take. I wrote to Mr. Hindmarsh & he was only to pleased to have me but of course I could not go.

**15<sup>th</sup> Nov 1916.**

Got issued with most of our missing articles for active service. I scored a nice tunic & a pair of underpants.

**16<sup>th</sup> Thursday.**

Orders came out that all kits bags had to be packed with any articles which were private property or not wanted for A.S. Imagine the job. There were only 17 of us to do 220 men's kits. It was a crying shame & I was as wild as beggary. All kits had to be emptied & sorted out & the bags which were locked had to be broken open. We were told that we would never see them again so I determined to get mine off to Gordon somehow or the other, as it was far too valuable to lose. I took it up to the YMCA & they kindly told me it would be forwarded on all right. When the men came home from leave they found all sorts of things missing & I feel darn sorry for the poor chaps. We worked up to 11 on them & then I turned in.

**16<sup>th</sup> Tues. Nov 16.**

Had all the day shooting on the ranges. Crumbs wasn't it cold too. This was the first time some of our men had shot & it seemed hard that they were being pushed off to the front so quickly. Had my first sight of snow but it was very light.

**17<sup>th</sup> Nov.**

Had an 8 miles march out to a place for field firing. Passed through a couple of pretty little townships & we saw the Aviation School but it was too windy for flights. Did some writing in the evening. One doesn't get too much spare time I can tell you.

**18<sup>th</sup> Sat. 1916.**

Drilling all day to try & catch up a bit of time. Threw our first live Mills hand grenade this morning & they are a tasty little weapon. Also had a

Goodbye

## DIARY 3

Enlisted 14-3-16

Left Australia 28-8-16

Arrived in England 11-10-16

Arrived at Harve 24-11-16

In the trenches 12-12-16

2156

Sgt. L Keith Swann.

"C" Coy.

40<sup>th</sup> Battalion

France.

**18<sup>th</sup> Nov 1916 (Continued)**

lecture on the Lewis gun as we have to fire 10 rounds before leaving for France. It is a beautiful gun & I wouldn't mind being in a gun team. Issued with a lovely warm leather jacket. They are great & if its colder in France than here, we will want a dozen on. Sent a cable home re my new address.

**19<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1916.**

Issued with gas & steel helmets and we are now fully equipped. Saw Syd Barratt & we went to say goodbye to Bill & Mick. Had a good chat & then went home.

**20<sup>th</sup> November 1916.**

Kit inspection and a test route march with our full packs up. The two extra blankets & ground sheets make a big difference in the weight but I managed to struggle through all right.

**21<sup>st</sup> Nov 1916.**

My promotion came out today. I am rated as a Cpl. Receiving his pay but I retain my three stripes & enjoy all the privileges of a Sgt. Of course I was greatly surprised at receiving this but the necessary kid fixed things all right with the head. One should have every opportunity of becoming a full Sgt. soon.

**22<sup>rd</sup> Nov 16**

Final kit inspection & general cleaning up of the camp. Went over to Amesbury & met old Gordon. We had tea at a Hut there and a good old final yarn. Left him at about 8 o'clock.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Thursday**

After much standing around & unnecessary delay we left Lark Hill at about 1 o'clock. We entrained at Amesbury and arrived at Southampton just as it was getting dark & it didn't take long for us to embark on a small boat, which was to carry us across the Channel to France. Talk about fast it was a pleasure in one way to be on her. The boat was awfully crowded & we didn't have room to lie down in. We reached Le Havre at 1.15 am & stayed on board until 8 o'clock the next morning when I was issued with my first iron rations. Then the fun began. We were all dead tired & were on our way to a rest camp. After a long march of about 6 miles up hilly roads we reached our destination absolutely done. We had to positively drag the fellows out of the gutters the last mile or so. We arranged ourselves in the tents & after a good tea & wash I felt much better. Had my first experience of trying to make the French lassies understand what I wanted. We went to bed early hoping to have a long night's rest. However, it was na bon. We were up at 5, rushed through breakfast & rushed to get into line. We had another march to the station in the early morning & rain. We were shoved into cattle trucks & after long wait, during which time I had a real good old feed of cake & tea, we started off for goodness knows where. It was an absolutely rotten journey for the truck was so crowded we didn't have room to lie down. There were 7 trains ahead of us & 3 behind. The journey was awfully slow & all told we were 40 hours on the road. We passed through Rouen & then on to the Somme region. I believe we took this very round about route to deceive the Huns should they make any attempts to surprise us. We passed through Estaires & disentrained at Bailleul, then arrived per motorbus at a place called Merris, a French village. We marched to our billets & got there about 6pm. It was an old barn & we were very crowded but we didn't stay there long. We adopted active service conditions & washed & shaved with water from the running brook. Just before dinner we found we were in the wrong billets & consequently we had to pack up & wander back to a much better place in the town. This barn was occupied by Germans in the early part of the war & the church still retains its shell holes. We are on the old bully racket but I'm keeping off of it as much as possible. Another Sgt. & I had a tin of peas & some cake together & it was O.K. I'm hitting things up these last few days for one never knows. We are in sound of the guns & about 10 miles from Armentieres. Orderly Sgt. for the mob. Wrote my first field service pics. Have to be very careful of spies as the place abounds with them. A billet of 25 tommies got blown up last month. Have no idea when we will go to the trenches but I don't think it will be long.

**29<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1916**

Issued with another gas respirator which is an absolute protection against attacks. Truly, it is a fine invention. We are told that on our front it is almost assured that we will catch several of these attacks. We have to practice getting them on in 6 seconds. The barn in which we are living was occupied by the Germans in the beginning of the war. Received four letters. None from home and most of them were old ones but nevertheless they were extremely welcome. Visited the little cafe twice & the old eggs & chips went down O.K.

**30<sup>th</sup> Thursday 1916.**

Received our first pay 30 francs. Very acceptable too. Went through a gas test also. Received another 5 letters but again they were all old ones, which had been redirected from Codford & Lark Hill. Tasted the wines of the place & they are not to be sniggered at.

**Dec 1<sup>st</sup> 16.**

Gas drill galore. Correspondence in the evening. Another Sgt. & I had a little supper before retiring, a tin of cream & a large tin of pears & very nice too.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 16.**

Up at 5 and away by 7 o'clock for quarters nearer the line. Had breakfast & got an issue & then our Bat. set off. We passed through Nieppe & arrived at Armentieres at 4 in the afternoon. We did about 9 miles & it was one of the worst marches I've done. The roads were all made of these cobblestones & my feet were just covered with blisters at the finish. Talk about motor transport & Traffic - all along the march we were being passed continually and the lovely cars too. Daimler, Sunbeams etc & my word they made my mouth water. All along the road was a beautiful avenue of trees and I guess they look nice in summer. A very noticeable feature is the absence of men in the villages & about all you see are old women. We were taken into an old building & there we made ourselves comfortable. We had a fair glimpse of the effect of shell fire on the houses & some of them had had a very bad time.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 16.**

After lunch we moved off to fresh billets & this time we got into a much battered old building. It had been the Civil Hospital but now all the windows & frames had been broken & much of the roofs & walls were knocked down. However we got straw & altogether it should be pretty right. Bought a souvenir in the shape of a little soapbox with "Armentieres" cup on it. Feet still crook & remainder of the platoon went up to the trenches with rations but I had to stay behind.

**4<sup>th</sup> Dec. 16.**

Received a couple of letters & also a paper from Mr. Hindmarsh.

**5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday.**

We went up into the first line fire trench & carried the empty gas cylinders away to a dump. They are about 3 ft long & 1 ft in diameter & shaped like a big bottle. They are attached to a pole & carried by two men & I can say they are darn heavy & awkward getting around the corners of the trenches. The trenches though which we passed were fine & quite dry & they must take a long while to build. There was very little firing & the front line is very different from what I had anticipated. We were able to march right up & we were absolutely safe all the time. This front is exceptionally quiet & they haven't advanced an inch for over two years. All they do is to bombard & destroy the trenches as much as possible & then the other side builds them up again. Of course this line is too far advanced & we are waiting for them to get through on the Somme. The whole of our Batt. was on fatigue carrying these cylinders & they did the work very well. One soon gets tired to the sound of the bullets & shell whistling overhead, but at first it comes quite natural for you to duck. We reached home quite safely but with very sore shoulders.

**6<sup>th</sup> Dec 16.**

We marched to the Divisional Baths & there we had a delightful time. We simply soaked ourselves in the big tank of warm water & afterwards we had our dirty clothes exchanged for clean ones. My word it was great as we hadn't had a bath for some time & water is frightfully scarce in this city. We absolutely haven't any water to drink as it had been doctored by the Huns. In the evening we again visited the trenches & carried more gas cylinders away.

**Dec 8th Thursday.**

Up a 6 & away to the trenches for fatigue all day. Had a good look at the German lines through a periscope but we couldn't see much. Things were again very quiet although we started a bit of a bombardment at 1 o'clock. After tea we got things ready for we take over the trenches tomorrow.

**9<sup>th</sup> December 1916.**

Slack day as the majority of the platoon went to the trenches. Had a real fly at a fruit stall when I was out on a message as I felt fit & wanted a final flutter. First of all I had a franc worth of lovely dates, then 1/2 lb of the most beautiful grapes possible. They were large black ones just like plums & didn't they go down with a slip. Had the greater part of a tin of preserved pears & to finish up dried figs fixed me. Needless to say the desired effect was obtained. Received a letter from Gordon enclosing letters from home telling of darling old mother's holiday at Malvern & my word I was glad to receive it. Had a most pleasing time re-reading them again & again.

**10<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1916.**

Up early and away to the trenches. In all my military career I have never seen such muddling to equal the way in which we were led to our trenches. Up & down, about turn, halt, up the wrong trench, take the wrong turning & so on & we took over 2 hrs whereas 1/2 would have completed the whole business. Really it was absolutely awful & took the heart out of any man. The lack of organisation is absolutely the limit. However I feel certain we will win the war even if we do have to bungle through it. One thing with a diary one can express them selves exactly how they feel. At time of writing I am in a dug out in the Subsidiary trench about 2 miles behind the firing line. The snipers are very well concealed & cause us a lot of annoyance but our artillery sends over many more shells than we get in return. One soon gets accustomed to the whiz of a shell when they fly overhead.

We have lots of fatigue taking stuff up to the trenches & ours, that is "C" Coy., have absolutely rotten trenches. I had to take a party up with tea at 12 midnight & the poor beggars needed it badly. They were expecting a raid & it was bitterly cold & some of the chaps were very nervous. They were telling me about going out to the listening post & it can't be too good a job going out over the trenches & doing a duck for fifty yards to a shell crater. It is very muddy & the trenches want a lot of repairing. I think we are in for twelve days & then have 6 days out. The poor devils in that first line fire trench have been rottenly fed & some of them have only had one hot meal in three days. Talk about system, it makes you sick.

**11<sup>th</sup> Dec 1916.**

Lovely clear day & consequently the aeroplanes were out to see what they could see. Our guns opened fire on them with shrapnel & the puff of smoke as the shell burst high in the air looked very effective. Sgt. of the guard for the gas alarm during the day. Slight artillery bombardment.

**12<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1916.**

Went up to the firing line at 2 am with a fatigue party & remained there all night picking up a few wrinkles & to be acquainted with the various duties of a trench Sgt.

**Dec 13<sup>th</sup> Wednesday**

Moved up from the Subsidiary line to take our place & relieve another platoon in the 1<sup>st</sup> line. We were greeted with a sharp rifle grenade "strafe" & things moved some for a while. I got covered with mud from

one explosion but that's a mere detail. Very little rifle fire during the day, and at night thousands of shots are wasted as most of the fire is just returning shot for shot at flashes. The trenches are very wet & muddy & everything you touch gets mud on it in two shakes. Had to tear the bottom of my overcoat off as the mud hanging to it makes it weigh like lead. Had hard work to keep awake during the night, and the hot cocoa & biscuits at 2 am were very acceptable.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> Thursday.**

At 4 o'clock I was relieved by another Sgt. who gave me 8 letters and straight away I got into my dugout, lit a candle & then I just lay back & read the lovely epistles. I still have several letters missing from home but I suppose that is on a/c of the Xmas rush. Lovely day, the sun even condescended to shine.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> Friday.**

Took over again first thing but it was very quiet all day except at 5 o'clock we gave old Fritz a heavy strafe from our new gun which stirred him up considerably & by his flashlight at night he was also very frightened. Our patrol had an amusing time when it was coming in, as the listening post mistook them for Germans. One chap chucked a bomb, but in his excitement, he forgot to release the pin so he jumped out & gave the patrol Cpl. A rotten black eye & ducked back for his life. The engineers came round taking measurements to repair the trenches & it's just about time too. Another very quiet night.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> Sat. 1916.**

Learned that old Princes had won the tennis with Eric as Capt. & good on the old boy's luck. Left the lines & came back to new billets. All my gear was missing & the only thing I found was my boots & puttees on another fellow. My shaving tackle has gone so I don't fancy having to purchase another lot especially in these hard times. Went to bed early to get a good sleep & we were up at 6 o'clock to the trench again for fatigue. Came back & had a good dinner of eggs & chips & preserved pears. Equipment still missing.

#### **18<sup>th</sup> Monday.**

Mary's birthday. Took a fatigue party up to the trenches to fill sandbags to build up a parapet which had been blown away by a shell. Got home at 4 p.m. & slept late into the day. Had 1/2 lb of grapes & they were lovely but darn expensive, costing me 1 franc for 1/2 lb.

#### **20<sup>th</sup> Dec 1916**

Moved up forward again & got our dugouts in the supports - a very nice one too. Received 5 letters, secured my lost shaving gear, issued with fine warm sheepskin gloves so you can imagine I was very contented with everybody in general. In charge of an observation post all night & my word it was cold, especially on the feet. Had a beautiful warm cup of cocoa & a slice of toast during the night. Everything was as quiet as usual - nothing to do at all. Slight fall of snow.

#### **21<sup>st</sup> Dec 1916.**

Came out at 5 p.m. & having had no sleep during the night I tucked in straight away. Had a great sleep until 9 am the next morning.

#### **23<sup>rd</sup> Dec. Sat.**

Xmas is getting close but we don't notice or look forward to it at all. At times we lose complete count of the dates & days. Received a nice card from the old bank sending me greetings. Had a feed of cold pud. Anything for variation. Very cold & raining - don't fancy the stunt tonight at all, but I'm feeling real well. Am longing to hear whether Roy was lucky enough to get home for Xmas. I sincerely hope so.

#### **Dec 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday 1916.**

Was off all day & I completed a lot of correspondence.

#### **25<sup>th</sup> Dec 16**

Xmas Day! and what a different time I had to what was usual with the dear ones at Jamestown. I had

previously bought a tin of preserved pears & another pal & I had them during the morning. I was thinking of home & wishing that I was back to welcome the old dinner which I knew mother would so excellently prepare. However the time will soon come around now for the happy reunion. I think. At dinner we were issued with a big plum pudding & it was jolly fine although it was rich for my stomach for when I got in the line I was - bilious a treat. Fancy! Can you imagine it? I had a very nice Xmas box in the form of 4 letters, one was from Malvern & I welcomed the home news. Went up in the first line at 4 o'clock & remained there until the next morning. We gave them a taste of our artillery & they replied with their minnies rather violently. One of my men from the section was killed from the concussion. What a Xmas tiding for the poor parents. There was very little activity though all through the night. Thus ended the most unique Xmas Day of my life.

#### **26<sup>th</sup> Tuesday**

Received a lovely tin of toffee & an extra large pair of warm socks from the Aus. Comfort Fund during the morning. Expect to do another night up there & guess I'll be darn tired as I had very hard work to keep awake last night.

#### **27<sup>th</sup> Dec 1916.**

Rested during the day & went up at 4 o'clock. Had my first experience in no mans land. We went out just as it was getting dark to cover a party who were repairing our barbed wire. We laid out there for 2 hrs in the mud & it got jolly cold. When I was looking for a little cover I espied a shell hole & thinks I this will do me to a T. I got in & went over my knees in mud & the more I tried to get out the deeper I became embroiled with the unclean substance. It took me quite 3 or 4 minutes trying to get out & at last I emerged victorious but covered with slime. There is scarcely any danger attached to that kind of post except of course if enemy patrols are encountered. Very little doing at all. Made some nice toast at 3 am to keep me awake.

#### **28<sup>th</sup> Dec 1916.**

Received 7 more letters & consequently much jubilation. Thought of Glenelg & what they'd be doing. Returned to our billet after dinner. Had the old feed of eggs & chips straight away.

#### **29<sup>th</sup> Dec 1916**

Up at 4.30 a.m. to take a fatigue party to the trenches.

#### **31<sup>st</sup>. Sunday 1916.**

Orderly Sgt. for the week. Will miss all fatigues thank goodness.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1917.**

May the New Year bring forth many happy & pleasant surprises. Can hardly realise that 1917 has arrived. I'm tipping we'll be home for next Xmas with plenty of luck. Had another lovely hot bath & change of clothes & I felt O.K.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 1917**

Went up to do another 6 days in the trenches. I went straight up to take over trench Sgt's. job. We had the heaviest bombardment up to the present on this night. Fellows of experience tell us it was a slight taste of the Somme but I got through it all right although it was fairly rough I must admit. There was a raid on "B" Coy. & they suffered rather badly but we didn't have a casualty. I remained up in the first line for 3 days as the communication trench is in an awful condition. I forgot to say that while I was coming up, of course I had a full pack on, I slipped off the duck-board & my left leg went right down & all the mud & water came right up to my thigh filling my gum boot. It took 3 days to dry & I can tell you it was most uncomfortable.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>. Jan 1917**

Very quiet all day.

**6<sup>th</sup> Jan 1917**

Received a "mail" from Gordon & I got in my dug out & had a most enjoyable hours perusal of the home & state news. Out here it is absolutely the best paper for a chap as it gives the sort of news we want.

**7<sup>th</sup> Jan 1917**

Received a lovely box of Xmas delicacies from dear old Gordon. He evidently got Selfridge & Co to send them & my word they were choice. Lollies, almonds, raisins, plum pud, roast fowl & biscuits & a pair of good socks. My word we did relish them & I've got a lot to be thankful for in having such a fine brother. Then in the night when the fatigue men came round with the cocoa one chap gave me 5 letters. Roars of heartiness & I straight away flopped into a dugout & had a good old read. Two letters from home & one from Mu telling of their good time at home with dear old mother.

**8<sup>th</sup> Jan 17.**

Came out & I was very thankful as I had caught a bit of a chill in the back & wasn't feeling too good. Went to bed at 6 & slept until 10 the next morning.

**10<sup>th</sup> Wed**

Have just had the rotten news from our O.C. Capt. Tyrell has been killed by a shell. He was liked by every one & a white man absolutely.

**11<sup>th</sup> Jan 1917.**

Hands very cold. I got another parcel from Gordon & it was a beauty. It contained roast chicken, box of fancy biscuits, a packet of raisins, singlet, razor & soap. The first named was especially acceptable & didn't we just revel in the luxury. I also received 6 letters again.

**12<sup>th</sup> Friday**

Two more parcels - one from Win & one from Marj. Win's contained a beautiful knitted pair of socks with my name worked in the top & they were some class. A packet of smokes also. Marj's was a blithe and all the things she sent I liked and fancied best. Ginger, almonds & raisins, dried fruits, cigarettes (which I gave to the lads) & butter scotch & chocolate. As you can imagine I lived very well while I was in the billets.

**13<sup>th</sup> Saturday.**

Another parcel from Mr. Hindmarsh & it enclosed a pair of sox & some nice shortbread. That makes 5 parcels in the one week. Topping! Saw Jim Bond & Charlie Tiver whilst going to the baths. Attended a C of E service today, the first chance we've had since arriving here. We never see any of the Methodist Chaplains! Also saw Bill Boon in the evening & had a good yarn. Got ready to go to the trenches tomorrow. Sgt. Mjr. Game & Sgt. Wittaker received their commissions & Sgt. Dell is now Sgt. Mjr. I am acting platoon Sgt. Now.

**15 Jan 1917**

Went into the trenches for a 6 days spell. Was trench Sgt. & did a 12 midnight to noon shift & I felt quite ready to leave at the end of that time. Were relieved by the 36<sup>th</sup> & they are a ragtime old crew. It was very cold & snow lay on the ground all the while. It was a very quiet week all told. Came out on the 19<sup>th</sup> for a 24 day rest & we occupied our first billet where we made ourselves very comfortable.

**20<sup>th</sup>. Jan 17.**

Lay in bed until 9 o'clock & felt pretty fit. Saw Berri & in the evening we had a little enjoyable reunion at one of the estaminets. Champagne, eggs & chips etc & everything was very nice. Its fine to see old faces & have a good yarn. Also received 14 redirected letters & a beautiful parcel from uncle. How I revelled in the luxuries & news from S.A. It was Oct 30<sup>th</sup> mail & should have arrived just before Xmas. Had a fine letter from Mr Craigie. The parcel was a beauty & kept me busy for days. All the fancied things were in it & I enjoyed them immensely.

**21<sup>st</sup>. Jan. 1917**

Amongst a party of 19 I marched to Steenwerck to do a 6 day Rapid Wiring School. It is very interesting & I am enjoying the course. We go for a brisk couple of miles walk & then have an hrs lecture in the morning & put up an entanglement. In the afternoon we practice taking down & putting it up. The ground is covered with snow & it is bitterly cold. All the water is frozen quite solid & I am becoming an expert skater. Have seen lots of old S.A. friends in the 11<sup>th</sup> F. Ambulance. Heard a lecture & band concert with Don Magarey. Also saw George Pearce & Bert Perry. Schemed a lovely warm overcoat & had it shortened & it looked some class. The Germans made the people here pay 40.000 pounds to stop from shelling their church. It is a fine place & one side is built partly on a huge rock out of which is wonderfully carved a representation of the Crucifixion. The place is our Div. Hd. Qrs & talk about stars - they're everywhere. And the motors! Oh, shut up! This is a better place than Armentieres & a little extra time here would be very acceptable.

**25<sup>th</sup> Jan 1917.**

Caught a rotten cold in my eye & it gave me fits. Went on sick parade (the first time since leaving S. Aus) and who should fix me up but Capt. Love, an old school mate.

**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday.**

Returned to Armentieres in a bitterly cold & biting wind. As our Batt. Had gone into the trenches again we straightaway gave our packs in & were shown up into the new sector. We relieved the Tyneside Scottish & Northumberland Fusiliers who, I believe were suddenly called to go up into Belgium because the English trenches had been flooded & frozen & an attack by the Hun was anticipated. Of course this knocked our 21 days spell on the head, we had six but the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade had none. Our trenches were a great improvement on the last ones & quite a treat to get about on. As usual I was trench sgt & did a long shift of 14 night work for the full ten days.

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan. Wednes.**

At about 6 o'clock Fritz started, and didn't he warm up. For an hour & a half he gave us hell and I'm almost sure our artillery put in a little dirty work too. Poor old "B" Coy. Got it hard & the trenches for some considerable distance were knocked out of shape completely. Our casualties amounted to over 70 and seven or eight paid the supreme sacrifice. Fritz tried to raid on our right but one Lewis Gunner stuck to his post & turned them back. Two of our Sgts. got wounded and one is almost sure of a Blighty. Lucky beggar. Stripes have been flying round galore & rapid promotion awaits anyone of merit. It took us a long while to get things straightened & some of the lads were badly shaken. This shell shock is a rotten thing & it's a bad look-out for these young fellows in years to come.

**Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> 1917.**

After our 10 days go in, we came out of the trenches for a 5 days spell. I only received 20 letters & I forgot to mention that whilst there I got two parcels - a lovely cake from mother & a tin of biscuits from Doris. Mother's cake only lasted a day although it was about 15" in diameter. We were short of bread & as hungry as mad dogs. I had over 50 letters to answer & all my spare time was devoted to replying & I'm pleased to say they were all done, but I bet the officer cursed me twice. The letter from home bought news of Bruce's death & the tidings staggered me for a while, because I knew how Ethel loved him. I was delighted though to hear of mother's & father's success with their flowers. Saw my old Sgt. pals once or twice & the usual reunion was washed down in the best. Received another 9 letters. During our stay in the billets I had a good rest & felt very fit when we took over on the 10<sup>th</sup> Feb.

Our brigade canteen is a great boon & the free cup of milk or cocoa is relished of a cold morning by all. It is supplied by the Aus. Comforts Fund & they are doing a tremendous amount of good out here for us. We also received a box of niceties - cocoa, paste, lollies, biscuits, cards & nuts and a plum pudding from the same people. The pudding was musty but we got it down all right. Our billets were in a most convenient position as the YMCA, canteen, barbers & estaminets were all handy. Heard the good news of Princes victory in the cricket & was extremely pleased to hear of Eric's fine innings.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Feb.**

Came out from another 10 days visit to the line and comparing our work with other times I had a real good holiday. Was trench Sgt. for a while and during the last 5 nights did 4 hrs wiring of an evening. We would go over as soon as it got dark & although Fritz wasn't too far away we had nothing happen to give us any thrills. At one part the trenches were only 50 yds apart & our bombing post was a veritable death trap. Two men were killed during our stay and fine fellows they were too. Gordon sent me a lovely parcel & on the whole I lived pretty well as I could always make a tin of cocoa, as I was good pals with the cooks. The weather is getting much more mild now but it is commencing to thaw & the trenches are getting very wet & sloppy. Our feet are wet through all the time & I can see a few rheumatics kicking round after this bleary war is over.

Am going round to see Freddie Daw tonight for a little champagne flit. Had a most enjoyable evening at the YMCA with Fred & Bert. The "Cooees" gave a fine concert & some of the singing was excellent. The party just travel around giving entertainments & they help considerably to take one's mind off the war. After, we had a glorious feed of pork chops - eggs & a tin of pineapple. One must look after oneself musn't one?

**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday.**

Went to Church service in the morning & the chaplain gave us a good address. Enjoyed the singing immensely. At 7.30 p.m. we left for the trenches & this time we were in the subsidiary line as we were due for a spell from the front line. We have a great little dug out & there's a small stream nearby where we can wash & obtain water for drinking. The Comfort Fund supplied two "Tommy Cookers" per platoon & I collared one. They are great devices & we make cocoa, soup or porridge at a moments notice. We are situated just behind a village & its painful to look at the ruined buildings & especially the churches which seem to suffer much more severely. Saw Harry Ringner yesterday & he was in the act of making a big plum pudding. I met him quite accidentally as I saw an officer who I knew & he jumped off his horse & let it go into the stable. He then called out to Harry & as I happened to hear the name I went & fished him out later.

Expect a big raid to be made tonight. About 900 are going over & I think Fritz will get a pretty good stirring up. Received 5 letters but they were all very old. One from Rene was dated Sep 17. & I'd had ones after Dec 25<sup>th</sup>. The weather is getting much more mild

**28<sup>th</sup> Feb 1917.**

At 9.30 we had to stand to as there was to be a dummy attack on our left. For 20 minutes the artillery gave Fritz hell & on one sector the engineers sent over smoke bombs followed up with gas. The Hun sounded his gas alarms for miles back & I guess he was in a panic. My word I was pleased that the shells were going the right way for it was easily the heaviest bombardment we had seen. We then went to bed again until 12 o'clock when the artillery let out for 1 1/2 hrs as the raiders went over. There were at least 900 & some got back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> line & returned with very few casualties. They told us it was a most successful raid as the artillery chopped things up a treat & the dead were laying all around & seeing they only took 17 prisoners I think it must have been pretty correct.

They also secured a searchlight & two machine guns. There is no doubt our supremacy with the guns we absolutely line Fritz up a treat - either he is saving them or he hasn't got them. I hope it's the latter.

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Fancy March is here how the time is going. We were really sorry to leave the trenches as we'd made ourselves such a home but we came to good billets for 6 days. Now that the raiders are back from their training we will have our usual run of 6 days in & out.

**March 4<sup>th</sup>**

Had a lovely bath & change of clothes. In the afternoon we had the new organisation explained to us, preparatory to training for the big push. (?)

**March 5<sup>th</sup>**

Received a letter from Gordon telling of his popularity with the Secretary of State. Well done Georgie old boy! Had a little revolver practice in the morning but I must say there is plenty of room for improvement.

**March 8<sup>th</sup>**

Received orders to pack up & march out but as usual after we had everything ready we didn't go that night & had to unpack.

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup>.**

At one o'clock we left Armentiers, where we had been for 3 months & went to the Divisional Baths at Erquinghem where we camped for the night.

**10<sup>th</sup> March 17.**

The battalion marched out in full array with the band leading & we passed through Steenwerck on to a little town called Steent-Je, a distance of about 7 miles. We were the first Australians there since last year. Next day we had to move our billets & the new place was a blithe. The barn was large with new clean straw & we could get beer & coffee on the premises. However next day the order came for us to get out again. Take notice of the wonderful management! After ploughing through the mud & mucking around we eventually reached our billet. It wasn't too good but being Australians we didn't grumble. (?)

**11<sup>th</sup>. Sunday.**

Went to church parade in the morning. At 2 we went on a march somewhere near Merris, (our first billet in France) & got back at 4. I was then told I had to pack up & go to a 2 weeks Musketry School a couple of miles from Steenwerck. I was sorry in a way because we were organising our platoon & getting ready for over the top. I was in charge of the rifle grenadiers & consequently wanted all the instruction possible. We were training hard because we only have a month & every man must have a through knowledge in bayonet fighting, bombing, Lewis gun & rifle grenades. However after a long tiresome march we were eventually landed at the Divisional Camp dead beat. I forgot to say that just as I was (?) the billet I was handed a couple of letters & a parcel from Gordon.

It was tough having to leave nearly all the good things behind. This musketry school is going to be a holiday because I know just about all the work. Fordham is one of our instructors. Selwyn & Game are going to England to officer the Sixth Division. Very lucky too! Our camp is situated about 2 miles from Croix du Bac & the place is awfully muddy.

**12<sup>th</sup> Monday.**

Had a very easy day. Went into a little place called Sailly in the evening but it's only a quite hole.

**14<sup>th</sup> Wednesday.**

Fancy I'm one year old today in the military world - how quickly the time goes. The musketry is just the same here as what I learnt in S. Aus so I think this stunt is going to be a complete holiday. There's no place to go of a night so I remained at home & answered nearly all my correspondence.

**16<sup>th</sup> Friday.**

Had a most interesting lecture on anti-gas by the Divisional Gas officer. He showed us several gas helmets of the Allies but ours stands out on it's own as being the best. Our 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade had 2000 gas shells put into their sector by Mr. Bosch last week & there was only one casualty it shows the helmet is perfected to a nicety. For every gas attack Fritz puts over we send 12 in return so I guess he is sorry he started the ball rolling.

**17<sup>th</sup> March 1917.**

Had a football match in the afternoon & went into Sailly after tea & saw a cinema show.

### **18<sup>th</sup> Sunday.**

Church parade in the morning. Walked into Saily & had an admirable dinner of steak, eggs & chips. Wrote home during the afternoon. It was a glorious day - the sun shone out beautifully.

### **20<sup>th</sup> March 1917**

Commenced our firing on the range & the work became much more interesting. Had a most interesting lecture on Raids by Col Jackson G.O.C.I. in the afternoon.

### **22<sup>nd</sup> Friday.**

Received news that our brigade had moved to St Omer per boat - the journey to take 3 days. See what we missed. Yesterday & today I enjoyed two of the most interesting lectures I've ever heard on the war by Cpt. Bliss. His first one told about the early part of the struggle & the Huns rush through Belgium & the second one of the attack & defence of Verdun. He spoke in the highest terms possible of Gen. Foch & truly he is a great man. Good news again re Bapaume & Beronne etc.

### **25<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

Put our watches on one hour. Arose at 5 o'clock & prepared to leave the school. Our packs were taken to the station at Steenwerck where we later entrained for St Omer. Arrived there at 12 noon but hung around until 4 o'clock for orders. Eventually reached our billets & they were very good being on the outskirts of St Omer.

### **26<sup>th</sup> March 1917**

Carried on with the new wave formation drill. Received 2 parcels one from Gordon & one from Mu, a lovely big cake. It was beautifully moist & fresh & every piece I cut contained a 3d or a 6d. Gordon's was also full of good things.

### **27<sup>th</sup> Mch 17.**

Wished I was home to celebrate fathers birthday, the dear old chap.

### **28<sup>th</sup> Mch 17.**

Another parcel from Gordon, pineapple, raisins, pudding etc. Three letters also. Had my pkiz taken.

### **April 1<sup>st</sup> 1917.**

With 3 other Sgts. I went into St Omer for a little enjoyment. We dined at the Cafe Roger having ham & eggs, apple fritters, cakes & a bottle of pale ale. After we went to a show in the YMCA which was most enjoyable.

### **April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Went off for a brigade stunt all day. We made a glorious attack on the enemy's lines & suffered no casualties at all.

### **Apr 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Took a party into St Omer for a bath & we received a fresh change of underclothing & a fine wash. Had dinner at the YMCA but - my long looked for Saturday meal - roast beef, roast potatoes & pears & custard. My word I did enjoy it too. Had a great snowball fight in the afternoon as the snow was lying about 6 inches deep on the ground. Sent my cherished most cap which I had been lugging round for months to Gordon by a Cpl. Who was going back to Blighty to do an O.T.C. school. We hear rumours of going back to the trenches in a couple of days time. Houplines too of all places.

### **4<sup>th</sup> April**

In charge of a water fatigue during the morning. The battalion had gone out on a stunt & it was cold & the snow was inches deep. As I could trust my men I simply took up a cosy position in an estaminet and directed

operations from the base (so to speak) or in other words I wrote several letters home. In the evening I took a piquet to Tatinghem & carried out the duties nobly & well.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Thursday.**

Prepared to leave our billets & at 10 o'clock we marched out to a place called Arques a couple of miles past St Omer. We were billeted in a large old Chateau & it had been a fine place in its day. We saw a brigade of sigs, three brigades of artillery & the 37<sup>th</sup> & 38<sup>th</sup> battalions marching through & scores of cars & transport. At Tatinghem I saw a large yard crowded with motor cars & bicycles awaiting repair & I should think a fellow would be able to pick a cheap one up after the war. Sunbeams, Minervos, Daimlers in scores were there & I must say I wouldn't be too proud to take any one they offered me. Went for a stroll through Arques & saw the sights which were very few.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Friday**

Again on the road at 9 o'clock where we marched back to Mt Omer to entrain for Steenwerck. We arrived there at 2 & then in the rain marched to Armentieres where we billeted in a large cottage. It had been a fine girls cottage & we occupied an upper room which no doubt was full of the frivol - some maidens escapades - what a pity they weren't there to relate them to us while we listened, open-mouthed.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Saturday. April.**

Tomorrow we go up. The specialists went in today. It is gloriously sunny.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> April 1917**

Went to a pierrots show in the evening - very fair too. Just before tea we witnessed an aeroplane fight & I saw for the first time a plane brought down. There were 9 of Fritz's planes to our 6, 5 of ours ducked off & left one all by himself. Two Bosche's immediately tackled him & in a very short time a large flame appeared on our machine & it dropped to earth covered in flame & leaving a big streak of black smoke. It was a great sight but I felt darn sorry for the aviator. Received 24 letters, a pair of socks from Marj, a little box from Gwen & three papers, so now I'll have heaps of writing to do.

#### **9<sup>th</sup> April. 1917.**

Went into the trenches at 10pm & took over a good sector, but our battalion is holding two battalion's frontage. However I don't think there are many Fritz's in their line.

#### **10<sup>th</sup> April.**

Our post got a strafe during the afternoon & one of the men got killed, whilst on a message for me. Did a couple of hrs wiring in the evening.

#### **13<sup>th</sup> April. 1917.**

I had just come in from wiring when Fritz commenced sending us a heavy strafe of minnies, H E's etc a little after 10 o'clock. He tried to raid us but our Lewis gun turned him off & next day they found a dead Hun from whom they gathered very valuable information I believe. On one of the other posts 5 out of the 6 got wounded.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> Sunday.**

Another strafe & I was up all night mending & digging the blown in trenches out. Received 7 more letters.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> Monday.**

Were relieved at 9 pm by the 37<sup>th</sup>.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> Tuesday.**

Received a tin of chocolates from auntie and a box of comforts from the League of Loyal Women which were eagerly devoured. In the evening I went to the Cooees where we saw a fine show.

### **17<sup>th</sup> April.**

In the afternoon the Battalion went to the YMCA to see a picture show & it was real good. Received a few letters & a parcel from Gordon. We sampled it & washed it down with champagne before retiring. Carried on with Lewis gun instructions most of the day.

### **18<sup>th</sup> April 1917**

Had a nice bath & a good feed of steak & chips. Two men in our company are to be decorated with the military medal for their work when Fritz tried to raid. Rumours are heard of us moving out to a new front to participate in the push. Let's hope so but we are having a great time at present. Four of us Sgts. Have received a room close to our billets & in the room there are two large beds & its great getting in between the sheets again. The last time was when I was at the Imperial. What tender memories that brings back.

### **21<sup>st</sup> April 1917.**

We are giving all the men instructions in rapid fire as this is evidently an important branch when we get on the move.

### **24<sup>th</sup> April 1917.**

Took a fatigue party to the trenches & had a good read in the sun. It was a glorious day, beautifully sunny. Saw an enemy aeroplane & a balloon brought down. There was aerial & artillery activity all day. Went to a concert in the evening.

### **25<sup>th</sup> April 1917.**

Second anniversary of Anzac Day.

### **26<sup>th</sup> April 1917.**

Prepared to leave our comfortable home as our brigade was taking over another sector. I was in charge of the party to go & look after the rations & although we were supposed to move out at 5.30 p.m. it was well after 8 before we did so. We arrived at Ploegsteert at 11 p.m. & then carried our rations to the Q.M. Store. Our dugouts are in a large wood & its quite nice to see trees again. Really it is an ideal place for a holiday picnic. At present we are in reserve but we relieve the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade in a short while. Messines is plainly visible & it has been battered about some. Our sector is not too good as Fritz has got a nasty habit of coming over & knocking a couple of the patrol in the head & taking them over to his trenches. We are having great weather & the sun is quite warm.

### **27<sup>th</sup> April 1917**

Fatigue in the Sub. line. Had a long talk to Freddie Daw.

### **28<sup>th</sup> April 1917**

Sent gas over to Fritz & strafed him a treat.

### **29<sup>th</sup> Sunday.**

Fatigue again. Had a long talk to Lieu Matters of the 11<sup>th</sup> Field.

### **30<sup>th</sup> April 1917.**

We were rudely wakened by a severe bombardment at 4 am & naturally had to stand to. Fritz came over in three waves & evidently intended stopping as he carried rations, picks & shovels & a large supply of bombs. Our Lewis guns did splendid work & left many of the Boche dead in no man's land. Had my first introduction to Mistress Louse & I was quite disgusted with her behaviour. Received a fine parcel from Gordon. On fatigue in the Sub. Line during the morning.

### **1<sup>st</sup> May 1917**

The weather is still beautiful. Saw an aeroplane brought down - Fritz is getting it dished up hot by our new planes.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Friday 1917.**

Heard indefinite news re a strike in Berlin. Had a letter from Gordon telling of his promotion - good on the old boy's pluck.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Saturday 1917**

Fatigue & pay.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Sunday.**

Took over from the 39<sup>th</sup> in the evening. We have a long sector & it's mostly held with machine guns. Six others & I are on the fighting patrol & we also do the wiring. For a couple of nights we wired & for three nights we went over to an old trench of Fritz. We found it unoccupied but after that they would not go out any more.

### **11<sup>th</sup> May 1917.**

We had just gone out to wire & I had posted the covering party when our Sgt. Major was sniped & got a rotten wound in the groin. We carried him in & he was remarkably brave. The doctor thinks he'll get through with luck.

### **12<sup>th</sup> May.**

Beautiful day & hot enough to go about without coats. Received 19 letters & a parcel & a beautiful wristlet watch from Gordon for my birthday. Was on duty as trench Sgt. during the evening.

### **15<sup>th</sup> May 1917.**

Came out of the trenches at 12 midnight & marched to our billets at Oosthave farm near Pont Nieppe. The country is beautiful now with all the wheat & green trees about & the weather is perfect.

### **17<sup>th</sup> May 1917**

Received two parcels & several letters. One was from Gordon & the other from home. We opened them & had the delicacies for dinner & they were enjoyed by all.

### **18<sup>th</sup> May 1917.**

I was up with a working party in the trenches & on looking at my watch discovered that the time was 12.5 am & that it was my birthday. The surroundings were rather out of place for such a festive time & I did not relish the mud & slush at all. This trench is being prepared by us as most probably we will use it as a jumping off trench in the push. I arrived home at 4 am, had a cup of tea & jumped into bed where I reclined until 12 noon. I had previously purchased 7 bottles of Boch & 4 of champagne & the cooks had made some jellies & custards & we had a fine dinner & my health was drunk by my fellow Sgts.

### **19<sup>th</sup> May.**

Am platoon Sgt. now as Sgt. Wilson is C.S.M. On fatigue all day. The place is absolutely lousy with guns & ammunition. He knocked out one of our batteries today.

### **24<sup>th</sup> May. 1917.**

Sent a little parcel home to mother, Margaret Cowling & Marj. Received a nice parcel from mother & father.

### **May 1917**

26<sup>th</sup>. Have commenced training for a silent raid. Will be going over in a few days. Fritz blew up a large dump of shells about 300 yards from our hut & pieces were flying in all directions. One piece landed on my

bed along side of me & it was quite hot. I've never heard such an explosion & the black cloud rose hundreds of feet in the air.

Thus endeth the epistle to the brethren & with plenty of luck the next book should contain many exciting incidents concerning the big Push & what my feelings were like as we hopped over the top in our effort to take Messines.

Lots of love  
Keith.

## DIARY 4

To  
My dear ones  
At home.

----L.Keith Swann.----

25<sup>th</sup> Jan 18 (diary sent home)

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The Great War  
1914 - 1918

CONTINUED.

**2<sup>nd</sup> June 1917.**

After all our preparation we were inspected by the Brigadier (McNicol) who gave us some good advice and our especial job was to bring back a prisoner or two, squash any machine guns & stonker two big dugouts which were supposed to exit in the trench we were going to raid. The Bn. had prepared a fine dinner for us & at about 12 midnight a lorry called & we were carried away up to the trenches. We were then billeted at Oosthave Farm near Pont Nieppe. The raid was an absolute failure as we were too slow in getting across & it became too light just as we were ready to hop in to his trenches. We were evidently seen for we were met with a strong fusillade of bombs & machine gun fire. The order was given to get back which was carried out to a T. Ten got wounded & one chap was missing, however he turned up next day having been in Fritz's trenches for over 20 hours. I had a narrow shave receiving a slight wound from a bomb in the forehead. We returned home very tired & disappointed.

**3<sup>rd</sup> June 1917.**

Fritz came over to get the balloon just near our camp but a badly directed shell saved him the bother. The cow then turned his machine gun on the two men who were in the parachutes, but luckily did no damage.

**4<sup>th</sup> June 1917.**

We were on our way up to the trenches to rehearse our positions for the hop-over when we ran into heavy gas clouds. Of course we donned our helmets & marched back several miles to get away from the awful stuff. It caught a lot of us napping when we passed through hollows. We came to a rise & there lay down in the fields for the night. It was I think the worst night I've ever put in.

**5<sup>th</sup> June. 1917**

Returned to camp at about 11 o'clock & rested all day.

**6<sup>th</sup> June.**

Final preparation for tomorrow. Each man carried a shovel or pick, 4 sandbags, wire cutters, 120 rounds, rifle, equipment etc, 2 bombs, non rations & 24 hrs rations etc etc which considerably loaded him down.

**7<sup>th</sup> June 1917.**

Just a little before midnight we fell in armed for the fray. Jack Dell my platoon commander had previously been gassed & I was in charge of the platoon, 3 N.C.O's & 20 men. My job was to clear a trench and then look after the 4 bridges over the Dourve. It was an important job for the bridges had to be kept in order to allow the rear bns to follow on. Our luck was right out at first. As soon as we left camp we ran into gas straight away & walking in helmets is no easy task especially when loaded up with such a weight. The gas & shrapnel shells were falling fast & really I thought Fritz had guessed we were going to attack. We marched in single file & it was hard work. Just as we were entering Ploegsteert Wood two incendiary & a couple of H.E's burst right in the column & several of the poor lads copped it. Three men lost a leg each & several were killed & most of the wounded got gassed besides. The ground was lit up for yards & yards around & the night was awful.

However after things got down to normal again we pushed on but with considerably fewer numbers. The lads stuck to it nobly & well & after more uphill walking (with our helmets on) we reached our hopping off trench. We simply dropped down in the trench - dead beat. I found that I had three men & no N.C.O's to go over with as all the others had become casualties. However we joined up with another platoon and made the necessary alterations to our plans. After a rest we felt much better & more fitted for the struggle. At exactly 3.10 a.m. on the 7<sup>th</sup> June the machine guns & all the others 18 pounders, 4.5's, 5.9's & 9.5's opened up as one gun in one huge rumbling roar. At the same time the earth simply shook & the trenches swayed to & fro and the sky was lit up by a large flash as the 19 mines under Messines exploded. If that didn't get the wind up Fritz well he's a better man than I thought him. We immediately wondered when he was going to explode his as we all thought our trenches were mined also but no nothing happened. I got the word to hop over & with my few men over we went.

It was just getting light but the continuous shelling caused immense clouds of dust to rise & it was difficult to see. There was practically no wire & his trenches were in an awful condition. We met very little resistance as he abandoned his machine guns although in a few isolated cases he caused a little trouble. My particular bit of the Beak caused me no trouble so we went along to look after the bridges which was our second duty. Again this was an easy job as the men had all got across although we were being heavily shelled. Just as we were going over a shell landed behind us & killed Cecil Dunn & Sgt. Bowring & 2 others - all fine fellows. Later they were buried together by N.Z. Pioneers in a nice neat grave. Map ref. Approx. Ploegsteert 1/10,000. 28. S.W.4. Edition 4.8. 8. A. 5 -3.50.

The barrage did not lift for eleven hrs & in that time I moved forward found the Coy. & we commenced digging in. The prisoners were coming back in dozens by themselves & all seemed glad to be out of action. I've never seen such a degraded dejected disgusting lot of men in all my life & some of them were mere boys. We were being heavily shelled all the time but luckily had few casualties. At about 5 o'clock we went right up to the green line & helped the 38<sup>th</sup> consolidate- all night we worked like mad digging & the line was completed in a wonderfully short period. We had hot tea for breakfast & it was a great boon.

**8<sup>th</sup> June. 1917.**

We retired to our first new line & waited for orders in case of a counter attack. Aeroplanes reported that Fritz was massing for an attack but our wonderful artillery completely broke it up. We absolutely had supremacy in the air in this stunt.

**9<sup>th</sup> June.**

Again heavily shelled & were relieved by the 42<sup>nd</sup> at 2.30 p.m. It didn't take us long to get out & we went back to Nieppe. A few figures with regards to Messines.

560,000 men employed.  
200 miles of wire swept away by artillery & pudding strafes.  
450,000 tons of shells.  
1,000,000 lbs of aminel used in the 19 mines.  
77 tons of boiling oil & gas used on & before the day.  
751 heavy & 3000 field guns employed.  
80 trench mortars captured & 30,000 prisoners.  
Seven Hun divisions put out of action.

The tanks had very little to do. First time I had seen them in action. The whole operation cost a 1/5 of what was anticipated.

Seven days previous to the show 67 Boche planes were brought down as compared to 8 of ours.

#### **11<sup>th</sup> June.**

We moved to bivouacs in a field near Neuve-Eglise where we had a good spell although we lost 3 men one killed by being shelled at night. Q.M. Sgt. Laurie got wounded whilst in bed & I was promoted to take his place. It was a real good job & I had an easy time.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> June.**

I went up with Cranswick & McKenzie to see the Brigadier (McNicol) to be interviewed about our commissions. Very joyful indeed.

#### **19<sup>th</sup> June.**

Moved to little Douvre Valley where the brigade was camped near Kemmel. It was a bonza camp & training was carried on most assiduously. I missed all the work being Q.M. & thereby had a great time.

#### **26<sup>th</sup> June. 1917.**

I was one of the four chosen from the Bn. to represent the men who went over at Messines to be inspected by the Duke of Connaught. We marched into Bailleul & there we were reviewed. We were given leave until 9 o'clock & in that time I had a good meal & saw a fine pierrot show. On the way home I saw four of our balloons set fire to by Fritz. A fine piece of work indeed.

#### **29<sup>th</sup> June 1917**

Awarded military medal for conspicuous gallantry etc at Messines. Really did not deserve it but there you are. Was very pleased for mother's & father's sakes. They'll think me a blooming hero no doubt. Sent them a cable.

#### **30<sup>th</sup> June 1917.**

Played 39<sup>th</sup> cricket but got beaten. Big Aus. Mail in.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> July 1917.**

Received my commission & I was a very proud man I can tell you. Bn. sports in the afternoon. Cabled home.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> July**

Bn. drill in the morning & Bde. Sports in the afternoon. As usual the 40<sup>th</sup> won the cup. I was given charge of No. 12 platoon.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> July. 1917.**

Proceeded to Hazebrouck & then on to Morbecque to a month's general course for officers. Had a real good time as the work was not at all strenuous, plenty of schemes etc. Saw several fine concerts by the Anzac Coves & N. Z. Kiwis in Hazebrouck. We gave some N. Z. nurses a concert at our mess one night & had a very

enjoyable time. Played cricket a lot & did fairly well.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> July 1917.**

Just before tea Fritz shelled Hazebrouck with 12 in shells and he was evidently after the railway station. It is quite a common occurrence for him to bomb the town of a night also. He set a blanket factory on fire & knocked several places about but did no harm to civilians or soldiers. The road out to Morbecque was literally full of people with all they could lay their hands on & they were travelling at the double. We went in to see the fun. It was rather pathetic to see the poor old women walking along with a couple of baskets in their hands & most of them were wet through as it was raining hard. A lot of shopkeepers etc closed up & went as far down as Boulogne to get away from the shelling. However a couple of weeks later he bombed that place.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> July 1917**

Reviewed by General Godlee, our Corps commander & received a whole host of praise.

#### **19<sup>th</sup> July 17.**

Procured a bicycle & went out in search of the 10<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> battalions. After making a lot of enquiries I found the 27<sup>th</sup> at Renescure & there saw a whole heap of my old pals. Footy Taylor, Ross, Branford, Laurie Davies, Elwin Gould & several others. We had a real good talk & it was fine seeing them all again.

#### **25<sup>th</sup> July 17.**

Saw old Bruce Simpson as I was coming out from Hazebrouck & he is trying to get in the Flying Corps.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Aug.**

Had a final dinner & it was some stunt. We finished up in the early hours of the morning after nearly everyone had made a speech about our glorious Army & how well the Aus. Got on with the Tommies. It's a good thing they were all half potty.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> Aug 17.**

Rejoined the Bn. who were resting at Kemmel on the old Tank park. Received 27 letters. Two weeks mail missing.

#### **12<sup>th</sup> Aug.**

The brigade was reviewed by Gen. Plumer near Neuve-Eglise.

#### **13<sup>th</sup> Aug. 17.**

Rumours that we are going back for a rest. Applied for Flying Corps.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> Aug 17.**

Up at 4 a.m. struck camp & proceeded with full marching order to Bailleul. Entrained there & went to a smaller place near St Omer called Wizernes. Here our packs were taken & we marched 14 miles in the rain to a small village called Vaudringhem where we billeted for the night. It was a nice place & we had a lovely omelette for our tea & the cider was OK believe me. The old chap who owned the place was called Vandrome & he must have been some head as he was the king-hit over 36 mayors of different districts. One of his daughters was very nice too.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> Aug. 17.**

Got on the road again at 12.30 & finished our march by going 6 miles further to a small quiet little village named Trois Marquets, 1.5 kil from B. H.Qrs at Becourt. A nice old lady keeps the house where I am billeted & its a very nice clean place.

**16<sup>th</sup> Aug 17.**

Inspection of platoon & general clean up.

**18<sup>th</sup> Aug 17.**

All day route march to Desvres which is about 9 kils from here. A nice day & we enjoyed it immensely.

**22<sup>nd</sup> Aug 17.**

Wakened at 10.30 p.m. & informed that I was due for Paris leave commencing at 6 a.m. next day. Much jubilation!!

**23<sup>rd</sup> Aug. 17.**

Reported to Adj. who gave me my warrant & leave pass seven o'clock next morning. Walked 8 miles to Nielles dez Blequin where I caught the train to Boulogne. We arrived there at 1.40 got paid & caught the 2.10 train for Paris. Met Bill from the 33<sup>rd</sup> & we stuck together right through. Arrived in Paris at 9 p.m. couldn't get a taxi so we walked on & on until we found the Rue Caumartin & eventually our hotel de la Grande Bretagne. It was a very decent place, very central & I got a good room on the second floor for 8 francs per night. Had a nice little supper & then went to bed.

**24<sup>th</sup> Aug 17.**

Had breakfast in bed arose at 11, went for a stroll & had dinner at the Ceylon Tea restaurant. Very nice place, quite moderate & the servants were Singalese & one old chap looked after us a treat. After lunch I sent a cable to Gordon & met 2 R.N.A.S. chaps & joined up with their party. Taxied round to Napoleon's Tomb, saw the Eiffel Tower & then round the Bois du Boulogne. The roads especially took my eye & the scenery was grand. I should think a car would last for ages in a place like Paris. The women dress beautifully & look extremely chic & their rouge & powder is most artistically applied. I can't imagine anyone having a dull time down there. The girls trouble one of a night but it's all in the life. Went to the Olympia but the show was poor.

**25<sup>th</sup> August 1917.**

Arose at 10.30 had a beautiful bath, lunched & then caught a ferry boat which went up the Seine and we saw all the wonderful bridges. Saw a bonza show at the Alhambra, nearly all-English artists. They've got a great gag of selling you the wrong program out in front of the theatre. We got taken in twice. Fancy one has to tip the girl 5d for showing you your seat. After the theatre we met Bruce Coulter & a couple of other officers & had a look round until fairly late.

**26<sup>th</sup> Aug 17.**

We went down to the YMCA & caught the drag, which went out to Versailles. It was an all day trip & only cost 10 frs. It was raining slightly but we had a fine time. It was Louis XIV show & he put up a wonderful palace. All the engravings are made of gold leaf & money was absolutely thrown away right & left. No wonder the people used to revolt. The hall of mirrors was the pick of the rooms & I can just imagine the old bucks enjoying themselves at the dances etc. I know I would! Follies Bergere in the evening & it's a gay place sure.

**27<sup>th</sup> Aug 1917.**

Hired a car & went out to the Bois de Boulogne. We strolled through the gardens, watched them playing football, had lunch & then trammed home. The French people are very poor sports indeed. 8.30 p.m. Went along to Vaudeville Theatre but as the play was in French we didn't enjoy it very much. Got caught for a mug by a French Canadian.

**28<sup>th</sup> Aug 17.**

Again caught the YMCA drag on their country trip out to Rueil about 10 miles from Paris & saw Josephine's church. We then went on to the water scheme which forces the water up to the fountains at Versailles.

After a good lunch we saw the Chateau la Malmaison which was Josephines palace & it was beautifully furnished & stood in glorious surroundings. A tremendous amount of the valuable pictures & pieces of furniture have been removed from Paris to Bordeaux for safety because everybody had the wind up when Fritz was within 10 miles of Paris. Thanks to General Galleni who got all the spare soldiers & despatched them to the front in taxis.

We went to the Femina theatre in the Champs Elysses in the evening but it was an awful show.

### 29<sup>th</sup> Aug. 17.

Caught the drag again on its tour round Paris. During the day we visited the Cemetery, Saint Capelle church, law courts, Notre Dame, Eiffel Tower, Trocadero Triumphal Arch, Hotel de Ville & numerous other monuments & places of interest. We had a very competent guide & it proved a most enjoyable day. Also saw many interesting war souvenirs at the Hotel des Invalides.

### 30<sup>th</sup> Aug. 17.

Went to Regina Hotel & met Whitaker, Browne & Gray & the guide. Caught the 11.20 train to Fontainebleau, 40 miles from the city. It was a very pretty run down indeed. Had a fine dinner & some beautiful red wine, which bucked us all up completely. Got a carriage & off we went to the palace. It was a sort of kings country residence & very fine indeed. On the horseshoe staircase Napoleon said goodbye to the old guard before he went to St. Helena. Saw a wonderful pond with scores of large carp swimming about. After going through the palace we were taken through all the important drives of the Fontainebleau Forest & some of the views were great.

Procured a serviette ring made out of a piece of tree & it is rather a decent memento. Arrived home at 10.30 feeling tres fatigue so went to bed straight away

### 31<sup>st</sup> Aug 17.

Had dinner in bed. Hired a car & then went to the French Munition Works but were unable to get a permit to go through the factory. The guide then took us along to the De Dion Bouton Motor Works which has been transferred into a munition work shop & there we saw the famous French .75 gun & shells being made in all their various stages. They turn out 8000 shells a day & 5 guns per week. It was most interesting & the manager was very pleased to show us through.

We next went along to the St. Cloud Park, where Nap. III lived & it was very pretty. To the Follies Bergere again & enjoyed ourselves immensely. One big Aus. officer almost pulled the strong man. Great fun! Some life!

### 1<sup>st</sup> Sep. 17.

Great sadness! Realised that it was our last day in Paris. However I started off all right. Was calmly reposing in bed when the porter brought me a big fat letter from Gordon containing all the home news. I just cuddled up again & drank in the happy news. Say it was great!

Breakfast consists of coffee & rolls chiefly & it's a great stunt to lazily stretch out your arm, grab the telephone & order your meal. It did me down to the ground & I'm pretty fussy. Went to a nice little girl's room to tea & she gave us a tasty lot of fancy cakes. Andree McNeill was her name & she was the only decent girl I met. She spoke English & gave us a great time. She was very cut up when we had to go & then I realised what a cruel war it was. We left by the 11.40 pm train & arrived home at 8 p.m. the next day. I got out at Desvis & walked to Trvis Marquets. It had been a wonderful experience & a fine holiday & naturally I enjoyed myself immensely. Am patiently waiting for Blighty leave which should come along about April 1927 with luck!!

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sept. 17.**

Found out that it hurt considerably to be back in this quiet hole after gay Paree. Commenced cleaning our equipment up & brass shone for the inspection.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sept.**

Received 22 letters. 10-mile route march with full pack. Great fun!

**4<sup>th</sup> Sept. 17.**

Bn. inspection - very satisfactory. In the afternoon we played the Pierrots cricket & just beat them by two runs. George Pearce was playing. They gave us a concert in the evening.

**5<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

12 mile march. They are gradually increasing the distance until we get up to 18 per day, because I believe when we move will have to travel per foot in stages of several miles per day.

**6<sup>th</sup> Sept. 17.**

Nearly everyone had the wind up. The Bn. was closely inspected by the Brigadier & he gave us a ripping report. Fancy we had to have all our helmet slings ironed out so that they would be flat. No wonder we are not winning the blessed war. The Brig also hinted that we were in for a hot time after our spell was over.

**7<sup>th</sup> Sept 17**

Cleaning up & Inspections of platoons.

**8<sup>th</sup> Sept 17.**

Specialist training.

**9<sup>th</sup>.**

Route march. 11 miles.

**10<sup>th</sup>.**

Church parade.

**11<sup>th</sup> Sept 17.**

Brigade march & march past Godlee.

**12<sup>th</sup>**

Cricket match. Made top score.

**13<sup>th</sup> Sept 17.**

Baldwin, Fawcett, Whitaker & I went over to Huequiliers for dinner at a nice place kept by Charlotte. Had a glorious repast as good as anything in Paris. A lovely custard tart to finish up with too.

**15<sup>th</sup> Sept 17.**

Bn. Sports. Am Bn. representative for the Bde.

**16<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

Received letters from friends re the com. & M.M.. Paraded sick - leg out of joint.

**18<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

Orderly officer thereby missing 14 mile route march. Poor beggars got wet through as it rained all the while. Did a little correspondence. Invited by "D" Coy to dinner. & had a most convivial time. Awful life, what!!

**19<sup>th</sup> Sept. 17.**

Did a brigade stunt and it was a huge success - a sort of rehearsal for our next stunt in the line. I was a casualty early in the game & so had a very easy time, simply sat down on my consolidated point!

**22<sup>nd</sup> Sep 17.**

Up at 5 am as we were to be inspected by Douglas Herig. We had to march about 6 miles & in one large paddock the whole division was lined up and it looked fine. We then marched past him & he is a fine looking man such a strong face. Arrived home at 2 p.m. & had the afternoon off.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 17.**

Church Parade in the morning. Had a game of cricket in the afternoon. Gave "D" Coy a return dinner at 7 o'clock & we had a right royal time. Our menu consisted of soup, salmon, lettuce salad, turkey & green peas, roast beef, baked potatoes & carrots, stewed apples & blanc mange, apricots & cream, biscuits & coffee & drinks of all descriptions. Really it was a fine feed & the evening was a huge success, especially Capt. Ruddacks laugh at the end.

**24<sup>th</sup> Sept 17.**

Rehearsed the Bn. stunt during the afternoon. Lecture by the C.O. in the evening on the proposed show to be held at 2 A.M. the next morning. On reaching home we were pleased to see it had been cancelled as it was rumoured we were moving next day.

**25<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

Packed up all ready to move off. At 12 when the men were just having dinner we got the order to fall in by 1 o'clock. It was one mad rush to clear things up & eventually we moved off from our good home at Trvis Marquets for quarters nearer the line. Sent pics & pictures of Paris home. Received more letters re M.M. I must be a blessed hero! Reached Remylls Wirgin at 7 o'clock. Have very decent billet. Met Mr Stanley a friend of the Dunn family & we had a good talk over Cecil & things in general. Had a most glorious bathe in a neighbouring creek. We arrived here hot, tired & dusty & to jump into a swiftly running icy cold stream - well it was luxurious. It absolutely revived us. Whilst passing through Ouvre I met Eric & Jim Bond & had quite a decent yarn to them.

**26<sup>th</sup> Sept 17.**

Moved off at 8 a.m. & did 17 miles solid & eventually reached Sercus. We were supposed to go to Blaringhem but the 37<sup>th</sup> got in on us.

**27<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

Did about 10 miles to St Sylvester Cappel. Camped out in tents & we had a very cold time.

**28<sup>th</sup> Sep 17.**

Only moved 5 miles to a camp near Winnezeele. Rumours about going over. Good news re the stunt. Received several letters from Aus.

**29<sup>th</sup> Sep 17.**

Arranged final affairs for the platoon such as seeing that all iodine, field dressings, helmets, colour patches & all other matters were in good order. I was detailed to go back with the marchons.

**30<sup>th</sup> Sept. 17.**

Had an easy day - sports most of the time. Received orders to be ready to move out next day.

**1<sup>st</sup> October.**

Marched back to Hazebrouck & on to Morbecque to the Divisional Camp there. Nothing was prepared & we simply had to set to & get tea & our place something like order. Had a tea in Morbecque & felt able to carry

on.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Oct. 17.**

Nothing doing at all except a muster parade. Sent a map & photos to Gordon per Latta. Cecil B. took me into Hazebrouck to a nice little friend of his & there we spent a most enjoyable time as she, a Belgian refugee, prepared a dainty tea & afterwards played some nice music for us.

**3<sup>rd</sup> October 17.**

It rained considerably. I was camp orderly officer but had very little to do.

**4<sup>th</sup> October 17.**

Received news that the boys went over yesterday morning, gained all their objectives & taken 2000 prisoners. It was bitterly cold & they must have put in an awful night.

**5<sup>th</sup> October.**

Carried on with training but as there was an abundance of officers we had very little work to do. Went into Hazebrouck & had a fine time at a little girl friends home known very well to Cecil. We had a fine tea & she played the piano beautifully.

**7<sup>th</sup> October.**

Went to a concert in the evening & enjoyed it immensely.

**8<sup>th</sup> October. 1917.**

After a lot of waiting we caught the train at Hazebrouck & journeyed very slowly to Poperinghe. After a six-mile march we joined up the Bn. about 2 miles from Ypres

**9<sup>th</sup> October.**

Prepared for our stunt & got things ready. Received a lot of letters & a beautiful scarf & sweets from Muriel.

**10<sup>th</sup> October 1917**

Took a working party through Ypres to a 8 inch how. Battery to load shells on lorries as they were moving up. Its heartrending to see the awful way in which Ypres is battered to the ground - not one single building remains intact. The beautiful Cloth Hall is simply a shattered outline of ruined walls & broken pillars. Really I should think it would almost be impossible to build the city up again.

**11<sup>th</sup> October 1917.**

Moved up to our forward area & camped in bivouac, resting all day. At eight o'clock p.m. we were given a nice hot feed, as most probably this would be our last hot meal for some days. We are camped at Hussar Farm near the base of the Zonnebeke Rd. At 8.45 we fell in ready to move off & by 9 p.m. we were on our way in single file towards the line. The whole brigade was moving in single file along the road & although traffic had been suspended we made very slow progress. Until we branched off to "K" track we met with no shelling at all, then however Fritz put over a number of gas shells which caused us to put on our helmets but we moved on & the interruption caused us very little inconvenience. The track was in a fair state but when you've got 3000 odd men following one behind the other you can imagine the going wasn't altogether fast.

After going along a sunken road for a while we found we were at our jumping off position. There was no trench there so we formed up in our correct formation as well as possible & laid down. We were all bunched up & things didn't look too good at all. We had two hrs to wait as zero time was 5.25 a.m. (12.10.17). I really think they were the worst two hrs I've ever been through. Personally I was lying in mud 4 Or 5 inches deep. The rain was pouring steadily down on us & to cap the lot the Boche started to shell us heavily. Really I

didn't fancy the idea of going over, as I knew the mud would be pretty bad.

However when the barrage opened up we went forward & there wasn't any order or formation at all. It was just like a crowd coming away from a football match. We were met with machine gun fire from a pillbox directly in the wood in front. However that was soon taken & altogether about 20 prisoners were captured. The ground was in an awful condition & made going very hard. The barrage was very poor & we found out more so afterwards. Well we advanced about 700 yards & then the 37<sup>th</sup> commenced to dig in. We had to take the second objective but our barrage didn't commence for over 40 minutes. Small groups of men pushed forward & some even went right into Passchendaele. However the N.Z's were unable to come up on our left as a very strong pillbox surrounded by wire was holding them up. This left our flank exposed & we were ordered to withdraw in small parties & consolidate where the 39<sup>th</sup> were, that is in our original assembly trench.

The mire in the gullies were easily up to ones thighs & it was a bad look out if you got stuck. Even in shell-holes the mud was sometimes over the knees & the wounded had an awful time. The majority were brought in but some poor chaps simply died of exhaustion, they crawled into shell holes & couldn't get out. The nights were awful but its wonderful how callous a fellow gets. When you see a fellow with his leg blown off pleading for help & you've simply got to push on you'd think it would make you cry, but no! we take it as a matter of course, it can't be otherwise. We had 2 officers killed & 23 other ranks & a large number wounded. His machine gun fire was pretty rotten for us & the barrage hardly touched any of his pillboxes.

A Boche will shout at you like blazes until you get about 50 yds away & then will come out of his concrete building & ask for mercy. Wonderful isn't it? That night it rained nearly all the time & he shelled us badly. Although very cold & wet I managed to snare a few moments of sleep.

#### **13<sup>th</sup> October. 1917.**

We simply sat by all day as nothing could be done. A hot stew was bought up during the morning & how we relished it, my word it was great! At 10 that night we were relieved by the 11<sup>th</sup> Bde. Then commenced our struggle home it was pitch black & we only had a muddy tape to follow amongst an area of shell-holes, with about 4 miles to travel. Most of the chaps were exhausted & with 2 days rain on "K" track & several thousand troops passing over it, it was almost indescribable. Nearly all the way the mud was over our knees & the poor lads were throwing away equipment, rifles, overcoats & any unnecessary impediments. That struggle home was a nightmare - you'd see fellows get stuck in the mud, simply sink down and say "All right cobber, go on" & then die. Truly it was a night to try the firmest. We arrived home at 2 am. 14<sup>th</sup>, deadbeat. However we were given a hot feed & clean clothes & it didn't take us long to get to sleep. My pal had laid my valise out for me & after a hot sponge I simply fell into bed & remained there all next day. I had scores of letters waiting for me & for once in my life I said "B -- the letters". It was great reading them next day when I had cleaned myself up & also I found two parcels for me & one from Malvern & one from Gwen Craigie. How delicious were their contents I only know! Fritz brought one of our balloons down that evening.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> October 17.**

At 12 noon we were placed in motor lorries & taken back to our little village of Trvis Marquets. We passed through Kemmel, Bailleul & Hazebrouck. We got out at Senelaques & arrived home at 1.30 a.m. After seeing the men fixed up I went along to my old billet & woke Madame up. She was awfully pleased to see me & set the fire alight, fried me 3 eggs & made some coffee. After getting into the sheets I felt very thankful indeed that I had been spared to return unharmed. It was great being back in the quietude of the country again & most probably we will remain here for some time, as we require a large number of reinforcements.

#### **17<sup>th</sup> October 17.**

Rested all day - no parade. Started to answer the 46 letters, which I had received by the last two mails.

**18<sup>th</sup> October 17.**

Platoon inspection. Went for a nice ride on the Coy. Horse in the afternoon. Had a few shots with my Fritz automatic & she's a pearl, much better for shooting than our revolvers are.

**19<sup>th</sup> Oct. 17.**

Had a morning ride & censored letters during the afternoon. Winter is quickly coming on & of night-time I go out in to the kitchen with the old lady & sit around the stove & read or write. Not a bad stunt either. I have a splendid batman who looks after me a treat. Of a morning at 7.45 just before I arise he brings in a cup of steaming cocoa & a couple of biscuits, sort of gives me a start for the day you know.

**20<sup>th</sup> Oct 17.**

Went to Desvies to the Baths.

**21<sup>st</sup> Oct 17.**

Church parade in the morning. After dinner I went over to Huequeliers to arrange a dinner for the following evening.

**22<sup>nd</sup> Oct 17.**

The other three officers went over in the mess cart but I decided to ride the horse. It took me about 200 yds & then balked so I had to make a tactical retreat & get a bike. Awful blow to one's dignity - what! We had a beautiful dinner, music & mirth & arrived home very pleased with ourselves & confident of making a return trip there on some future date. The men in the mess cart came an abdominal crash as the swingle-tree broke & they had to leave the cart & walk home. Have completed all correspondence & now feel a free man. Saw Eric White up at Ypres, also Norm Riley & Basidow. It is raining heavily & consequently no parade. Sent a cable to mother for her birthday

**23 Oct 17.**

So far our training consists of specialists work from 9 to 12.30 and in the afternoon we do an hrs drill & then play games. Went for a ride over to see George Browne in the TM.

**29<sup>th</sup> Oct 17.**

Had another dinner & the cooking as usual was superb.

**30<sup>th</sup> Oct 17.**

Rained all day so we carried on with Lewis gun instruction. Capt. Cruishank has taken charge. Heard from Dumaresq & he's getting on all right. Aus. Mail supposed to be coming in shortly.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 1917.**

Aus. Mail in but one week is missing. Went over to Huequeliers & had a great feast & enjoyable evening.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 1917**

Went over for a ride to see Browne. Had dinner there.

**4<sup>th</sup> Nov 1917.**

Went for a long walk in the afternoon & fell over a pig coming home. Went clean over its back, landed in the mud & took several inches of skin off my hand. I wasn't drunk either. Transferred £20 to my a/c in the Com. Bank.

**5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1917.**

Church parade in the morning & "D" Coy. entertained us at dinner in the evening. It didn't altogether go with the usual swing.

**6<sup>th</sup> Nov 1917.**

Getting ready for the colonel's inspection also did some shooting. Two lectures in the evening. Was interviewed by Capt. Bean the Aus. War Correspondent & told him many weird & wonderful things about Passchendaele. Also informed that we would be leaving for the trenches on Saturday next. Gordon's birthday. Sent a quid along for Peg to fix up a little present of some description.

**7<sup>th</sup> Nov 1917.**

Colonel's inspection & we gave him a good turn out. Rained very heavily all day.

**8<sup>th</sup> Nov 1917.**

Battalion shooting & sniping competition all the afternoon. "C" Coy. Did remarkably well, winning all except one prize.

**9<sup>th</sup> Nov 1917.**

Received a bundle of cloths from Gordon, singlet, a beautiful scarf made by Mrs. Rabbisch, pyjamas, & 3 books, & a pair of gloves. Also several papers from S.A. Our old lady gave us a little fish supper as a final flutter before we retired & it was extremely tasty. They are awfully sorry we are going but with a fair amount of luck we should go back there again.

**10<sup>th</sup> Nov 1917.**

Wished dear old mother a happy birthday. Marched to Senelarques & there got in the motor buses waiting to carry us away. We had a very comfortable ride to a place called la Mottte-au-Bois near Hazebrouck, distance from 40 - 50 miles. But here our system went to pot. For two solid hrs we waited in the rain with full packs up & we were wondering where the guides were. They were only 3 miles away but eventually we were marched away to our billets. However no hot tea or stew awaited us so we got into beds at once & the billets were good.

Not so with yours truly though. Whilst fixing up my men I mistook my footing & fell into a cesspool which adorns every French yard. I was unable to get out for some while & was up to my hips in the rotten slimy liquid. Oh the perfume too - it was heavenly! I was lucky though in getting my cloths dry during the night. However it's a great life & we get heaps of fun.

**11<sup>th</sup> Nov 17.**

Marched 7 miles to billets at Doulien. Had pancakes for tea - a whopping success.

**12<sup>th</sup> Nov 17.**

At 11 o'clock we marched through Steeneverch to the Waterlands camp where we stayed the night.

**13<sup>th</sup> Nov 17.**

By a further two-mile walk we arrived at our destination in Komarin, about 1 mile from Regina camp, our forward battle position at Messines. We are in reserve here for eight days & then do a similar period in the line. The weather keeps fine.

**14<sup>th</sup> Nov 17.**

Received letters, not Aus, & Gordon was very pleased with the little present Peg got him. Was detailed for a working party but at the last minute it was cancelled. To enhance the joy of not spending a night out in the cold I then received a photo from Bon - it was a blithe. Wrote several letters during the evening.

**15<sup>th</sup> Nov 17.**

Had a lovely warm bath & change of cloths at the Romarin Baths.

**16<sup>th</sup> Nov 17.**

Received a pair of socks from mother, and several letters, some over a month old.

**20<sup>th</sup> Nov 1917.**

Prepared to go up into the trenches.

**21<sup>st</sup> Nov 1917.**

Caught the 3.45 pm train at Romarin Siding for Hyde Park Corner. Walked up the Messines Road until we came to New Cross St where we branched off to take over the trenches just opposite Warneton. The relief was carried out well & we had a good sector - nice & dry. We did a shift of 4 on & 12 off. Our special forte was fries eggs & toast of a morning & pancakes for dinner, & within 50 yds of the front line so it wasn't too bad. We had a very quiet time until the last day 29<sup>th</sup> when the Boche must have thought we were relieving for he shelled all parts warmly all day long. Our relief turned up at 6.30 p.m. & by 8 o'clock we were on our way out. However at Bn HQ we were put on fatigue (after 8 continuous days in the front line) carrying duckboards along a track a 1 ½ long. The men were dead tired and it was a cruel task, however its all in the game. We arrived home a little after 10 p.m. feeling very worn out but pleased that our term in the line had been completed with so few casualties 2 killed & 2 wounded.

I received over 40 letters in the line, all different dates, some a month old but all extremely acceptable. Marj. Parton also sent me a Xmas parcel, containing cake & sweets etc. My batman went on leave to England & took my automatic & nose-cap over to Gordon. A good move! News from Gordon states that our Xmas mail to Aus. has been sunk. Luckily all my cards went later. How I love those Huns! Haven't heard from Roy for some time. Hope he is quite well. Photos of the Singer arrived from Malvern & I shed tears of joy at seeing its noble form again.

We are in very comfortable quarters in under-ground dug outs at Red Lodge near Hyde Park Corner. Our year in France was completed on the 24th instant. It's been a wonderful experience & my luck has been great. I received a beautiful letter from Mr & Mrs Dunn last week thanking me for writing them.

**30<sup>th</sup> Nov. 17.**

The 39<sup>th</sup> raided at 5.15 p.m. & were successful & our lads went over at 1 am. Both were noisy shows & complete successes. Prisoners in each case were taken & many of the enemy were killed. We only had one casualty - a piece of marvellous luck. I was checking officer & just missed a Blighty - a piece of shrap hit me in the shoulder but unluckily not hard enough. Fancy if I'd gone to England & had Xmas dinner with Gordon.

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 17.**

Can't realise that Xmas is almost here. Went with Capt. Ruddock into Bailleul for the day. We had a great dinner & a lovely bath & bought up several articles. When we got back to camp we went to a little affair at B.H.Q. to congratulate Payne & Jackson on gaining their distinctions. It was not a success as the room was too small. I was exempt from working parties & had a very easy time - no work at all.

**5<sup>th</sup> Dec. 17.**

Small fall of snow. Reynolds called in & we had a good yarn. Also saw Lift Parkes & Sid Stockham. Spent the evening with Harold Davidson last night & had a most enjoyable chat over old times. He has evidently been doing remarkably good work as he has received the D.C.M. & was also recommended for a bar to it. Went into Romarin with the others & saw a good picture show. Saw several small balloons high up & they appeared to be dropping papers of some description. They were over the enemy lines but did not appear to contain any men. Could not understand what they were there for at all.

**6<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Came an awful crash. Was detailed to do an extra turn in the line as "B" Coy. had no experienced officers & they asked for me. I didn't like the idea at all because I'd done 8 days before however its all in the life.

**7<sup>th</sup> Dec.**

Fritz strafed the supports all-day & made things pretty willing. Everybody had the mind up that the Boche was going to raid because we were on the sector on which ours went over. The trenches were in a bad condition as they were not revetted & the sides were falling in & making things very mucky. We are on the Warneton sector.

**8<sup>th</sup> 1917 Dec.**

Received a parcel from Doris Swann & very nice too, also a few letters. Very quiet day although the aeroplanes had a fair spin.

**9<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

It's just a year since we took over the line. The old luck has been right in & on the whole I've not fared too badly. My health is perfect. Applied for a relief.

**10<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Relieved by Fawcett & I withdrew to the QM store at Romarin. Sent a cable, birthday wishes to Marj. Had a glorious bath & went to the movies after tea.

**11<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

It's a great life down here & the food is great. Of course I've nothing to do & we have a lovely fire & every convenience. Had a quiet little game after tea.

**12<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Several Gothas came over on a bombing expedition & dropped some near the 44<sup>th</sup>. We had the pleasure of seeing one brought down in flames. Sent Xmas cables home.

**13<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Went over to the 43<sup>rd</sup> & saw old pals. Also visited Bill Boon & saw Lift Parkes. Had a great old yarn.

**14<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Moved from Romarin to take over from the 26<sup>th</sup> at Neuve-Eglise. Am detailed for a months school. Jack Dell returned. Proposed increase in leave in the New Year. Cheerio!

**16<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Travelled by mess cart to Ravelsburg where we had to catch a lorry at 9 o'clock at Bde HQrs. With their usual organization we had to wait 5 solid hrs in the cold for the blessed thing to turn up. At 2.30 p.m. it made an appearance & we had a 40 mile journey before us. Off we went passing through Hazebrouck which has been severely shelled & we landed at St Omer at 7 where we made a good tea from omelet & nice hot bread. We were perishingly cold & it was nice. After another 15 kilos & a lot of enquiring we eventually landed at Nort be court. It had snowed very heavily indeed - the first big fall for the season.

**17<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Commenced our musketry course (Fifth Army) & the wind was awfully cold & biting. The mess is rotten & as St Omar is 8 or 9 miles away & we only have Sundays off I can't see myself having a very enjoyable time. Have a nice spring mattress affair for our beds so that is one consolation.

**18<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Awfully cold again. Marj's birthday.

**19<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Although we pay 3.50 a day for the mess it is not worth half - quite the worst I've been in so far. We are making a complaint so hope things will improve.

**20<sup>th</sup> Dec.**

Went into St Omer in the afternoon. Brought a nice table centre for mother - sent it per registered mail. Had a very enjoyable meal at the Hotel du Commerce. We only have Sundays off & our notes take all the spare time so its not the rest we thought it was going to be, however the old bed is very nice anyway.

**Xmas Day**

Had breakfast in bed arose at 12.30 p.m. Wrote during the afternoon. At 8 o'clock we had a real tip-top dinner but it didn't seem a bit like Xmas. I was thinking of you all & of the great old times we had when we gathered round the table at home. How I long for the time when it will be repeated. However "cheerio" is my password so I wont get down in the dumps. Am eagerly awaiting some mail, which we expect at any time. Gordon sent me a note from Roy & I was very pleased to see that he was quite OK.

**26<sup>th</sup> Dec. 17**

A very cold bleak day. The snow was over a ft. deep on the parade ground. Our feet get nearly frozen off for we've got a lot of standing about to do.

**28<sup>th</sup> Dec 17**

Had our first oral exam, which was very easy. Thought I'd like to be at Glenelg for the 28<sup>th</sup>. I guess there's a few degrees difference in temperatures between the two places at the present time.

**29<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Took a run into St O. & made a few purchases.

**30<sup>th</sup> Dec 17.**

Did our snapshooting & rapid practice. Heavy fall of snow & bitterly cold. Mess-bill brought down to 2 francs per day & a decided improvement.

**1<sup>st</sup> Jan. 1918.**

The N.C.O's failed to appear on parade & were severely reprimanded. However we got the half day off as there had been a mistake in ordering the parade. Concert in the evening.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 18.**

Second oral exam, which caused us very little bother.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 18.**

Remained in bed until 12.30, had lunch & then went for a long walk round the neighbouring country.

**6<sup>th</sup> Jan 18**

Final exam. Fairly easy.

**7<sup>th</sup>**

Day of rest - arose at 1 p.m. Got ready to leave camp.

**8<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

Lorries were to take us to St Omer at 9 o'clock but they couldn't get up the hill on a/c of the icy roads & we were detained 3 hrs. Eventually we boarded the train & arrived at Hazebrouck at 2.30 p.m. This town has been knocked about awfully since we were here 3 or 4 months ago. The range of his guns are easily over 20 miles. Whilst having dinner I met Baldy's little Belgian pal & we had quite a nice chat. Entrained again at 4.30 & arrived at Caestre at 5.30 p.m. Marched to the 1<sup>st</sup> Anzac Corps camp where we stayed for the night.

**9<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

Arrived at Neuve-Eglise at 12 mid-day & joined the Bn. Was very glad to be back again with my pals. There is a possibility that I may go on leave in 10 days time. If I hadn't been at the school I'd have been in Blighty now - very very stiff bick. Am longing for it. General Bridwood inspected the camp. Ausy mail

expected.

**10<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

Up at 6.30 to take a working party to Romarin. Unloaded stone from train into lorries. Very cold & snowy day.

**11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

Took working parties to Wuluerghen Siding until about 3 p.m. each day. After 6 weeks without letters I received a bundle of 19, and they were relished I can tell you. Leave stunt still going well. With luck I should go a week from today.

**14<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

Remained in bed until 9.30. Went into Bailleul, saw Grubb, interviewed the R.F.C. cove & went to a pantomime given by the Anzac Coves entitled "Dick Whittington & his Cat". It was a real good turnout & we enjoyed it immensely.

**15<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

Told by Adj. I would be going on leave on the 17th. Cheerio! Received 10 more letters. Rained hard all day.

**16<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

I was not put on a working party so I had the morning in bed & rested during the afternoon. Went to the Bandicoots after tea but only a fair show.

**17<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

At 9 a.m. I caught the mess cart which took me away to Bailleul where the leave train left at 11.15. We arrived at Calais at 4 p.m. & stayed at the officers club that night.

**18<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

We left by the leave boat at 9.30 a.m. & after a calm trip reached Dover at 11.35. I had my pack crammed with souvenirs & it weighed very heavy. Shell-case, nose-cap, driving bands, bayonet, dagger, automatic etc. One runs a bit of a risk in getting them over but it's all in the fun. We left Dover a few minutes before 12 on our way to dear old London. My dream had come true & I ceased to sing that little old song "Take me back to dear old Blighty" Au Revoir.

(Diary insert - Undated clipping from a unknown newspaper)

## ***THE AUSTRALIANS***

### ***FIGHT FOR MESSINES RIDGE.***

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### ***GERMANS USE DEADLY GAS.***

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### ***SOME ANXIOUS MOMENTS.***

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*British Headquarters, France, June 9.*

*There was never so much spectacle in warfare as the attack on Messines Ridge. One watched it as it were from an armchair looking across to the stage. Here is the exact picture as we saw it hour by hour:--*

*It was dark when I went to call for the New Zealand war correspondent. Everywhere along the road one passed small columns of fully loaded men moving silently through the night - New Zealanders, Australian, British. At the New Zealand headquarters there were lights in the mess-room, and a pot of tea was always ready on the brightly-lit table inside. As we motored towards the front everything was in the most perfect order. I saw not a hint or suspicion of trouble. Suddenly on the dark flats we ran into gas stream-out of it-into a second gas stream. So the German was shelling these regions with gas and tear shell.*

*Where we left the car the gas had thinned; but as we walked there began to fall, almost as softly as the raindrops that precede a thunderstorm, showers of small shell from distant field guns. They seemed to be sprinkled all over the country as if through a garden sprayer. The soft whistle and pat pat of the little bursts was continuous on every side. The country was thick with a musty smell of chloroform, sandwiched between strong whiffs of lavender-smelling tear shell, and occasionally the pungent mustard of some other poison. Long after we reached our trench this hosing of the country with shell steadily continued. The particular corner to which we made our way was for that night occupied by an Auckland battalion. Before us straight across the valley about 2,000 yards away was Messines-we could see the dull shell-bursts in the dust of the ridge, and occasionally a flare went up from the face of it. Sometimes flares dropped far away behind it. They must have been where the British line curled round it in the Ypres salient far to the left.*

#### ***Watching the Germans.***

*Those were moments of intense anxiety to the onlookers. Would the Germans see our movement, and guess that the attack was immediately imminent. At ten minutes past two at points of the front a flare of quite a different sort shot into the air very straight and high, and then brilliant light sailed slowly down. It took a good minute and a half to come to earth. Our big guns seemed to quicken at the same time, but nothing came from the German, except the same pat-pat-pat of the gas shell and the occasional lily-like white light illuminating no man's land. A partially gassed man passed up the trench. "The blank," he said, "burst one in the bay." Then when all seemed to be progressing unbelievably well, with only 18 minutes to go, two green and two yellow flares shot suddenly into the sky. As they settled one noticed that they fell behind the ridge. They must be from the extreme left of the British line, away from Ypres. Immediately, flare after flare curved over the horizon in that far corner -- yellow, green, then red, and whole sheafs of white. Something must have been seen there. Every German field gun throwing gas shell stopped suddenly. Presently low flashes over the skyline in that direction showed that a German barrage had come down there already. Could it be the Germans had discovered the left of our attack or was it some feint of ours away beyond the left? Perhaps a raid from the silent. Anyway everything is perfectly peaceful on our front. Five minutes after they had ceased, the gas shells began to slip down again quite normally. Never was shellfire so welcome.*

#### ***A Diary of the Fight.***

*Twelve minutes to go-A big New Zealander has come along the trench. "Come, you blokes," he said, "tucker-any of you not had your breakfast?" Big dixies of tea had been carried along the trench some time before, and the men had been munching and yarning in the dark. The pat, pat, pat of gas shells continued. Nine minutes to go-Still undiscovered. A bright round moon. The first warm streaks of dawn are just showing above Messines. The German has burst a few big gas shells down towards the front line. "Where are these blanky bombs?" asks a voice. The men in this trench are not for the first wave, but they are getting their things together. An officer walks along the parapet. "Got those picks?" he asks.*

*Five minutes-Those German barrage flares still going up in sheafs on the far left. Lots of gas shells. Four minutes-A single great bright double green flare has suddenly shot up from the foot of Messines ridge straight ahead of us. There is no question where that was-directly in front of the Australians and New Zealanders. A machine gun starts-then a second joins in-then a third. A second green flare goes up. The*

three machine guns are hard at it. A big shell bursts near by. Fair in the middle of the dark slope a single rifle flashes like an electric spark. There is no question they have seen something.

***The Great Explosions.***

Two minutes to go-The machine guns have petered out into silence. The hill slope is as peaceful as it ever was. Three of our big guns have fired-others follow within a second or two, somewhat as a man quickens his first steps when he starts to run. Then the whole trench wall rocked inwards and swayed and then rocked and thumped again. Far away to the left a huge dull red bubble, covered with a grey slag, suddenly grows and then bursts, throwing a rosy red underglow on some thick cloud hanging above it. Then another bursts beside it and another. The ground rocks and sways and rocks along before there arrives the tremendous delayed detonation. Brilliant shears of some molten substance beside the mines. Then more mine bursts within a second or two further left, behind the ridge. Simultaneously three similar heavy red bursts away on the right. My God, what a stage management. It happened in less time than it takes to tell. It was followed by an immediate simultaneous roar of machine gun fire. Not a chatter but a single rip into uproar. And then the bombardment came down and crowned it.

***Full of Noise and Smoke.***

For two hours from that moment one might as well have sat down in the trench with one's back to the fight. There was nothing distinguishable to see or hear. The whole valley was full of noise and dense deep grey smoke. The barrage which one expected did not come on that trench. A stray rifle bullet or two flew over. Occasional shells fell near. One could hear machine guns chattering through the fog, but they gradually ceased. The few white and red flares which overtopped the dust grew rarer and rarer until they were clearly only rising beyond the ridge. The men in the trench put on their kit. The order came to fix bayonets. An officer moved along the parapet. They scrambled out, formed up, and were quickly lost in the smoke. We turned to our breakfast. What we saw when the fog gradually cleared must be the matter for another article.

(Diary insert - Undated clipping from a unknown newspaper)

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***THE AUSTRALIANS***

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***FIGHT FOR MESSINES.***

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***HEROIC YOUNG OFFICERS.***

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***GERMAN DEAD LIE THICK>***

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*(From the Australian War Correspondence, C.E.W. Bean)*

*British Headquarters,*

*France, June 13.*

The Messines battle consisted of one attack in the dawn and the first hours of the morning, and a second attack during the afternoon. During the second attack the Australians played their fullest part. In the morning assault they attacked on the flank of the New Zealanders, and formed the right of the whole line. In the afternoon other Australians moved through the New Zealanders and the British immediately north of them, and launched the further attack along almost the whole southern half of the battle front, while the

*British launched it along the northern half. The left of the Australian line, which advanced behind the barrage of its artillery, met no heavy opposition. The Germans mostly bolted or surrendered, and several hundred prisoners were taken. A couple of tanks moved in with the troops here. They worked splendidly in the advance, and when the Australian officer in charge of the line here asked them to support him on a particularly knotty point they moved straight down there. When finally they became bogged and could get no further the crew dismounted some of their machine guns, brought them into the line, and stayed there fighting side by side with the Australian unit until the end of the piece.*

#### ***A Stiffer Fight.***

*On the right shoulder of Messines Ridge, just where the forward summit is reached due east of Messines, the road from Messines to Menin runs out towards the German hinterland. There the fighting was stiffer. The Germans had been bombarding this corner as if they intended to counter-attack. They had reinforced their worn-out Bavarian troops, and in the process had received our preparatory bombardment fair and square on their heads. Their own bombardment had eased off, but their position in the trenches at this point and in half-broken hedges and behind ragged trees was held by a sufficient number of men to place our long advance under a continuous fire both from snipers and machine guns. It was here in front of the Victorians and Queenslanders that some of the heaviest fighting occurred. The trench mortar, which was intended to deal with this thorny corner, had been blown out with its team before reaching the place, and half the crew of the Vickers gun which was intended for this point, had been killed or wounded. There remained with the gun an officer and two men, and the officer set up the gun and began firing on the German machine guns holding the position. The gun was knocked out. The officer repaired it and carried it forward himself, and worked it until it was smashed a second time. Then he crept on with a couple of men and settled a German machine gun with two bombs. Shortly after this he was wounded. Meanwhile the Victorian infantry officer, who was in charge of the advancing line at this particular point, had overcome his first obstacle--a number of Germans in and around a building on the road--by working round them with two Lewis machine guns and firing into them from their rear. In a ragged hedge near could be seen two German machine guns. The officer crept further and bombed them one after the other. He was so close that he caught the blast of these bombs himself. He saw his men into their objective, fighting with bombs in some places. Then he too, was wounded.*

#### ***The Germans Come Up.***

*The lane had scarcely been established when the Germans were seen moving in considerable parties opposite this corner. A senior officer told me that he himself saw what he took to be about two battalions of Germans in fairly dense formation. From the front line small bodies of Germans were seen creeping over shellholes and through broken trenches. Our artillery came down on this projected counter-attack like an avalanche. The intended assault along most of this front was never delivered. In the line northeast of Messines, however, where the Australian attack along with the British attack farther north had swerved slightly to the left, a gap was left in the assault, and opposite this a pocket of Germans still remained in their reserve trench. The Germans tried during the night to counter-attack from their position hereabout. The attack was made with little or no artillery preparation. The line of men was seen advancing, and every rifle and machine-gun was turned on it. The Germans in parts came near enough to throw bombs into the Australian trench, and then the attack disappeared.*

#### ***Pelted With Shells.***

*In the morning, where the attack had been made, Germans could still be seen collected. About 20 Australians with bombs under an officer were sent out. The Germans replied with bombs and then ran, our men shooting at them. Even then the Germans returned. Parties were seen creeping up most of the morning into a hollow, where the rifle and machine gun could not reach them. The artillery was informed, and they pelted the hollow with their shells.*

*The Germans were seen hurrying back. A party of Australians went out in front of their trenches here. They brought in 40 wounded Germans. One of the Germans told them that his whole company had been in position there, and that he thought no man of them had escaped. About 60 or so lay there dead. On the second night there was a tremendous bombardment, which nothing followed. But the gap in the line where the German pocket remained had still to be cleared. The Australians near it, a day or two later, assaulted the gap immediately after dark. This turned into a very stiff fight. The Germans saw some of the preparations for it before dusk, and caught sight of the men coming into position after dark, exactly as they themselves had been seen three nights previously.*

#### **A South Australian Rush.**

*The instant our guns opened the German barrage came down, and the line advanced under a heavy fire. In front of the Germans was a wire entanglement not easy to get through. As the men came through the centre only a few got into the German trench, but on the left flank the South Australians rushed the section in front of them, and the rest were moved in through the trench thus taken. Meanwhile on the right the New South Welshmen had bombed the Germans at the block which previously barred them down this trench. The Germans counter-attacked, and the New South Welsh officer and most of his post were killed or wounded. The Western Australians attacked and re-took the block, and moving down they met the Tasmanians. The Germans retired from their last holding in this trench at dawn. They had been caught just before the retirement was to be carried out. They hung on a few hundred yards down the valley, from which place our patrols have since pushed them, and when some of us visited the place a few hours later the Western Australians were sniping them as they scuttled from hummock to hummock. The Germans had put up a good fight. Their dead lay thick where the bomb fight had been. Some of the worn-out Tasmanians had dropped asleep as they worked and lay dead to the world, both in the trenches and out of them. One Western Australian while he slept-clung tightly to a precious German helmet.*

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#### **ARMY CRICKET AT LORDS**

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LONDON, August 19.

*An Australian and South African cricket team on Saturday played a match against the Army and Navy at Lords. The Australians included Messrs. Barbour, Kelleway, Massie, Macartney, and Mathews. The English team is practically the same as that which met the Australians on July 14.*

*The Navy and Army team scored 106, of which P.F. Warner made 20 and Franklin 21, Macartney took four wickets for 37, Mathews three for 18, and Massie two for 39.*

*Australia and Africa made 242, of which Barbour scored 101, made by brilliant cricket in 95 minutes. A.C. Kelleway made 31.*



**JEAN DUNCAN**

(Diary insert - Undated clipping from a unknown Adelaide newspaper)

**SERGEANT SWANN, M.M.**

*Mr. J.W. Gillingham has received a cable message from his nephew, Sergeant L.K. Swann dated June 29, stating:- "Awarded Military Medal; well." Sergeant Swann is one of three brothers who have responded to the call of the Empire and humanity. He is the son or Mr. And Mrs G.L. Swann, of Jamestown.*

*Lieutenant G. Gordon Swann, the popular elocutionist, who was recently mentioned in the "Times" for valuable service, is the eldest of the three. Regimental-Quartermaster-Sergeant V.R. Swann, who after*



**Sergeant L.K. Swann, MM**

*having served in Egypt and Gallipoli had a strenuous time in the Sinai Desert and Palestine, is the second of the trio. Sergeant L.K. Swann left Australia in August last year. He went to France in November. All three are old Prince Alfred boys. And were also connected with the Parkside - Methodist Sunday-School.*

*(Diary insert - Undated clipping from a unknown Adelaide newspaper / or news publication)*

*Sergeant L.K. Swann cabled (June 29) to his uncle, Mr. J.W. Gillingham; "Awarded Military Medal, well." Sergeant Swann is a son of Mr. and Mrs. G.L. Swann, of Jamestown, whose three sons are "doing their bit" The first to respond to the call was Reg. Q.M. Sergt. V.R. Swann. Who left Australia in the early stages of the war in 1914 with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Light Horse. He served in Egypt, on Gallipoli, until the evacuation, and has had a strenuous time since then in the Sinai Desert and Palestine. The eldest of the family, Lieut. G. Gordon Swann, left home in June, 1915, served in the Army Motor Transport Service in Egypt, then transferred to France, and for eight months has been at various posts in England. He was recently mentioned in the London Times for valuable services rendered. The youngest son, Sergt. L.K. Swann, left Australia for the 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion in August, 1916, was transferred to the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Tasmania) whilst at Salisbury Plains, and went to France last November. Each of these attended Prince Alfred College, and the lastnamed won the esteem of all with whom he was associated as a diligent student and a clean sport, representing his school in intercollegiate cricket and tennis. He played with Sturt Cricket, Baseball, and Lacrosse Teams, and was a teacher in the Parkside Methodist Sunday School. A later cable advises that Sergt. L.K. Swann received his commission on July 2.*

(Diary insert - Copy of a correspondence from " (?) BANK " dated Adelaide 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1917.)

J.W. Gillingham, Esq.,  
Currie Street,  
ADELAIDE

Dear Sir,

The Trustees of the Bank desire to express their very great pleasure at hearing of the Military distinction won by Sergeant L.K. Swann and his promotion to a Lieutenancy.

The officers also join most heartily in this felicitation.

Please accept the congratulations of both the Trustees and the Staff, and will you kindly convey same to Lieutenant Swann and also to his parents.

Yours faithfully,  
W.B. Poole,  
MANAGER

(Attachment to above copy correspondence - Undated clipping from a unknown Adelaide newspaper)

*LIEUT. L.K. SWANN, M.M..*

*Second-Lieut. L.K. Swann, in a recent cablegram to his uncle, Mr. J.W. Gillingham, announced:- "Awarded Military Medal; well." He had also been promoted from sergeant to a commission. Lieut. Swann is a son of Mr. and Mrs. G.L. Swann of Jamestown, whose three sons are "doing their bit." The first to respond to the call was Reg.-Q.M.-Sgt. V.R. Swann who left in 1914 with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse. He has served in Egypt, on Gallipoli, until the evacuation, in the Sinai Desert, and Palestine. The eldest of the family, Lieut. G. Gordon Swann, left in June, 1915, has served in the Motor Transport Service in Egypt, France, and England. He was recently mentioned for valuable services rendered. The youngest son, Lieut. L.K. Swann, left Australia in August last, and went to France last November. Each of these attended Prince Alfred College, and the lastnamed represented his school in intercollegiate Cricket and tennis. He played with Sturt Cricket, Baseball, and Lacrosse Teams, and was a teacher in Parkside Sunday School.*

(Diary insert)

## A MOTHER'S POSSESSION.

Memories of a boyhood's day,  
When he went to school away;  
Letters in a schoolboy's hand,  
Telling of the things he'd planned.  
Limned in colours fair and bright-  
These are what she has to-night.

Vision of a soldier-lad,  
In his dress of Khaki clad,  
Saying, "Mother, do not grieve,"  
When he had his final leave.  
His tanned face and hers so white-  
These are what she has to-night.

Soldiers running up a slope,  
Hearts all gay and full of hope.  
One that stood before his men,  
Waved them on and on again.  
One that fought so well his fight -  
These are what she has to-night.

Letters bound and put away,  
Treasures to her dying day.  
Flowers growing by a grave,  
And a cross where grasses wave.  
One that walks with God in white-  
These are what she has to-night.

FRANK ELLIS.



**Taken at Hazebrouck.  
10.7.17.**



**THE MILITARY MEDAL.  
Messines 7.6.17**

(Diary inserts - Undated clippings from unknown newspaper / news publication)

*G.G. Swann and R.H. Mowat have won their commissions since they left Australia. The former was amongst those mentioned in the Times of February 27<sup>th</sup> as having been brought under the notice of the Secretary of State for War for valuable services rendered in connection with the war.*

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*Keith Swann has won the Military Medal, and has been given his commission. No details have come to hand.*



**Lieut. W.L. Davies, MM**



**Lieut. L.K. Swann, MM**

# DIARY 5



London. March 1918

L.K. Swann. Lt.  
40<sup>th</sup> Bn  
A.I.F.

28.1.17  
Oban.

Graduated for Pilot.  
Category "A" July 30<sup>th</sup> 18.  
Category "B" Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup> 18.

## The Great War ( continue on )

18<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.

Another pal & I got into the Pullman Dining Car & we had a tasty little lunch whilst journeying Londonwards. It was fine sitting down to a table laid out nicely with decent cutlery & a white table-cloth etc. It was my first luncheon in England for 14 months. We arrived at Victoria Station at 1.45 p.m. & an English officer was kind enough to show me the way to Waterloo. We just caught a tube nicely & within 10 minutes I was purchasing a ticket for Tidworth. I had only 5 minutes to wait & then the train moved off. Lobbing right in the hum & bustle of city life again I felt about as large as a one ft. rule but it was fine to see civilization again. I ask you as man to man "Is there a war on?" No certainly not! you reply in the vernacular. (?).

After changing at Andover & Triggershall I reached Tidworth at 6.10 p.m. I immediately set foot & enquired my way to the Barracks. After sometime I reached the A.M.T.S. office & one of the Cpls. took me down to Gordon's mess. He was not in so I was shown into his room & very nice it was too. I was sitting on his bed

when he walked in from his bath & you can imagine how surprised he was at seeing me there, as I had not informed him of my visit. The old boy is looking OK but evidently has a lot of work to do. His quarters are of the best though. Well we had tea & you can imagine our old tongues wagged before we turned in. Between sheets again! Top-hole!! However I had a rather restless night, as I wasn't quite used to their feel.

#### **19<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1918**

Had breakfast in bed & got up at 11 a.m. Strolled over to Gordon's office & on the way met Mont Maughan, who was looking very flash on his horse. He was just going to look for the hunt. Went & saw Gordon but he was very busy. At 3 o'clock I had a long yarn to George Prince & Harold Smith. I was very pleased to see them. Gordon had applied for 3 days leave & obtained it so we caught the 4.10 p.m. train from Tidworth & arrived in London a few minutes after 6 o'clock. Booked rooms at the Ivanhoe, had a nice tea & went to "Billeted", a bonza play of Dennis Eadies.

#### **20<sup>th</sup> Jan 1918.**

Remained in bed until 12.30. One must rest one's wearied head. What! Dined at the Res-des Gourmets, visited Peg, went to church & had a snack at the Strand corner House. It was a beautiful day, the first for sometime.

#### **21<sup>st</sup> Jan 18.**

Had a morning in bed but we got up in time for dinner! Went round to Horseferry & made an extra allotment & had my book fixed up. As we were going back we noticed a 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Car standing in the street so I got him to take me out to Wandsworth where I saw old Baldy. He is going back to Aussie. After tea we went to the Spy play "Inside the lines". It was goodo, especially as the seats were free - Efficient staff work on Gordon's part.

#### **22<sup>nd</sup>. Jan 18.**

Had our photos taken. Caught the 3.15 p.m. to Cardiff. Mr. Hindmarsh met me & took me out to Roath Park. They have a beautiful home & it is in a lovely position. I enjoyed myself immensely whilst there as I felt I was one of the family. Mr. H. took me for several walks around the Roath Lake & Park & it is a pretty place. We had some exciting games of billiards & bagatelle of an evening. Twice we were entertained, once by the Hemers family & very nice too & then by Mrs. H. jnr. Their heavy supper stunt used to worry me though. Miss H. is a superb cook. They are looking forward to Gordon's visit very much. I did not like leaving them at all but on

#### **Sat. 26<sup>th</sup>.**

I caught the 10 a.m. train for London. Went to the "13<sup>th</sup> Chair" matinee & it was a ripping stunt. After the "Within the law" play style. One even got two or three thrills. As I was coming out of the theatre who should I see but Cliff Hawke. We had tea together & then went to the Victoria Palace. The Aus card expert was a blithe, one of the best I've ever seen. From Euston I caught the 8.50 p.m. to Glasgow arriving there at 7.50 a.m.

#### **27<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

After a shave & a bath I took a stroll up the street & fell in with a party bound for Loch Lomond. It was a glorious day & the ride out to Baldock in the car was great. We then went around the lake in a boat & had quite a decent time. After a nice dinner, Central Hotel, I wrote a few letters & retired early.

#### **28<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

Took a stroll around the city, bought up a book of views & some pcs to send home. Went by the mid-day train to Oban. Had a fine trip up as the day was good & the scenery excellent. The lochs are fine & the rugged hills must look fine in summer. Arrived at 6.30 & stayed at the Queens Hotel which is kept by an old Scotch lady. After a nice tea I wrote a long letter home & then snuggled in. Fancy only 3 more days left. How cruel! After breakfast a gentleman very kindly took me for a walk along the coast & the scenery was

beautiful. It must be a perfect place in the summer time. I sent some views of the place home. When I went to pay my bill at the hotel the old lady would not take a penny & seemed awfully cut up that I had to go so soon. And yet they say the Scotch are mean. Caught the 11.20 a.m. train on the

**29<sup>th</sup> Jan 18. &**

arrived at Glasgow at 5. Happened to see Brennan from 43<sup>rd</sup> so we had tea together & then went to the theatre "Dick Wittington & his Cat" was on & it was really good. However I had to catch the 9.45 p.m. & thereby missed half the program.

**30<sup>th</sup> Jan 18.**

After a tiresome journey we arrived in London at 8.30 a.m. Just missed another raid. Had a clean up then went along to Horseferry where I drew £20 & paid it into my Com a/c. Went to "The Boy" in the aft & it was top-hole. Had tea with Peg & took her to "Yes Uncle" an absolute glorious scream. The weather is glorious. Sent home diary (red book / number 4) & pcs. of Glasgow & Oban.

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan 18.**

Last day. Oh my!! Met Peg in the aft. Gordon came up for the evening & we had a nice little tea together & a final farewell. It was a rightfully foggy night & trains were hung up for hrs.

**1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1918.**

Gordon saw me off by the 8 a.m. at Victoria. Was sorry to leave the old boy as I had had such a glorious holiday. Left Dover at 1 p.m. arriving in Calais after or near 3p.m. Stopped at the Hotel Sauvage. Was supposed to catch the 2 a.m. train for home but as I'd broken a tooth off my plate I saw the dentist & he fixed things up for me to remain another day.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. 1918.**

Had a nice ride out to the Hospital in a car driven by a nice girl & there the dental cove took my tooth & told me to return on the morrow. Was driven back to Calais again, had lunch at the club & then saw Harris (27<sup>th</sup>) off. Retired early to catch up a little of my beauty sleep.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 18.**

Went out to the hospital again in the car & secured the plate. They made a good job of the tooth & also strengthened it as it was getting rather worn. Went to Calais Stn to get a train but was informed there was none until next day & very nice too.

**4<sup>th</sup> Feb 1918**

Caught the 9.30 a.m. for Bailleul. After a change at Hazebrouck which has been shelled & bombed very much. I detrained at Steenwerck arriving at the QM's at Romarin at 7 p.m. I remained there the night as the Bn went into the line. Everybody thought I'd gone to the Flying Corps & the postal Cpl. returned a registered cable from H. Qrs. to the base. Evidently these were orders for me to report to Horseferry. However I saw Brigade & they gave me a warrant for England for the morrow. At 2 p.m. I went up with the ration train & said goodbye to most of my platoon, officers & others. I must admit I was sorry to leave them because the Bn is one of the best & I've had such fine treatment all through.

On the other hand I was awfully glad to say goodbye to the mud of Flanders for a time - at least. Bert Sadler had been awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre & Ray Smith, Alexander & Bertram & I celebrated the award & also my going. We had quite a convivial time. Col. Clarke (44<sup>th</sup>) also called in.

**5<sup>th</sup> Feb 18.**

Caught the 7.50 a.m. from Steenwerck & arrived at Boulogne at 6 p.m. - a very long monotonous journey. Shared a room with 2 flying chaps - one of them - Knight was an old P.A.C. chap.

**6<sup>th</sup>. Feb 18.**

Left Boulogne by the 2.15 boat & after a very choppy trip reached Folkestone at 5.40 p.m. Got a nice seat in the Pullman, had tea & got out at Victoria at 8 o'clock. Taxi took me & my valise to the I vanhoe where I hope to spend a few days. I was greeted with 34 letters when I saw the Coy. Cpl. Very nice indeed! Three from home. Sent two handkerchiefs to Margaret Cowling per registered letter. Miss Hindmarsh sent me 4 khaki ones, which were very acceptable.

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1918.**

Had breakfast in bed, a nice bath and then rallied forth to Horseferry. Saw Murray Fowler & Bob Selth. Received orders from HQrs to report to A.F.C. Depot, Wendover as soon as possible. Left the hotel after dinner & caught the 3.20 from Marylebone arriving at Wendover at 4.40. It was a very pretty trip down. Shared a room with James from the 37<sup>th</sup>. Bn.

**8<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Lived the life of a gentleman. Did nothing.

**9<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Answered many letters. We had a dance in the evening in our mess & it was a huge success. Met some very nice girls & had a ripping time.

**10<sup>th</sup> Feb. 18.**

Slept in until late. After lunch 3 other pals & I went for a stroll, as it was such a glorious afternoon.

**11<sup>th</sup> Feb. 18.**

Took a party out for a route march to Tring, a small village, 5 miles away a very pretty walk.

**12<sup>th</sup> Feb 18.**

General loaf during the day. Lecture on Dopes, Varnishes etc after dinner.

**13<sup>th</sup> Feb 1918.**

Secured a buzzer & commenced learning the code. Saw a boxing competition in the evening.

**14<sup>th</sup> Feb 18.**

Went for a long walk during the afternoon with the doctor. Saw a real good concert by some London folk at the camp in the evening.

**15<sup>th</sup> Feb 18.**

Was informed that my weeks leave which I had applied for had been turned down & the major gave me a week end only, from Friday until Tuesday morning. As I wanted a few clothes I took the day off & proceeded to London by the 11 a.m. train.

I went straight to Horseferry to the Kit Store & secured a nice pr of slacks & a tunic besides shirts & collars etc. I took the slacks & tunic around to the Army & Navy Stores to be altered slightly & they promised to have them ready next day. I caught the 5-train back, reaching camp in time for mess & no one the wiser. It was a good piece of work because on the morrow I can slip straight down to Cardiff.

**16<sup>th</sup> Feb 18.**

Sent a cable home "Six months duty England" etc so I guess it will please dear old mother. Was driven down to the station in the Minerva & the chauffeur was a lad whom I knew well at school - Eric Bowen by name. Secured my clothes at the Stores & then caught the 3.15 p.m. to Cardiff. Little did I think three weeks ago that I'd be back in the train bound for Cardiff. I found all quite well at Tyneside & they gave me a hearty welcome. During the three days I was there I had glorious weather & a ripping time. As usual I was very

sorry to leave. One evening I amused them with card tricks & every-thing went with a swing. Jack & I had some good times together - he's a fine little chap. On Sunday evening Miss Hindmarsh & I went along to hear Lionel Fletcher & he was great. His congregation numbered over 3000 & every night he draws the same large crowd. I spoke to him after the service & he was very pleased to see some one from Adelaide. He wished to be remembered to uncle. Mr. Hindmarsh & I had some great games of billiards - very close & interesting.

**19<sup>th</sup> Feb. 18.**

Mr. H. had a letter from uncle dated Dec 28. I left Cardiff by the 3.8 train having had a great time. They make me so welcome & feel so much at home & are awfully kind that I can never thank them enough. Can see myself having a great time there in the summer on the lake etc. Arrived in London at 6.30, had tea at Lyons Corner House Strand & then thought I'd go & see Muskeleynes Show. However when I got round there the place was closed as they thought there would be another raid. The last two nights the Hun had raided but I missed both. I caught the 9 p.m. back to Wendover feeling very satisfied with every one in general.

**20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1918.**

Supposed to attend lectures but they eventuated not. Was informed that I'd be going up for the next air-board, probably on Tuesday. More leave perhaps! Tis a cold & wintry day.

**22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 1918.**

Concert party came down in the evening and gave us a good show.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Feb.**

Up to London & had dinner with Baldy & Jack Dell who are going back to Ausy. Had a very nice time.

**24<sup>th</sup> Feb 1918.**

Went to bed at 1 o'clock as I was feeling pretty rotten with a touch of influenza. Got up on the 26<sup>th</sup> but still felt pretty much off. Went up to town in the afternoon & stayed at the Picadilly Club.

**27<sup>th</sup> Feb 18.**

Went round to Hampstead to the Air-Board. Got through OK. Had lunch with Baldy & Jack & then went to Chu Chin Chow. We enjoyed it immensely - a wonderful production. Had tea with Gordon at his room & then we went to the Victoria Palace. They had a fine show on. Slept at the Imperial.

**28<sup>th</sup> Thursday.**

Said goodbye to Baldy & Jack & caught the 12.7 to Wendover. Have to go to Reading tomorrow.

**1<sup>st</sup> Mch. 1918.**

Caught the 11.20 to Marylebone & then from Paddington to Reading arrived there at 4.30 p.m. After a lot of messing round they finally allotted us to a billet in the town at 21 Russell St. It is a very comfortable place, the landlady is very kind & feeds us awfully well. There are 3 of us here & she draws our rations twice a week from the R.F.C. Depot. We have a 1/2 hrs walk to our work & we always walk both ways. Reading is a very nice place and the Thames flows around the outskirts. The weather is delightful & I think we should have a good time. Our course proper does not commence for some time yet so we are doing a waiting course, elementary work with a little drill thrown in.

**6<sup>th</sup> March 18.**

Went to the "Arcadians" but it was on a third rate show. Received a batch of redirected correspondence from France & naturally all the stuff was old.

**9<sup>th</sup> Mch. 18.**

Had an inspection by the C.O. at 9.30. Went for a walk along the Thames after dinner - wrote in the

evening.

**10<sup>th</sup> Mch 18.**

Commenced course & evidently we are in for a hot time. Sunday afternoon is the only time we get off. Occasionally we have a 6.45 am. Parade. The subjects we are at present studying are:- buzzer, rigging, Lewis gun. instruments & theory of flight, also bombs. It is most interesting as you can imagine but talk about notes, sketches etc. well they are liable to sicken one.

**12<sup>th</sup> March. 18.**

Three letters from home. Went to "High Jinks" but not too good.

**14<sup>th</sup> Mch 18.**

Received a nice parcel from Ruby G. Also received my photos from London & they were pretty good. Scattered them about most liberally.

**16<sup>th</sup> Mch 18.**

Weather is still charming. Gordon sent me my kitbag down. Had the bad news that my old Sgt. of No. 12. Sgt Walley. D.C.M. had been killed. He was a fine chap & leaves a wife & kiddy. My word it's hard, darned hard.

**18<sup>th</sup> Mch 1918**

Received three more old parcels. They had been posted in Sep. & Oct to reach me in time Xmas but evidently had been detained a little. They were from Home, Malvern & G, Craigie. All were very welcome. Had an exam. On Rigging & got through OK. - ditto repeato Lewis gun. Letters still continue to float in any old time but I'm so busy that I have very little time for answering them. The weather is still beautiful.

**22<sup>nd</sup> Mch.**

Went to the usual dance in the Town Hall. We don't get any 1/2 days on Saturdays "Work for the night is coming" is our motto.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Mch 18.**

Went for a long walk along the river bank, had afternoon tea at the Roebuck & then returned through various country lanes & villages, striking the Bath Road, arriving home in good time for tea. Our landlady looks after us really well, it's a real home. I will be sorry to leave.

**24<sup>th</sup> Mch 18.**

Early morning signalling at 6.45 a.m. takes the enjoyment out of life a little. We are on bombs & instruments now, the former being especially good.

**25<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>.**

Nothing to report - situation quiet.

**30<sup>th</sup> March 18.**

Oh I forgot to mention that I was thinking of dear old father on the 27<sup>th</sup> & wishing him all the good things possible. Gordon sent a cable for us both.

**April 1: 1918.**

Nothing is left of fool's day now. We were not given any holidays at Easter except the Sunday. Gordon came down before dinner. In the afternoon we went for a row up the river & had quite a good time besides securing several blisters. He caught the 9 o'clock train back & we both enjoyed ourselves muchly. He has evidently a fine job at Chelsea. & is looking OK. Received two nice prs. of socks from Mrs. Hindmarsh & a very hearty welcome to visit them again. Poor old Mr. H has been seriously ill.

**4<sup>th</sup> April. 18.**

The proverbial showers are making themselves felt & the sunshine has disappeared altogether. Went to a very nice Fancy Dress Ball & had a tophole time. I wore flannels which I previously had made for the tennis which I hope to have when I visit Cardiff again. It was lovely to have them on & if I'd only been on the oval again, Oh I say!

**6<sup>th</sup> April 18.**

Have been here over a month now - the time seems to go like mad. My word I'm a lucky beggar to be out of all this fighting over the other side. I feel sorry for the poor chaps as I believe they are having a rough time of it. I would like to know how the old Bn. is. Went for a walk to a pretty little village on the banks of the Thames called Sonning. The scenery was delightful & so was the girl!!

**7<sup>th</sup> April 18.**

Our engine course commenced. Very interesting but it's an awful cram.

**9<sup>th</sup> Apl. 18.**

Went to "The Better' ole" Bruce Barinsfathers play & it was rather good. Was quite pathetic in places & made me think of "Home sweet home".

**10<sup>th</sup> Apl.**

Heavy fighting is taking place around Messines, Armentieres, Steenwerck & Bailleul & the Boche has made a big push there & evidently succeeded except at Messines. I know the country well & never thought they would ever break through as far as they have. The Aus. Just moved down south before the attack was made. Poor old Armentieres - it was our first sector we occupied when we were in & then it was a real fine home. I've spent many happy hrs or rather days there.

**12<sup>th</sup> Sat. 18.**

As I was going to lectures at 2 p.m. who should I see walking towards me but 2 of my men, wounded out of my old platoon. I was awfully glad to see them & hear how the bn. was faring. Evidently they had had a very bad spin & casualties were heavy. They were fighting in front of Albert. Poor old Grubb was killed, all the officers wounded & many N.C.O's. A Cpl. was in charge of the Coy. at the finish. By all a/c's. our boys are inflicting very heavy casualties on the Boche. Needless to say the two lads were awfully pleased to be over here.

**13<sup>th</sup> Sunday 18.**

C.O's Inspection at 8.45 a.m. The weather is not fine enough for the river so. I hope to go for a nice walk somewhere.

**15<sup>th</sup>. Tuesday. 18.**

Received 2 bundles of redirected correspondence from the Base containing 29 letters. Also had a letter from Love telling me all about the stunt.

**16<sup>th</sup> April 18.**

Went to "Romance" at the Country & enjoyed it immensely. Received a parcel from Mavlern. No. 1. The fruits were OK. Had a preliminary exam. on aerial navigation & got through all right. We have an excellent instructor & the subject is very interesting.

**19<sup>th</sup> April 18.**

Usual dance & got nice & wet coming home.

**20<sup>th</sup> Sunday.**

No church parade as it was too wet. April has bought with it showers galore & miserable weather. Could not

go on the river as it was too cold so I remained at home & read & corresponded.

**23<sup>rd</sup> April 18.**

Another exam. On aerial navs. in the morning. We were for a wonder given a half-holiday but the weather was too bad for the river. I went up to the hos. to look for one of my old platoon but he was out. Finished quite a lot of letters off. We would-be fliers rejoiced exceedingly glad at the news that Baron von Richthaven, Germany's crack airman had been brought down on the Somme & killed. His total was 80 but the papers evidently think this was the number brought down by the "circus". I bet it leaves a nasty taste in the Boche fliers mouths though. Wrote to Gordon to come down next Sunday. Sent a doz. Views of Reading home. Ireland is going to make a big fuss over conscription - they make a man sick. I am wondering if Hughes will do anything with regards cons. as things are so bad over here. Lets hope he does. Our course finished today & we have a few days resume before the final exam. On Tuesday. Hope to secure a few days leave pending results.

**24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>.**

Lectures in the Town Hall on Engines. Awfully boring, what I don't know about engines would fill 17 large books.

**27<sup>th</sup> March 18.**

Went to a nice private dance. Met something nice.

**28<sup>th</sup> March 18.**

Gordon came down by the 12 train. I took him for a walk through the gardens & over the old ruins just to sharpen his appetite up for dinner. My old landlady gave us a good feed & after we caught a launch at Caversham which went up to Goring about 7 miles from Reading. We past Pangbourne, a delightfully pretty place & all along the river the scenery was fine. On board we had a nice afternoon tea & arrived back at 6.30 in time for tea. Gordon took several photos during the day & left by the 9 train. He is looking quite well.

**29<sup>th</sup> Monday. 18.**

Exams. in buzzer, rigging, bombs & instruments & aerial navs. I think I did quite all right.

**30<sup>th</sup> March 18.**

Exam on Engines. Am afraid I came a wash in the rotary. Went to the palace after tea but it was a Nth rate show.

**1<sup>st</sup>. May 1918.**

The suns shines forth & I feel like a bit of a trip round the old maypole & whispering words of deception in the good old Queen's ear. Yes, I received 33 letters this morning ranging between Nov 25<sup>th</sup> & March 15<sup>th</sup>. I have the day off as we have to wait until the results come out to know whether we go to Wendover or remain here for a little longer. I rather fancy the latter. I was awfully pleased to hear that Roy was doing a school & would very likely get his com. out of it. Good on the old boy! During the afternoon I wrote a few letters as I have heaps to answer.

**2<sup>nd</sup> May 1918.**

Was not feeling at all well & as we had the day off I had a very quiet time at home. Was pressed into going to a nice little dance in the evening through & thoroughly enjoyed myself.

**3<sup>rd</sup> May 18.**

Caught the train for Paddington after bidding adieu to all my friends. I also had the satisfaction of passing the exams, by the way. I called in at the A.M.T.S. but Gordon was out so I went on to Wendover by the 5.25 p.m. We arrived there at 6.45 & after tea five of us were given 4 days leave. I went back to town & stayed

at the Ivanhoe. Harry Jessop is there also but I did not have the chance of seeing him.

**4<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Had breakfast in bed & after a nice bath I strolled along & visited the Houses of Parliament & the Royal Institute Museum which were most interesting. I had lunch with Gordon & then caught the 3 train for Cardiff. They were all pleased to see me but Mr. H. is not looking too good.

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday 18.**

A delightful day. Went to church with Mrs. H. in the morning & to hear Lionel Fletcher in the evening. He had a wonderful congregation, gave us a ripping sermon & was pleased to see me. Also met the first Yank. Officer so far - he'll make a soldier in time.

**6<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Had a game of tennis on a nice turf court in the morning & went for a row on the lake after tea. Played Mr. H. billiards in the evening.

**7<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Caught the 1.15 back to town after a very nice little holiday. They were as kind as usual & were sorry that Gordon did not accompany me, so was I. I called for Gordon on reaching London & he had arranged a nice little foursome. We had a good dinner at a choice little cafe & then proceeded to "Hotch Potch" a real screamer. Oh it was great! I slept at Gordon's digs & went back at 10 next morning.

**9<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Had a very quiet morning but discovered fine nice lawn courts, which I immediately joined. Played all the afternoon & believe me it was fine. I could fancy myself back in dear old Adelaide very very easily.

**10<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Walked over to Tring bought up a few articles & a bicycle (6 bob a week). Played tennis again, went to a concert in the evening & had a game of billiards after. I think I can manage to live in this camp for a very very long time. We have a good table in the mess & its only 6d a 100. So far we have no duties to perform at all except an O.o occasionally. Received a lovely cake from darling mother. It was for my birthday & was a beauty.

**11<sup>th</sup> May 1918**

Nothing doing in the way of work so far so I continue to play tennis, billiards & go for long cycle rides endeavouring of course to become quite fit. What a life believe me & to think of those poor beggars in France fighting - cruel there's no name for it.

**14<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Received a wire from Jim Hindmarsh inviting me to spend the evening with him on the 16<sup>th</sup>. It was his birthday on the 15<sup>th</sup> & mine on the 18<sup>th</sup> so we are going to celebrate them together - at his invitation & expense! Have applied for four days leave & will spend them in London.

**15<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Went for a 20 mile ride to Tring, Aldbury, Ivinghoe, Chedderfield & home through Ashton, Clinton. The weather was glorious & the scenery excellent & I enjoyed the outing immensely.

**16<sup>th</sup> May 1918**

Applied for week-end leave & obtained same. Went up to Station per Minerva & caught the 3.2 to town. As I had arranged to meet Jim Hindmarsh at the Waldorf Hotel at 6 I strolled along about 5.30. We had a very nice tea there & then went along to see "The Lilac Domino". We were rather disappointed with the play as it wasn't quite frivolous enough. Of course he shouted me all through & I naturally sat back & enjoyed

things muchly. He is a real good chap though. After a light supper he left me, as he had to go to Liverpool.

#### **17<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Break. In bed & a lovely bath. Drew £10 from my military pay & credited my Com. A/c which is now £50. Had lunch with Peg & went to the movies after. Got round to Gordon's quarters in time for dinner. Spent a quiet evening together.

#### **18<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

23 today but yet I feel as silly as ever. Had lunch with Gordon & then went out to Finsbury Park to see the Yank Army play the Navy. It was a lovely afternoon & they gave us a great exhibition of the ball game. Their antics were very amusing. The Army won 7-6. We arrived home just in time to change to meet Peg & Eileen. Had a nice dinner & then saw "Uncle Anyhow". It was quite a good play but some how or other I felt home sick or sad.

#### **May 19<sup>th</sup>.**

We had our break in bed & had an hrs stroll through the park before dinner. Had tea with Peg & then went over to Hyde Park Gardens & heard the bands play. The weather is great. At 22.30 the alarm was sounded & the Anti-aircraft guns barked out rather furiously. It was one of the Boche's biggest raids & we brought down 7 of his planes. Our casualties were 200. The all clear sounded at about 1 o'clock & we slept soundly for the rest of the night. It was my first raid in London but the barrage was very paltry compared with some I've seen. However the people seem to get the wind up awfully.

#### **20<sup>th</sup> May. 1918.**

Went round to Gordon's office about 10 am & as his boss drove round to Horseferry we accompanied him. Needless to say we didn't go straight home but had a nice spin round the city. It was quite like old times for us to be together again in the car. I saw more of London that morning than I've seen in all my other visits put together. After lunch we went to the Tower of London & passed a couple of intensely interesting hours there. To "When Knights were bold" in the evening but they had an awful house.

#### **21 May 1918.**

Returned to Wendover at 9.30. Collected lots of letters, two parcels & a registered packet. Muriel sent a beautiful cake, as fresh as if only a couple of days old, & my word we did enjoy it. Then the other was from Malvern full of dainties. I think it must have been an old one as some of the articles were worse for -----. Mrs. Hindmarsh very kindly sent me a couple of ties. All these nicies arriving during my birthday week made me feel very happy. There are rumours that we will move soon but so far there is nothing definite.

#### **24<sup>th</sup> May 1918**

At 1.10 I left here per sidecar to travel to Reading (57 Miles) to pay some of our boys who are doing a rigging Course there. It was a glorious afternoon, no dust & the roads were good. The journey took 1.20 min. & it was a delightful run. The country was beautiful & some of the fields were just a mass of yellow as the buttercups were all out & very thick. The driver was a good man & we carved the pace out well. I called on my old landlady & she was very pleased to see me. After a tasty little afternoon tea we left Reading at 5 arriving back at Wendover at 6.30. It was a fine trip & I couldn't help smiling to myself at the cruelty of this Great War. Had 3 very successful games of billiards in the evening.

#### **25<sup>th</sup> May.**

Received a parcel from Rene but it had been badly knocked about & evidently a very old one. Had a lovely afternoon's tennis. Our club ran an American tournament, which proved a great success. The handicapping proved to be very fair although we were put back farthest of all. However Frazer & I played well & worked our way up into the finals. It was a fine afternoon, the orchestra played well & with a nice afternoon tea we had quite a good time.

### **26<sup>th</sup> Sunday 1918**

Gordon came down & I met him in the Minerva. Eric Borven was driving. Played the finals in the afternoon & after a very strenuous game lost to the secretary & his wife 9-7, 5-7, 8-6. We did not play well & had very little luck & they deserved to win. I received a very nice little silver calender for 2<sup>nd</sup> prize. Gordon left by the 8.24. Of course being 2<sup>nd</sup> i/c S of T.T I had the Minerva again. Some war what!

### **27<sup>th</sup> May 1918**

Received my M.M. & its very nice too. Quite a perfectly good souvenir of the Great War. Would like to send it home but am afraid of the post.

### **28<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Rumours of a complete turn-out of all officers to Squadrons. We were posted to Scouts - Camels at No. 5 Training Squadron at Chalford or rather Minchinhampton in Glos. Had a last game of tennis after dinner.

### **29<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Left by the 10.23 a.m. for London after saying goodbye to dear old Wendover. It was a real home & I didn't like leaving it. As it was a "washout" day at the Squadron we were unable to go right through so had to remain in London all night. I called on Miss. Munns at Hamstead after lunching at Lyons Corner House & there had a most enjoyable time. They made me feel quite at home & I hope to visit them again. Their hot cakes were delightful. Had dinner with Gordon at his digs & then saw "Be careful Baby" a great play. Gordon had secured free seats so everything was quite O.K.

### **30<sup>th</sup> May 1918.**

Visited the Grafton Galleries in the morning & saw the Australian War Pictures. They were remarkably fine & a great credit to Aus. It was a most enjoyable morning & a sight not to be missed. Lunched with Gordon at his own particular little cafe, returned to his office, then drove round to H/Qrs, picked up the Staff Capt. Took him round to Waterloo & then Gordon landed me at Paddington just in time to catch the 3 o'clock train for Brimscombe. We passed through Reading & along the Cardiff line arrived at Brimscombe somewhere near 6. Went by lorry to Hyde House in Chalford where we occupied tents on the side of a large valley which gave us a beautiful view. England is a delightful now as everything is at its best. The weather is also top-hole & camping in the open is quite like picnicing. The aerodrome is 2 1/2 miles away but we are conveyed to & from by lorry. There are about 25 officers & cadets doing the course. Things are frightfully slack here & the way the mess is run is a perfect disgrace.

### **1st June 1918.**

Our work consists of buzzing, machine gun work & flying. The major took me up for 20-min. flight & all my expectations were fulfilled. The sensation was glorious & I'm sure I'll like the work. We did no stunts but the plane seems quite safe even in simple flying. The country looks awfully nice & the full value of aerial observation is brought home to one when you get up high. We went up over a mile - 6000'. My ambition now is to be able to fly a Camel & go for long cross country flights when I like. I hope to fly to Cardiff someday.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> June 1918.**

Went into Stroud after tea & had a good bath as none are available here.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> June 1918.**

Buzzing & M.G. in the morning & we simply hung round for a fly all the afternoon.

### **4<sup>th</sup> June 1918.**

We still continue to wait patiently for a fly but no! the war is yet young so they evidently think. It makes one awfully lazy just waiting about until 5.30, the time when we return to camp. No. 6 Squadron had a bad time today 5 m/cs were crashed luckily no pilots were hurt, but the damage done would easily run in 4 or 5

thousand pounds. The upcost of an aerodrome must be enormous & considerably helps in the daily 6.000.000. Met Spen. Haslam, Denton & Len Taplin, all old school pals.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> June 1918.**

The waiting game still continues. Had a good game of tennis in the eve. This time last year things were warming up at Messines.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> June 1918**

A year ago at 3.10 a.m. the mines had exploded, the barrage was on & we were over the top with Messines as our objective. Oh how well I remember everything! Was allotted to an instructor, Payne by name, & he took me up. I really enjoy the work more & more everytime I go up.

#### **11<sup>th</sup> June 1918**

Caught the 3 o'clock from Brimscombe for Paddington as tomorrow is our washout day & we were lucky enough to get an early kick off. For some unknown reason (unless I'm in love) instead of booking to Victoria I went straight to Waterloo & then it cost me 2/6 for a taxi as I was running late. One does strange things at times doesn't one? I reached Gordon's digs at 7, had a snack & then went to Victoria Palace where we saw a real good show. Next morning I passed very leisurely & after lunch visited the National & Royal Academies. At the latter were a magnificent display of paintings & really one could spend hours & hours there viewing the works of art.

About 4.30 I took a bus to Golders Green & called on my newly found friend, Phyllis. Had quite a nice tea & then we went in to town. In a cosy little corner in Romanis we dined & everything was perfect believe me. You know when one is sitting opposite a nice young lady where the lights are softly shaded & sweet strains of music waft gently upwards and where the food is tastily served etc one can hardly believe that there is a war on & that at the very same time you are enjoying yourselves the poor laddies over in France are going out. Still I feel I've got some more coming to me soon & so why not have a real good time now. After we went to "Fair & Warner" & it was quite good. I had a most enjoyable time & trust it will be my luck to have a few more repetition. She's a real decent girl, quite a good pal, and Phyllis isn't a bad name either!

#### **13<sup>th</sup> June 1918.**

Caught the 7.30 back to camp feeling fit for the struggle.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> June 1918.**

Nothing of importance to note. Usual routine - flying in the morning & machine guns in the afternoon. Nothing to do of an evening & the mess is absolutely a disgrace. However we are taking steps to remedy affairs. Received letters from Malvern telling of their trip to Sydney. It was a fine performance of the old Singer's & must have been a good experience for uncle & auntie. Have now had over 6 hours flying so will be going solo shortly.

#### **21<sup>st</sup> June 1918.**

Wilkie & I went into Stroud for a bath as there are none at the house. Had a glorious one at the Imperial & also a fine dinner, which was quite a treat after our mess. Went to a Show after but it was very umpteenth rate. However the trip in broke the monotony a little & we quite enjoyed ourselves.

#### **25<sup>th</sup> June 1918**

The day which I had eagerly been waiting for at last arrived. Was able to do my flight before breakfast & m/c gun class during the morning. Caught the 3 train to town. Had dinner at Gordon's digs & as he had secured free seats we went to "The man from Toronto" a humorous play. Auntie's birthday. I hope she received our cable all right.

**26<sup>th</sup> June 1918**

Went around to the club at Piccadilly & had a good bath & a hair cut. Met Gordon & we dined at the "Old Cheddar Cheese" where we had an excellent meal. Things were quite antique & very interesting. We went upstairs to the Sawdust Club & there Gordon took me in several imposing positions. The visit was such success that I hope to take Gordon along again. I left him & journeyed out to Hampstead. Had a most enjoyable time. Phyllis plays awfully well & I had Bon's two songs "Mother mine" & "Longing" which she played over for me. They were excellent - my favourite being the latter.

Phil, who was dressed in an exquisitely becoming frock & hat joined me for dinner at Romano's & from there we went to "The Boy". Everything went with a swing. Believe me we get on quite well together! Caught the 7.30 back next morning. Saw Liff Parkes who is going back to Aussie in the Strand. Needless to say he was very happy. Also met Freddy Daw who is joining up with the Indian Army. I was awfully pleased to see him.

**28<sup>th</sup> June 1918.**

Having the afternoon off Capt. Richards & I went into Gloucester but that town not meeting with our approval we journeyed on to Cheltenham. It is quite a nice place & we enjoyed ourselves immensely barring the Revue we saw & that was easily the worst I've ever seen.

**29<sup>th</sup> June 1918.**

Did an early flip was on landings. I have over 9 hrs flying now so am just about ready for solo. I feel quite confident & am sure I will do all right. Believe me it's the Sports of Sports. A nice job after the war will do me down to the ground, say major in charge of one of the aerodromes near Adelaide. However the war is only its infancy yet & I may be a colonel before then. One never knows does one?

**30<sup>th</sup> June 1918.**

Thought of the old bank going it's hardest. Received letters telling of their arrival home from Sydney per car. Some trip! During the week the weather was good & I did a fair amount of flying. Brought my time up to 12 hrs.

**5<sup>th</sup> July 1918**

Went into Stroud for a bath & a decent dinner. Our quarters at our new drome are much better than Hyde House & things all round are improving. I expect just when we are due to leave things will be very comfortable.

**9<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

Called at 4 a.m. for early flying. It was a glorious morning & the sunrise was exquisite. Went up with my instructor & did a couple of good landings & had control of the engine quite well. We landed & he said I could do my solo. I had plenty of confidence & put up a very creditable 40 minutes flip. Made a few perfect landings, but lost my prop. & Payne my instructor was well pleased with the work. I felt as safe as a house & feel quite OK about future flights. Capt. Richards crashed & fractured his jaw slightly. Went to Wandsworth later. Caught 3 train for London being Washout Day on the morrow. Went to Victoria Palace with Gordon & Peg & they had a fine show on. One of the best programs I've seen.

**10<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

Met Phil at Hampstead, walked over the Heath & through the Park. Saw "Nothing but the Truth" at the Savoy in the evening. A great show.

**11<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

Returned per 7.30 but got out at Reading, had breakfast at the "Ship", got measured for a pair of breeches, missed the 9 train & arrived at the drome at 2 p.m. As there was no flying doing my valuable presence was not required. Heard the bad news that Major McCudden V.C. etc. our crack airman was accidently killed

whilst joining up his squadron. Had a letter from Hugh Nicholson who has arrived at Liverpool & is going to join the "Melbourne".

**13<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

Did my first two spins. Took quite a while to make up my mind to do the deed but when finally I pulled back the fine adjustment & did the spin it gave me quite a lot of confidence.

**15<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

Wilk. & I went out to Painswick to the home of the Leechs where we played tennis. It commenced to rain steadily but the old chap was such a keen enthusiast that he did not finish until we were just about wet through. We had a nice afternoon tea & they were awfully nice people. Returned to Imperial for dinner at Stroud & arrived home at 10.

**16<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

Continuous heavy rain which makes flying impossible therefore the troops rest.

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 1918.**

My instructor took me up & we did all the stunts & he says I'm fit for my pup solo.

**23<sup>rd</sup> July 1918.**

Made my first Pup flight & had quite a good time. They are excellent m/c. to fly but I couldn't look for nuts. All their movements are so much quicker than the Avis. Left by the 12 train & called on Capt. Richards at Wandsworth. Also saw Charlie Sexton who was wounded at Hamel. Had tea with Gordon & went to the Vic. After.

**24<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

Met Phil at 11 a.m. saw the pictures at the Naval Exhibition & they were excellent. Lunched at Picadilly Corner House & then saw Chu Chin Chow. I enjoyed it better than the first time as they had introduces new songs & scenes. Met Gordon again & we saw a good nights stoush at the National Sporting Club.

**25<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

Played our first match against the Marling College near Stroud. They were only lads though & we won easily. They scored 26 & we 127. I secured 7 wickets for 15. The weather nowadays is awfully uncertain & one never knows whether it's going to rain or be fine. The crops are looking fine & the farmers think a good harvest highly probable.

**29<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

The major was very keen to push us through before the end of the month & so I did my height & cloud-flying test.

**30<sup>th</sup> July 1918.**

As I still required 4 1/2 hrs to graduate I got to work early took my photos, finished off the formation time & forced landings. I felt awfully tired by night time but it was satisfactory to know that I had graduated. So far I've done 25 hrs & not crashed or broken anything. Crashes have been most numerous of late & it's marvellous how the fellows escape without a scratch & yet the bus is absolutely written off. The upkeep must be simply astounding. As my instructor was having a couple of days off I immediately followed in his footsteps like a good boy. I caught the 1.31 p.m. from Stroud & arrived in Cardiff at 4. I spent the next day there & returned to camp by the 9.10 on Aug 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. H. was a little better & we had some good games of billiards. Miss. H. & I went for a walk to chose a field for landing but met with very little success. It was a nice little break & I enjoyed it muchly. My absence from camp was unnoticed so there you are where are you? Haven't had any letters from home for weeks. Had a letter from Roy stating the arrival of his star.

Good on the old boy! Am taking my grad. Leave next week & Gordon is arranging a little tour to Northern Wales. If the weather is fine we hope to do some bathing.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> August 1918.**

Played Leighterton on our drome & just managed to beat them 137 to 131. I got 6 for 42. When playing the mechanics the other day we also won & I got 4 for 24. It's just like old times chucking up a few leg breaks etc.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> August 1918**

Wilk & I went to the Andersons at Ebley near Stroud to play tennis but it was too wet. Had dinner in Stroud & saw an awful show at the Empire.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> August**

Applied for graduation leave which has been granted. Gordon wrote down giving me details of where we were going & when to meet him. Am going on the 8<sup>th</sup> that is Thursday after Washout & returning on the 12<sup>th</sup> (with luck).

#### **August 6<sup>th</sup> 1918.**

Did an hours aerial fighting with my instructor so as to get off in the afternoon. New breeches arrived and very nice too! A pal of mine was going to fly me to Birmingham but just as we were going to start another bus crashed & we had to abandon the idea. Therefore I had to go by train which left Gloucester at 2.52 arriving in Birmingham at 4.15. As I had to meet Gordon at 8p.m. I had a hair-cut, afternoon tea & a stroll around the town. It is of course a large manufacturing place & naturally very dirty but the girls appeared rather tasty so thought I at the time not knowing them of course that I was to prove the case later on. Well I met Gordon & we arrived at Chester 10.30 p.m. After a little snack we both retired feeling tired.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> August 1918.**

After breakfast we strolled around the walls of the city & Gordon took snaps of anything important. It is really a most historic place & awfully quaint. We lunched at the City Grill & feeling once more fit for the struggle visited the Cathedral a famous place & through the Rows, quite peculiar places. The shops appeared excellent & altogether a most pleasing town. The weather was perfect & if only it continues nothing more will be required. We left by the 5 train & landed at Llandudno at 7.45 p.m. After a fruitless search on foot for the place, Craig-y-don, we eventually reached it per bougham. By all appearances things are going to be OK. We were given quite a nice room & the Boarding House seems very nice.

Two Australians had just left & had evidently had a great time for when they knew we were Australians they literally jumped on our necks. However the class of girl they treated didn't altogether benefit by our stay there.

#### **9<sup>th</sup> August 1918**

It was nice to lay in bed & think that my leave was just about to commence. Another glorious day. Had a quiet morning & strolled along to the Big Orme in the afternoon with two of the girls from the house. It was lovely out & the scenery excellent. Saw "Toto" at the Grand in the evening. The feeding at this place is quite good & all the people are very homely. Gordon & I had some good games of snooker - another pleasing feature was the 11.30 a.m. mixed bathing parade. About 20 used to go in & didn't we just have some fun. Not 'arf! Glad eyes & stockings are not rationed here that's quite evident, and needless to say I quite agree that they shouldn't be. Hear! Here! I hear you say). Visited the little Orme. Went to the Pierrots & had a few dances at the house after. Quite an enjoyable day.

#### **10<sup>th</sup> August 1918.**

Received a large mail from home & Malvern. Visited Carnavon & saw the old castle with its many interesting features. The great wireless station that is our only connection with Russia can be viewed from one of the

castle's towers. I believe it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in the world & when sending lights up the town a mile away. We saw the room where the first Prince of Wales was born & also the large square well where they used to drop the undesirables.

**11<sup>th</sup> August 1918.**

Bathed & played billiards in the morning. Went to tea at a Mrs. Dobies in the afternoon. Her daughter knew some of the officers out of the 40<sup>th</sup> so she came up to me & invited us around. They were awfully nice & invited us to visit them at Chester. Their son has just returned from Germany after being through a 10 months hell. He has lost an eye through a careless operation which was performed without chloroform & in the 3 months he was in bed in hospital he was not washed once & he's an officer. Do we want Peace yet I ask you? No not until the cows are on the ground begging for mercy.

**12<sup>th</sup> August 1918.**

By rights I should have been back today but no I couldn't do it. The weather was too good & we were enjoying ourselves too much. Went to Bettuys-y-Coed a lovely little place. Saw the Swallow Falls & Fairy Glen both awfully pretty. Glorious day again. Had a nice dance on my return home & made a fond farewell to Dolly the little girl I had met from Birmingham.

**13<sup>th</sup> August 1918.**

Caught the 11 a.m. for home. Our holiday had been great as the weather was so fine & we enjoyed every minute of it. At Birmingham we had tea with a Mrs Phillips & then she showed us round a little. A hearty invitation was also extended to visit their home whenever possible. After saying goodbye to Gordon I left B. & reached Gloucester at 8.35 p.m. Remained there over night & journeyed on next morning. Nothing was said of my lateness, thank goodness. Two lads were, I am sorry to say, killed in my absence. Shepherd & Lewis both fine fellows.

**14<sup>th</sup> August 1918.**

Did a 25-min. dual - a bit wonky on it. Played tennis with Payne in the tournament & won our first round. Weather still excellent.

**15<sup>th</sup> Aug 1918.**

Went to Davies to tennis at Stroud & had a glorious time. Flew to Cardiff in the morning & dropped some letters. Am taking Shepherd's place on the committee.

**17<sup>th</sup> August 1918.**

Payne & I played & won our game. I think we stand a fair chance of winning the doubles.

**19<sup>th</sup> August 18.**

Wilkie & I went down to Cardiff to the Hindmarsh's. I was going to London but as the train-strike was on I decided not to go up there. We had an excellent time & the people made an awful fuss of us when they knew we had flown over their homes. And the rumours too oh they were funny!

**21<sup>st</sup> Aug. 1918.**

Returned home to camp & I had to see the major on a/c of being a couple of hours A.W.L. A few kind words was all that I received. Payne & I won the doubles 6-2, 6-3.

**22<sup>nd</sup> August 1918.**

Did my solo Camel & got on quite well except the landing when I bent the axle. It's a great bus & will do me. Received 2 letters from home.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Aug 1918.**

Made another bad landing, burst both tyres. Received a slight strafe from the Wing Examiner.

**24<sup>th</sup> Aug 1918.**

I had arranged a cricket match with the A.O.D. in Gloucester so we went per motor lorry to Stroud & caught the 1.31 to Gloucester. It was an excellent afternoon & the oval was good with a nice turf wicket & we had a fair game. It ended in our favour 192 to 63. One of our bowlers secured the hat trick & I just missed my century by 3. They put a new bowler on & he sent down a fast one which broke & shot in from the off. However I was quite pleased with the effort. Had dinner at the Bell & went to the Hippodrome after - quite a fair show. We left by the 11 p.m. train & were met at Stroud by lorry that conveyed us home. It was quite an enjoyable outing.

**26<sup>th</sup> Aug 1918.**

Received a lovely tin of homemade chocolates from my little girl in Birmingham & also a box of tarts & scones from Dorothy Hemus. They were lovely & we enjoyed them immensely.

**27<sup>th</sup> Aug 1918.**

Dud weather. Kingsford crashed. Went to a dance at Tetbury & had an excellent time. Arrived home at 3.30 a.m.

**28<sup>th</sup> Aug 1918**

Very tired so arose at 10.30. Received another box of tarts & very nice too! Two years ago today I left dear old S.A. One year ago today I was on my way to Paris on leave. One year hence I hope to be home.

**29<sup>th</sup> Aug 1918.**

Cummings, Scott & Jeffreys killed in an air collision whilst on early flying. This makes five in a fortnight - an awfully unlucky spin.

**30<sup>th</sup> Aug 1918**

As there were too many pupils on Camels I went back on to Pups & didn't mind in the least. They are real joy buses & one can tootle all over the country ad lib.

**31<sup>st</sup> Aug 1918.**

I had hopes of going to Birmingham to the Phillips home for the week-end but the major turned it down as I had been up before him for missing a lecture. I was awfully sorry for I was looking forward to a good time. However better luck next time. Went to Cummings funeral in the afternoon. He was with Gordon in Egypt & a very fine instructor. Played billiards in the evening.

**1<sup>st</sup> September.**

How the time goes! Met Don Day from Unley. Put 3 hours in & had a lovely flip with Payne on aerobatics.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 1918.**

Left for London by 6 p.m. train. Was too late to go to a show.

**4<sup>th</sup> September 1918**

Met Johnson at Horseferry & secured passes for the Enemy Aircraft Exhibition at Islington. It was an intensely interesting show but their m/c's are not a patch on ours - no wonder we are masters of the air. Had lunch with Gordon at the Olde Cheshire & then I went to the matinee at "The box o' tricks". It was a fine show & Harry Tate was good. Met Gordon at 6.20 at Marylebone & proceeded to Northwood where we spent a nice evening with the Edwards.

**5<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1918**

Returned to camp by the 9 train but as the weather was bad we did no flying.

**6<sup>th</sup> Sept 1918.**

Was up in a Pup fighting Stevenson when my engine suddenly cut out. I picked a nice field & made a good landing. Had to walk back to camp four miles after leaving a guard on the M/c. Got a couple of mechanics & returned per foot & they fixed it up. Something was wrong with the petrol system. I then flew her back to the aerodrome. Wilkie & Johnson left for finishing off school. Received another box of cakes from Dorothy & very nice too.

**7<sup>th</sup> September 18.**

Played finals of tennis at Tetbury but Payne & I were easily beaten 6-2, 6-1. Berri. won the singles. Went to the Colonel's smoke concert after & had a good evening. Poor old Allen was killed this afternoon, got on his back in a loop.

**8<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

Wilkie & Johnson sent to France. 9 casualties at No 4. Taplin, Eddy & two others brought down. Evidently attacked by a big squadron as they accounted for 8 Lokkus.

**9<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Sept 18.**

Still on Pups but very little flying on a/c of bad weather. Transferred to Capt. Malley's class.

**17<sup>th</sup> Sep. 18**

Caught train to Stroud & went to Birmingham where I hoped to stay with the Phillips. However I had to go to a hotel as Mrs. P was not at home. Had quite a good time with Dods & it reminded me of my stay at Llandudno.

**18<sup>th</sup> Sep. 1918**

Went to Stratford-on-Avon & had an intensely interesting time. Anne Hathaways cottage was particularly so. Saw "Nothing but the Truth" in the evening.

**19<sup>th</sup> Sep.**

Left by 8.35 a.m. & was lucky in catching the major's car from Stonehouse which saved me some considerable time.

**20<sup>th</sup> Sep 1918.**

Had an awfully good dance at Col. Henry's home near Avening. Some supper believe me! Letters from home.

**25<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1918**

Had a fly on a Camel & just as I was taking off I put the nose down too low & chipped a bit off each end of the prop. However it made very little difference & I did an hours time. Am getting a very nice biscuit barrel made by one of the A.M's.

**26<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

Uncle's birthday. Went to a dance at Kingscote given by Miss Wallace. Had a fine time.

**27<sup>th</sup> Sep. 18**

Weather still very dud. Payne gave me two 7/6 seats for the boxing in at Stroud. The A.F.C. in England are holding the competitions there in aid of Red Cross Funds. Quite a good evening as the boxing was fairly clever.

**28<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

Went in to see the finals of the Boxing - very fair. The cups were real good.

**29<sup>th</sup> Sep. 18.**

Had a nice flip on the Camel early & then it rained all day. Its going to be awfully miserable here in the winter. Sent mother a little pair of A.F.C. wings for her birthday.

**30<sup>th</sup> Sept 1918.**

Did my first aerial firing & secured 28 out of 400 - fairly good for the first attempt. Am getting to like the bus very much.

**1<sup>st</sup> Oct.**

Went to the Lowsley Williams dance & had a fine time. It is a real old English home & their billiard table is the best I've ever played on.

**3<sup>rd</sup> October 1918.**

Caught the 3 train for London. Had dinner with Gordon & as he had free seats for the theatre we went to "The Law Divine". It was not startling in any way but quite enjoyable.

**4<sup>th</sup> October.**

Met Morely & Winnall whilst at the bank. Had dinner with Gordon at his little cafe & a very nice one too. Saw his car which was stripped down but it appears to be a very nice one. Will do us after the war all right. After lunch I went out to Hampstead & then met Phil in town & saw "Going Up". It was quite good & a very pleasant evening was the result. Returned to camp by the 9 p.m. but weather was dud & consequently no flying.

**6<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Rhodes, Trim & Cullam left today so now we will have a chance to do a lot of time as I am in the next bunch to go. Received a parcel from Malvern, which was filled with dainties.

**7<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Received a letter from Hugh Nick saying he was on leave in London.

**9<sup>th</sup> October 1918**

Did 2 1/2 hrs in the morning & left by 3 train for London. Met Nick & stayed at the Club. Took Phil to "Shanghai" & it was a great show. Dorothy Brunton & Ivy Shilling were very good.

**10<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Nick & I went along to dinner with Gordon. Saw a great show at the Coliseum in the afty. It's the best theatre I've ever been in. Had lunch at the Club & then went to "The maid of the Mountains" a tip-top show. Returned to camp by the 9 a.m. next morning. Unluckily the major was inquiring for me so when I returned I saw him & he informed me that I would be seeing the colonel next day.

**12<sup>th</sup> Oct 1918**

Went per sidecar to Tetbury & the Col. Didn't seem at all pleased with me. Oh what a cruel war it is!

**13<sup>th</sup> Oct 1918.**

Placed under open arrest. A lovely day & I was not allowed to fly which hurt considerably. Wicks was killed at Leighterton. Received a gorgeous tin of dried fruits from home. They were wonderful samples & I enjoyed my share immensely. Received lots of Aussie letters. Had quite a good dance near Gloucester with the little munitionettes at the works there. The manager is an Aus. & gave us a fine time.

Minchinhampton  
August 1918.



My first solo bus.



Wendover Feb. 1918

In Sawdust Club's room  
at Ye olde Cheshire. Sept. 1918





**Wendover  
March 1918**



**Gordon's car  
June 1918.**



**Along the Serpentine  
June 1918**

## **DIARY 6**

**14<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Continued to lead the life of a convict. Had to have my meals brought in to me & was not allowed in the mess etc. However adjutant cheered me up by saying that he thought the matter would be squashed.

**15<sup>th</sup> October 1918**

Saw the colonel (went over to Tetbury per side-car) & after a few kind words he dismissed the case. Returned to the aerodrome & took a camel up to loop. First attempt I got into a flat spin on my back & believe me the feeling isn't too good. Still I successfully looped her & after rolling & 1/2 rolling I spun down to about 2000 ft when I did a couple of stall turn dives. When about 100 ft up I tried my engine but it failed to answer (I forgot to look at the pressure so that may have been the trouble) so I was forced to

land. I chose a good field but had too much pace up & tried to turn near the ground with the result that I touched with one wing & knocked the under carriage off besides breaking the prop & practically writing the bus off. About 1500 pounds worth of damage I suppose. Things moved at the double & it was all over in a very short time. I was not hurt or shaken up in the least & still have as much faith in the machine as ever. It occurred about 2 miles from the aerodrome but assistance was soon forthcoming.

#### **17<sup>th</sup> October 1918**

To complete Category "B" Bishop & I had to do a cross country flight. So we set out at 10.30 a.m. for Rendcomb & Yatesbury. Reached both places safely & we made up our minds to return over Bath & Bristol & up the Severn Channel to the drome. We passed Bath all right but low clouds came over & we missed Bristol. After an hours flying we saw a large town & on going down to the railway station we saw it was Exeter in Devon, about 90 miles from the drome. As we could not see any aerodrome about & as we were running short of petrol we landed in a field near a house & the old farmer informed us that there was a drome right near Exeter. We started each other's m/c & flew over Exeter about 8 miles away. After cruising round for sometime & not spotting any drome we again landed in a field near the vicarage at Pinhoe about 2 1/2 miles from Exeter. Here we were informed that there was no drome in the neighbourhood & the nearest was Torquay, 20 miles away. This was about 4 p.m. Well Bishop's engine went dud when he was trying to take off & it crashed into a large hedge, practically a write-off. He hurt his mouth & nose slightly so I did not attempt to leave. (After we found that there was no aerodrome at Torquay but a seaplane station). We secured a guard from the Higher Barracks for our planes & at an invitation from a Mr. Butt spent the night there. They made us feel quite at home & were awfully kind. I sent a long wire to the adjutant telling of our experience.

#### **18<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Made arrangements per phone for Torquay to bring me petrol & oil & to clear the crash. Bishop returned to drome.

#### **19<sup>th</sup> October 1918**

Party arrived & fixed things up but when I attempted to go I got into low clouds & was forced to return. Bent an axle in landing but they put another one in for me next morning. That evening I stayed at the vicar's, a Mr. Puckridge & my word they just treated me like a son. They have 3 sons in the Army, one in the infantry & 2 in the Flying Corps. One has been killed & one is a prisoner of war. They looked after me a treat & my stay there was an extremely happy one. Mrs. Puckridge was Australian born & was a real dear. She is writing to you mother. I was unfortunately poorly clad & as I had thigh boots on I borrowed a pr. of boots from Mr. Butt. Still I had no headgear & only a service jacket, but then who cares for looks?!!

The weather was quite unsuitable for flying on a/c of a low fog until the 23<sup>rd</sup>. I went into Exeter, had a haircut, & procured a cap, saw the town & the Cathedral. It is a fine place, one of the best in England I should imagine. The church of Pinhoe is about 900 years old & the vicar also showed me the burial ground of the men of Devon who fought the Danes in 1001. I left Pinhoe at 1 p.m. on the 23<sup>rd</sup> & followed the G.W.R. to Bristol via Taunton. The clouds were still low & I had to keep under the 1000 all the way. The fog got so thick that I was forced to land before reaching the drome. I chose a field near a large farm & landed OK. It was Hamfield Farm. 1 1/4 miles from Berkeley. I sent a telegram saying where I was & then returned to the Farm. They made me quite comfortable & feed me a treat.

#### **24<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Left Berkeley at 11 p.m. & arrived back at camp 20 minutes after. The major was quite pleased that I had bought the m/c back safely & did not say a word at all. Have passed my final tests & due for another four days leave. A great life! Accumulated letters 15 & very nice too. Left by 6 train for London on 4 days leave.

### **25<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Met Phil, went to Lyons Picadilly, had a very nice tea & then saw "The freedom of the Seas" Denis Eadies play. It was quite good

### **26<sup>th</sup> October 1918**

Had lunch with Gordon & we left by the 4 train for Canterbury. We intended going on to Ramsgate but could not manage. Our hotel, the Rose was a very decent place. Went to the movies & saw Chaplin in a very funny film "A dog's life".

### **27<sup>th</sup> Sunday.**

Went to service in Canterbury Cathedral. It is a fine place but the service did not appeal to me a bit. No one has ever equalled Henry Howard as a preacher in my wide & varied experience. ahem! After a fine dinner at which we drunk Roy's health & hoped he enjoyed his birthday we went for a long walk right round the town. It was a fine afternoon & was very nice walking. We left by the 7 train & reached home about 9 after quite a pleasant weekend. Received a parcel of lollies, raisins & nuts from home & a pair of socks from Auntie Mary.

### **28<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Saw Lady Haig's exhibition of war models in Oxford St in the morning & went to St George's Hall in the afternoon to see Maskelyne's Show. It is not half the show it used to be since old Maskelyne died. I was very disappointed in it. Gordon, Peg & I had dinner at Lyle St & then saw "Hullo America" a ripping show. Elsie Janis was great & things went with some swing. Stanley Lupino as the Aussie was very funny.

### **29<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Returned to camp at 12 & left at 6 p.m. for the "finishing off" school at Markse in Yorks. Decided to go to Cardiff & say goodbye so changed at Swindon & reached Cardiff at 10.30. I stayed with the Hemus family & they gave me a fine time. I didn't like going to Tyneside as I thought Mrs. Hindmarsh would rather be by herself for a while. She gave me a little book when I said goodbye & both she & Miss H. are awfully brave. As Dorothy was bridesmaid to a pal of hers who was getting married I went along. It was my initial performance & I was disgusted with the service. A catholic married them & it was the biggest farce I've ever seen. However the luncheon at the hotel wasn't half bad. Left by the 5 train for London.

### **30<sup>th</sup> October 1918.**

Met Kel & Steve & left Kings Cross at 10 for Markse. After much changing we arrived there at 6 p.m. The country was very pretty & we passed through York, Peterborough, Grantham & Darlington.

### **31<sup>st</sup> October 1918.**

Markse is quite near the sea but a pretty dreary place. We were on the Vickers gun all day & I was getting thoroughly fed when an orderly appeared who informed me that I was to report to the adjutant immediately. On doing so I was told that I was to catch the 10 p.m. train & report to the Air Ministry before 12 next day for overseas. I was delighted and weren't my pals all jealous. I had a rotten journey down as the train was awfully crowded & arrived in London at 7 a.m.

### **1<sup>st</sup> November 1918.**

Went to Hotel Cecil & there was given my movement orders for France.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> November 1918**

Brought my luggage from Kings Cross to Victoria. Went out to Hampstead after lunch & had a very jolly afternoon. Had tea with Gordon & then went to the Victoria Palace where we saw quite a good show.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> November 1918.**

Left Victoria by the 7.20 p.m. for Folkestone. I've had a real fine time during my training here & don't mind

going back a little. It is just about 2 years ago that I first went over. Left Folkestone at 10.10 & arrived at Boulogne about 11.40 - quite a smooth trip. Berri & Cullam were on the same boat. Booked a room at Hotel Louve as the A.M.L.O. could not give us any orders. Met Ron Swann on his way to England. Reported to A.M.L.O. at 5.30 p.m. & were informed that we had been posted to No 1. Aeroplane Supply Depot near Lumbres next day.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> November 1918.**

Berri. & I went out to Wimeraux by tram. Had a walk along the beach & back to the town for lunch. Had a very nice snack & the m'selle was very chic believe me. There are several nice hospitals at Wimeraux - No 2 A.G.H. is there. We caught the 4.37 train for Lumbres & arrived there at 7.40 where we were conveyed to the depot by lorry for a distance of 3 kilos. This is simply a base where you wait until posted to a Squadron & in the meantime you do M.Gs.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> November 1918.**

Was on guns during the morning. Posted to No 4 Squadron & anxiously awaited a tender. However none came. France is still the same old place for mud & rain. However its nice to be here & see the old places again. Berri & I walked into Lumbres before dinner.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> November 1918**

Gordon's birthday. I really thought I'd be able to spend it with him but still one never knows these days. The news of Austria's crash bucks one up considerably. We are still anxiously awaiting the tender. Our Squadron is somewhere near Lille so it's quite a considerable journey, 50 miles or so. I often used to look at Lille when at Armentieres & wonder when we'd get there - soon I hope to see the city.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> November 1918**

Rained like mad all day and we carried on with ground gunnery. Still straining our eyes for the tender. Went for a long walk with Berri before dinner.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> November 1918**

Large rumours about peace - everybody very excited & the French people march up the streets & wildly sing the Marsellaise. Went to the N. Zealand hospital & saw their concert. Met a couple of Aussie nurses who were awfully bucked at seeing us.

#### **9<sup>th</sup> November 1918.**

At 10 p.m. our tender arrived & we set off for the Squadron. Naturally we were awfully pleased but wished it could have come in daylight as we had a long ride before us & the country would have been most interesting. We passed through Arie, Bethune & La Basse & after much inquiring & losing our way arrived at the aerodrome at Grand Ennetieres about 9 kilos from Lille on the Douar Rd at 4 p.m. We were dead cold but snuggled into bed & slept the sleep of the fagged.

#### **10<sup>th</sup> November 1918.**

Dear old mothers birthday! My it seems great to think that we'll all be home for her next. Had my first flip on the Snipe & was pleased beyond expectation of her glorious capabilities. Talk about climb - she's glorious! Our Squadron are doing escort for large bombing raids & I hope to accompany them tomorrow. Was taken up towards the line & we passed over Lille, Tournai, Roubaix & Turcoing. The land further north is very marshy. Saw two large fires in Tournai, evidently Boche booby-traps.

#### **11<sup>th</sup> November 1918.**

We were to escort another bombing raid on the Enghem Junction & as I was chosen for the stunt I was highly elated. We had all our m/cs nicely ticking over & waiting for the leader to move when the raid was cancelled. Struth I was disappointed! However hostilities were to cease at 11 a.m. so that's something. Went into Lille during the afternoon & had a good look around the place. It is hardly knocked about at all.

We have a splendid club there (it used to be the Hun's.) & they took all the brass bands from around the pillars otherwise its pretty right. I have a very nice billet & our mess is in a chateau close by. It was occupied by a Hun general for 4 years & as they had to get out so quickly they fortunately left it intact. There's a beautiful piano too. This village was in Hun hands only a fortnight ago, & the people are very glad they've gone.

**12<sup>th</sup> November 1918.**

Had a couple of more flips & went out to Ath. We can't realise that the war is practically over & everyone is feeling a trifle disconted.

**13<sup>th</sup> November 1918.**

Our acting flight commander Heller took Moxham & I for a formation flip. We were going up to Ostend but Heller had to land near Werving so we set off for home. However when we had only gone a few miles we landed at an aerodrome at Linsells to procure assistance for him. After having tea there we took off & set for home. We missed the drome though & had to land at Froidmont near Tournai. Stayed with the 21<sup>st</sup> R.A.F. Squadron all night & returned next morning. The terms of the armistice are great & I didn't think for a moment that we'll have to stoush up again. Stan Howard joined up again today.

**ABOVE DIARY ENTRY OF 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 1918. IS THE LAST MADE.**

**SLEEP THE DEEP SLEEP.**

(Next blank diary page / Typewritten page affixed by unknown person, probably by George Gordon Swann, the eldest brother of Lyell Keith Swann MM)

*Sleep the deep sleep.  
The western sun is setting,  
Brave soul, for you, all journeying is past;  
I must not weep  
Dear love, nor be regretting,  
That you have entered into rest at last.  
Sleep the deep sleep.*

*Sleep the deep sleep.  
Let no vain tears be wetting  
That sacred spot where all alone you lie.  
I will not weep,  
For I am not forgetting  
That we shall meet again dear, bye and bye.  
Sleep the deep sleep.*



Lieutenant Lyell Keith Swann MM  
"ASCQ" Cemetery - TOURNAI.5.  
Grave Reference: D. 12.

## EPILOGUE

RBO/11099/16/2.

JR/NRE.

COPY OF  
( STATEMENT D.16. )

Lieut. L.K. SWANN. 4<sup>th</sup> Sqdn. A.F.C.  
Died of Wounds 14.11.18.

*This Officer was killed as a result of an Air accident. He was taking off with a flight Patrol at 11 a.m. on 14.11.18. when he was seen to spin at about 300 feet.*

*He crashed to the ground and was taken to 63<sup>rd</sup> C.C.S. where he dies at 10 P.M. the same night, Fractured Bone and internal injuries.*

*Aerodrome, Grand Ennehierres: near LILLE.  
Buried at "ASCQ" Cemetery by Hospital Chaplain.  
Map reference TOURNAI.5.*

1/100,000. B.5.

*(Sgd) W.J. Cooper. Capt.  
For O.C. 4<sup>th</sup> A.F.C.*

JR/NRE

RBO/11099/16/2.

COPY OF STATEMENT D.16. )

Lieut. L.K. SWANN. 4<sup>th</sup> Sqdn. A.F.C.  
Died of Wounds 14.11.18.

*Lieut. SWANN was admitted to this Station about mid-day on November 14<sup>th</sup> suffering from severe injuries sustained by 'crashing' on landing his aeroplane. His left knee and foot were badly smashed the base of his skull also being fractured.*

*He was unconscious and unfit for operation until 6 p.m. when the left leg was amputated above the knee. There was no improvement however, in his condition and he passed away without regaining consciousness at 9.40 P.M. that evening.*

*He was buried in the French Military Cemetery at ASCQ on the main LILLE-TOURNAI ROAD.*

63<sup>rd</sup> C.C.S.

*(Sgd) A.B. Lyon. Lt-Col. R.A.M.C.  
63<sup>rd</sup> Casualty Clearing Station.*

**And with Australia's flag shall fly  
A spray of wattle bough,  
To symbolise our unity,  
We're all Australians now.**

LEST WE FORGET